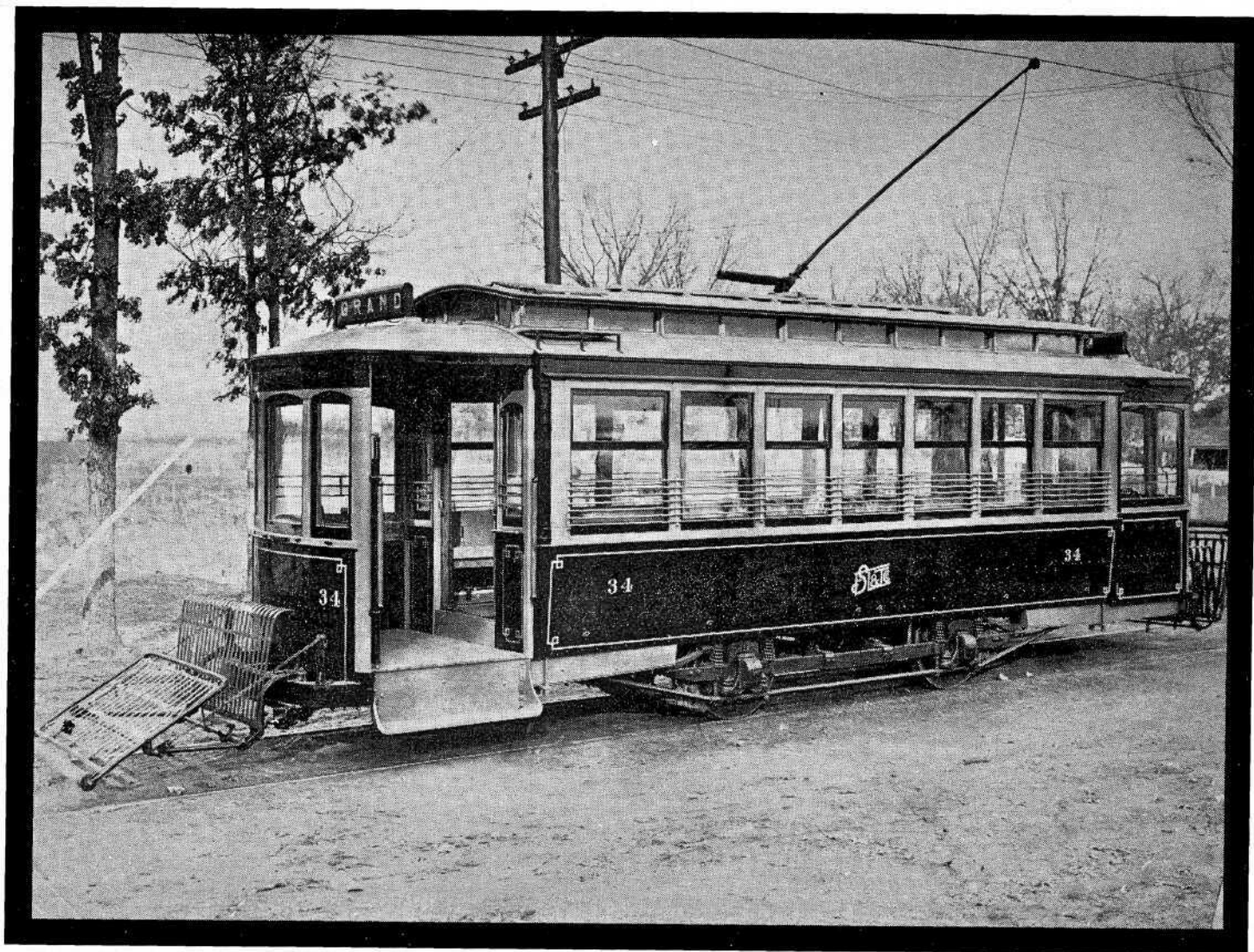


The JOURNAL



VOLUME 3, NUMBER 2, SEPTEMBER, 1979

Picture on Cover:

Car #34, rebuilt from open car in Fort Smith Light and Traction shops. Shows company logo in center of side panel. Rebuilding included, besides fabrication of windows and enclosure of open style body, application of air brake equipment and new GE-264 traction motors. Original photograph property of Fort Smith Chamber of Commerce.



The JOURNAL

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VOL. III, NO. 2

SEPTEMBER, 1979

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Streetcars of Fort Smith and Fort Smith Light and Traction Company	i

EDITORS NOTES:

Streetcars of Fort Smith and Fort Smith Light and Traction Company, researched, written, and contributed to the Fort Smith Historical Society by Charles Winters of Kansas City, Missouri, is a very valuable contribution to the written history of Fort Smith. For that reason, this entire issue of *The Journal* is given to its publication so it can be printed in its entirety in one volume.

Mr. Winters, though currently a resident of Kansas City, is a native of Fort Smith, a life member of the Fort Smith Historical Society, and very much interested in Fort Smith and its history. Thank you Mr. Winters for your help with preserving this history.

CORRECTION: Last paragraph, Page 38, April 1979 issue of *The Journal* "Eleanor McBride Roberts" should read "Eleanor McBride Rogers". Eleanor is the wife of Robert McCann of Fort Smith.

CORRESPONDENCE: Knowledge of *The Journal* spreads. A letter has been received from Dieter Paprotka of West Berlin, Germany stating, "I see that you have a wonderful *Journal* with stories over the old time in Fort Smith"....

Mr. Paprotka inclosed membership dues in his letter, and closed with "Many thanks for your great help in my own collection and the best greetings here from West Berlin." Thank you Mr. Paprotka for your greetings and your order.

Mrs. Clearcie E. Yary of Cerritos, California sends an inquiry and writes, "There is no way I can express my feelings on the *Journal*. It's great, terrific, worth every penny and more, plus I love it. Enclosed are my dues for 1980".

Thank you Mrs. Yary. Your inquiry is being answered by mail since no inquiries are being printed in this issue.

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THE STREETCARS OF FORT SMITH

Fort Smith Light & Traction Company
by
Charles E. Winters

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PREFACE

To the small child in Fort Smith of 1933, streetcars held a special fascination, a symbol of the steady advancement of society with growth and progress as its destiny. News the streetcars would cease operating seemed impossible. How could the community survive without its shining orange cars moving over spacious streets, carrying people from all walks of life to every part of the city with efficiency? How could its patrons survive without cool summer rides in refreshing breezes? What would become of those people who moved about the area in warm and dry streetcars during rain and snow of severe winters? What would become of the route to Van Buren, where throngs of busy people rode on a double track right of way that was mostly unimpaired by automobile traffic? What would become of the tracks where streetcars sped across a massive bridge above the Arkansas River, ascended a steel viaduct to cross a railroad yard before movement down to Van Buren streets?

Unreal as cessation of streetcar operation seemed, it came in November. Removal of streetcars from the area was only one phase of a national pattern.

Streetcar transit provided for vigorous growth and expansion of cities during the period roughly covered by the years 1890 through 1930. The family breadwinner went to his job, the housewife went to her shopping, the youngster attended highschool, sweethearts went on dates, couples attended theater, and on Sundays the family attended church, went to outings and other special events via Fort Smith Light & Traction Company's Streetcars. During the decades of the 'twenties and 'thirties the automobile changed habits of American families. Following loss of streetcar service, most public transit involved operation of the motorbus, but increases in automobile ownership has left too few patrons to sustain profitable operation.

The writer undertook research of the Fort Smith *Southwest American* from its beginning in 1907, through its sale in 1923, as part of graduate study at the University of Missouri at Kansas City. Other information and data came from the *Street Railway Journal*, *Electric Railway Journal*, and other related trade journals. The opinions expressed however, are those of the writer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following account of Fort Smith streetcars and the city during the time of streetcar operation, reflects unselfish and generous efforts of many people. Traction historian Terence W. Cassidy accompanied the writer to Fort Smith in 1951, while physical scars of the former trackage permitted diagram mapping of each route. Oklahoma Gas & Electric Company officers James Mailer and Merle Wright permitted use of old records and photographs. Fred Krock gathered and documented considerable material, and shares his effort in this study. Fadjo Cravens assisted and gave encouragement in many ways. Mrs. E. M. Shipley's loan of photographs made by her deceased husband has documented a number of points. Jim Dew pointed the writer toward several former Light & Traction employees, to permit further documentation. John Rhodes remembered, with detail, the modification, construction, and operation of the streetcars he had directed skill and craftsmanship upon. Many others have taken part in providing materials used in preparation of this study, far too many to list individually, but who deserve mention for their patience and kindness.

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CHAPTER I

FORT SMITH LIGHT & TRACTION COMPANY

Street railway transit in Fort Smith began with mule drawn cars. Operation began in 1883, capitalized at \$22,000. Samuel J. McCloud headed the Fort Smith Railway Company which operated the cars, and George T. Sparks was Secretary and Treasurer. Other investors included W. J. Johnston, B. Baer, George T. Sparks, and James Brizzolara. Tracks began at Ozark Street (now First Street) and Mulberry (North B Street), extending eastward to Third, south to Garrison, eastward on double track to Eleventh, and northward to M Street, site of Scheutzen Park. Additional tracks from Eleventh extended eastward on Garrison continuing on Little Rock Avenue to Twenty-first Street.

The whole street car system consisted of three cars, each of which seated between 14 and 16 passengers. Newspaper stories say that as many as forty persons sometimes climbed inside and on top of the cars on special occasions.

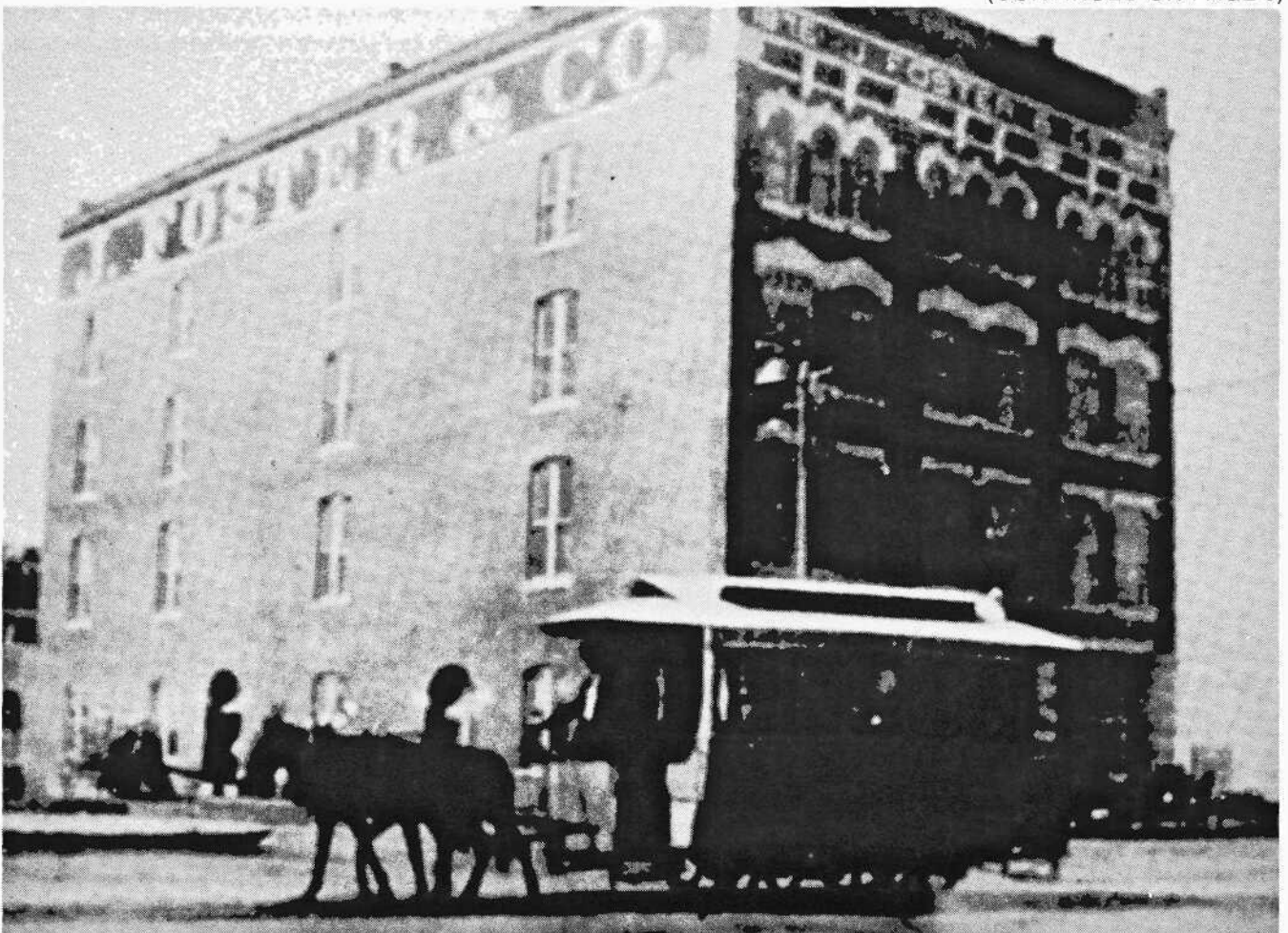
First electric streetcar service began in 1893 with charter for the Fort Smith & Van Buren Electric Street Railway Light & Power Company. Granted franchise on

condition that it construct a bridge across the Arkansas River to Van Buren, the company operated two cars on North Fifth Street trackage extending from Garrison to N Street. A small electric generating plant and facilities for light streetcar repairs were situated just to the north. Messrs. Lemert and O'Neil secured control of the company in 1902, acquiring a new double truck streetcar in 1903.

McCloud's company, by this time partly electrified, combined with the Lemert & O'Neil firm to form the Fort Smith Traction Light & Power Company. McCloud's motive in affiliation is said to stem from unselfish wishes to hasten electrification and extension of street railways in the city. Amalgamation of the two companies placed his firm in the dominant role, but put managers of the Fort Smith & Van Buren company in control of his franchise for operation of street railway, natural gas, and electrical service for Fort Smith in 1903.

Trackage extended out North Eleventh to Waldron Road, to a tract known as McCloud Park. Car service and repair facilities were combined in a new shop at Eleventh and Kelley Highway, leaving McCloud's facilities at North

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)



Mule drawn cars.

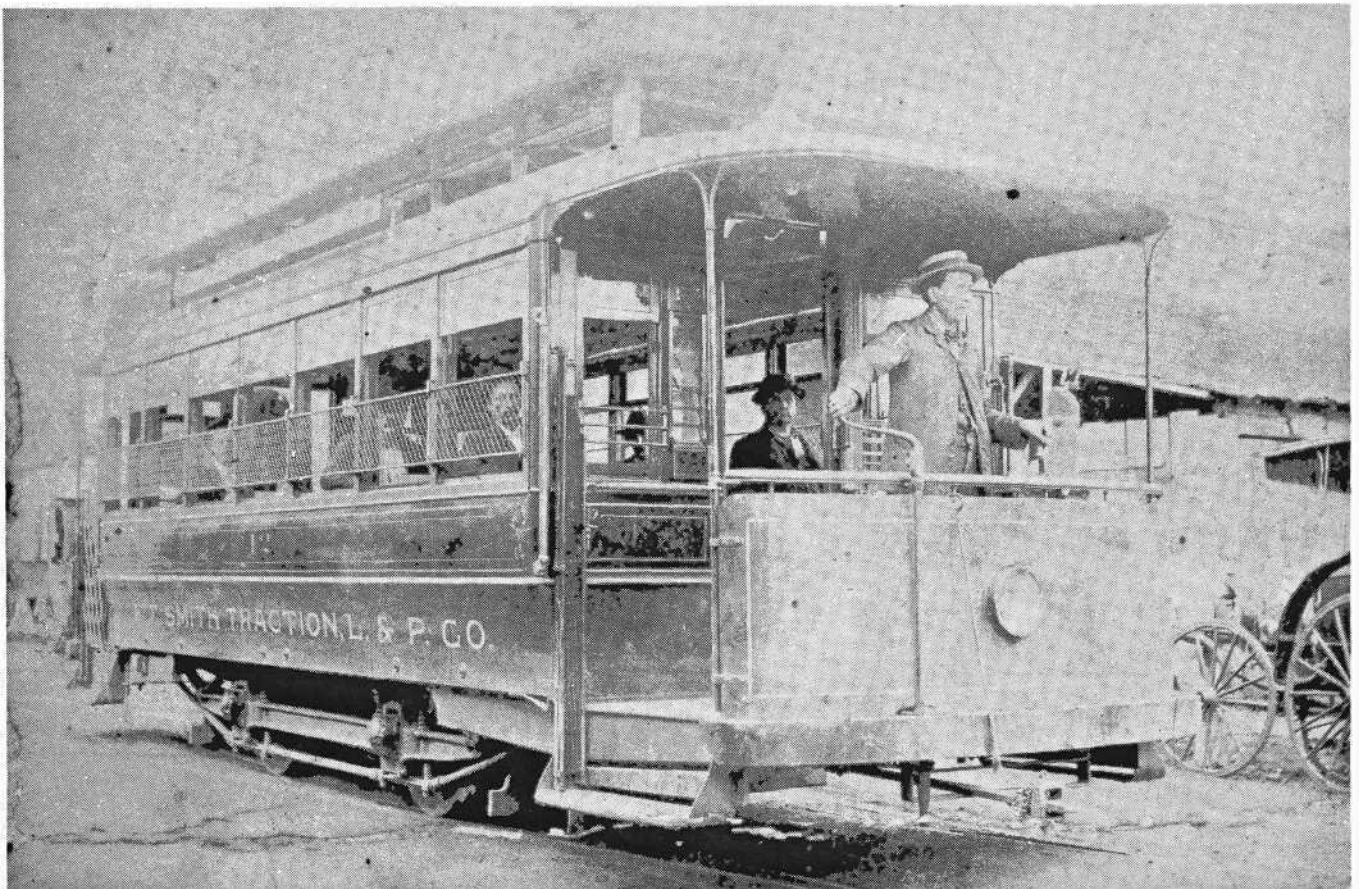
Courtesy Fred Krock



Courtesy Fadjo Cravens

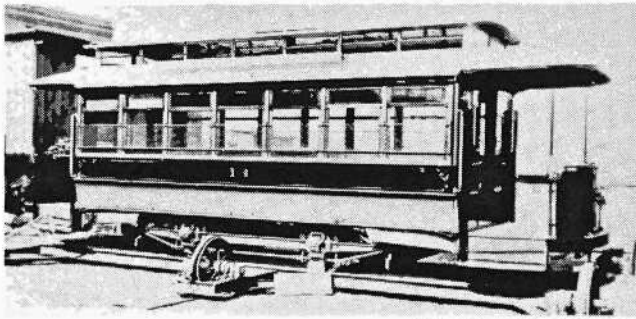
The first street cars in Fort Smith and the crowd of Fort Smithians waiting to take the first ride. The man standing by the first car is John Sengel, then city marshal. Other persons are, left to right, James Brizzolara, Jr., James Brizzolara, Sr., Mayor Samuel McLoud, Mrs. Samuel McLoud, Miss Ella McLoud (Mrs. A. N. Sicard), Miss Marie Brogan (Mrs. Alf Raymond), Mrs. B. F. Atkinson and George Sparks. Other people not identified.

The first house at the left was occupied by Mr. Schlenger. Next is the Frisco Depot. The building in the center is the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railway Company. The house at the right was the home of Samuel Peters.



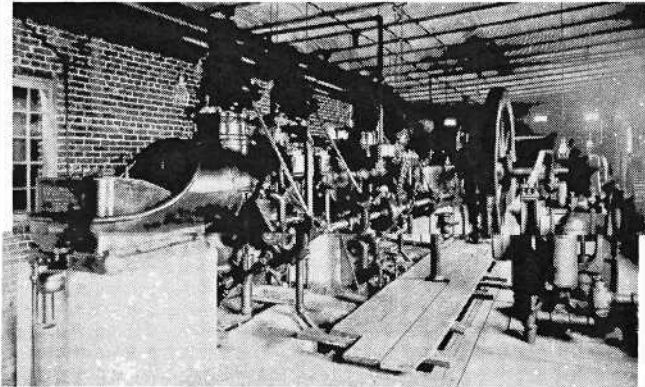
Courtesy Hazel (Geurin) Weeks

Robert "Bob" Geurin, motorman, at controls of Fort Smith Traction Light & Power Company car #12, which was typical of open platform, hand brake, single truck style of vehicle that introduced electric streetcar service to Fort Smith.



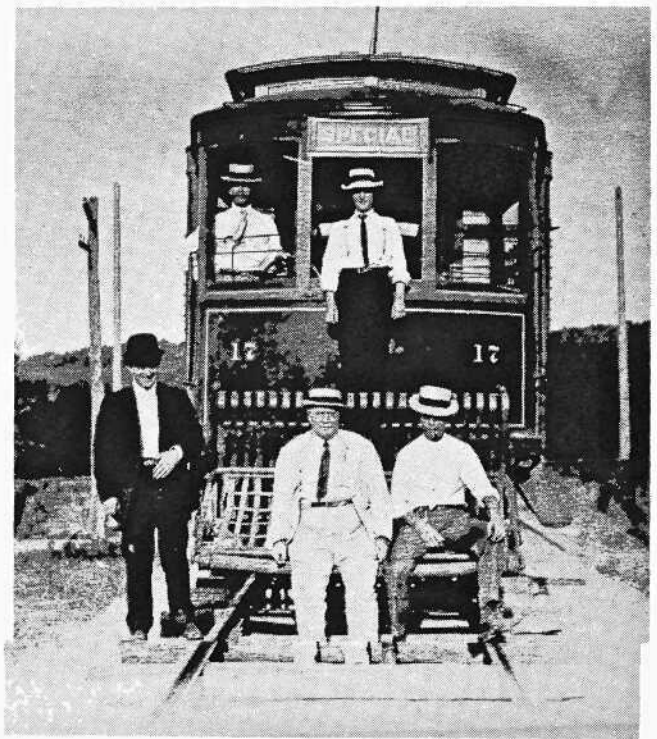
Courtesy Fred Krock.

Car #13, A slightly larger FSTL&P car, probably same vintage (1898) as car #5.

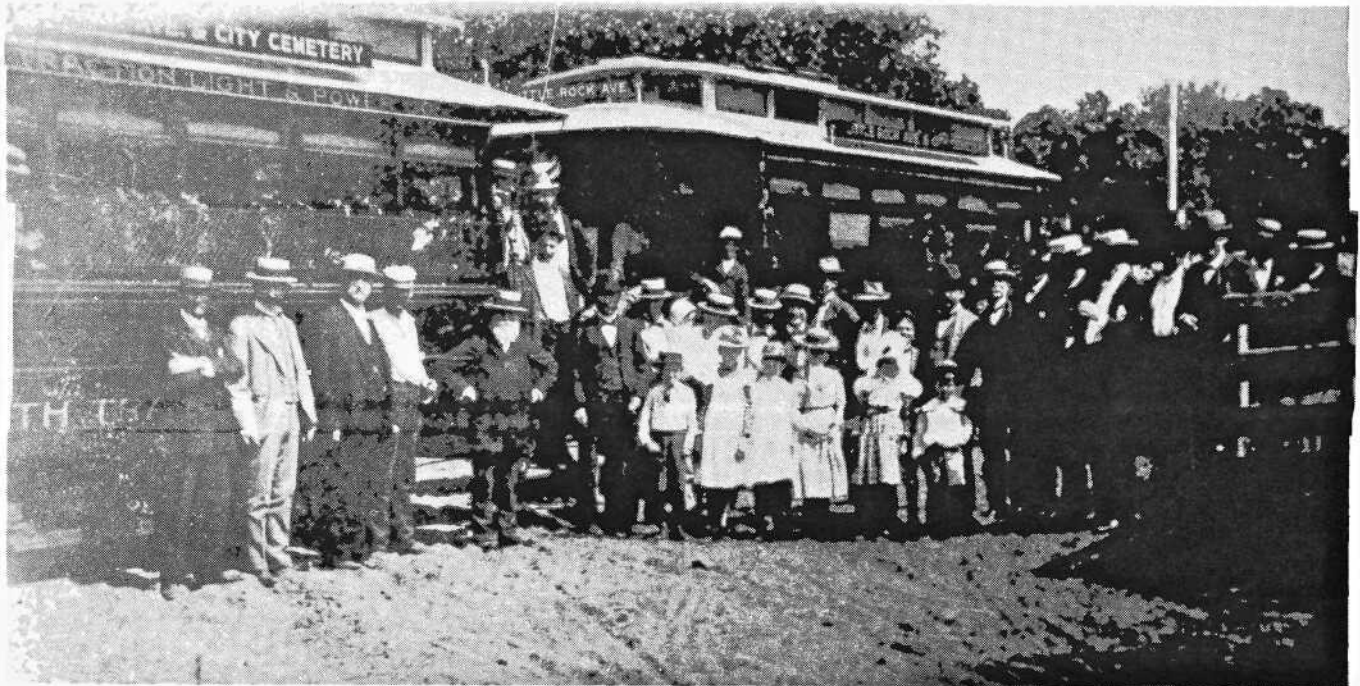


Courtesy Jim Dew

Electrical generating plant for streetcar system. Date Unknown.

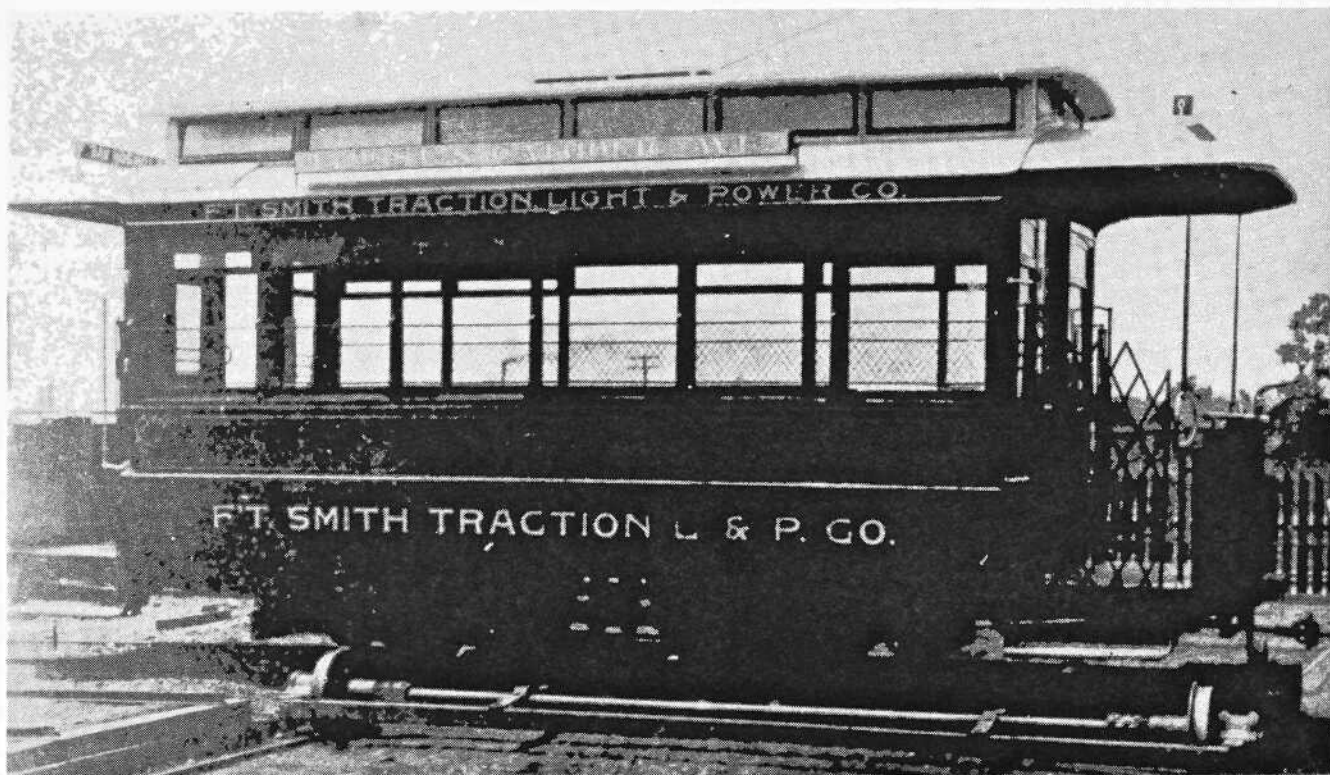


Car #17, the first passenger car operated on Arkoma line. James Brizzolara is seated in center. His guests were T.I. Greenstreet, Frank Blocker, Henry Riess, and newspaper reporter.



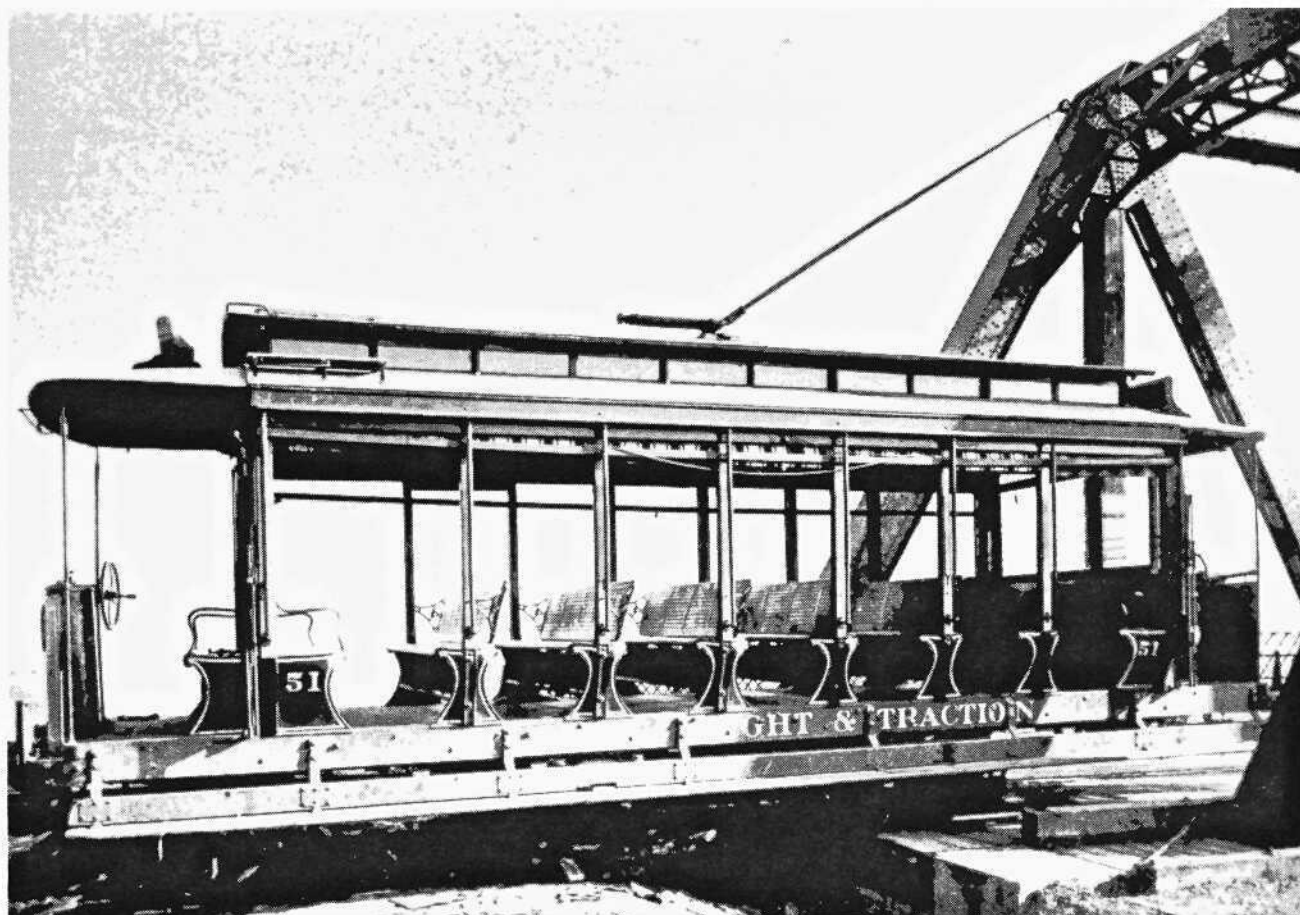
Courtesy Fadjo Cravens and Nick Kelly

Officials and others who went on the first car on its first trip over the new electric street railway, Fort Smith, Arkansas, June 22, 1899. Alderman: J. A. Hoffman, B. T. DuVal, Hank Wyman, T. L. Phillips, James Kelly, P. R. Davis; Frank Freer, Police Judge; Barney Gass, City Engineer; John Fuller, Chief of Police; J. J. Little, Chief of Fire Department; James Brizzolara, postmaster; Dr. J. G. Eberle, Board of Health, Dr. St. Cloud Cooper, Board of Health, Dr. J. D. Southard, Board of Health; Governor, William M. Fishback, J. A. Walton, W. W. Gurley, W. R. Lewis, E. N. Sehorne, Edwin Foster, T. S. Osborne, George Sengel, G. R. Williams, Samuel McLoud, J. M. Sparks, E. A. Anthony, Joseph M. Hill, S. J. Rosamond, Tom Williams, Jim Sparks, Jr., Sherlock Southard, John McBride, Con Triesch, Harry Salls, J. W. Rice, J. M. Sloan, and John Brizzolara.



Car #5, one of first Fort Smith electric streetcars.

Courtesy Carl Wortz, Jr.



Car #51 on completion of Van Buren Bridge. One of fifteen open style cars.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

3rd and A for electric utility service use. New and improved power generating equipment was installed at North 1st and D Streets.

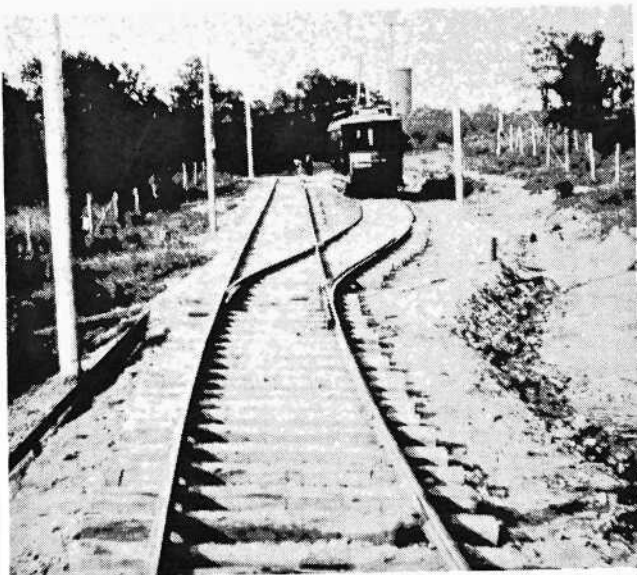
Managers Lemert and O'Neil reorganized the F.S.L. & P. Co. to become the Fort Smith Light & Traction Company in 1903, and H. M. Byllesby Engineering & Management Company of Chicago, Illinois, secured control of the Light & Traction through stock purchases in 1904. There were fifteen streetcars moving on lines extending out Towson Avenue, Little Rock Avenue (Rogers Avenue), North Eleventh, and North E Streets at the time. General manager J. Walter Gillette announced McCloud Park improvements, changing its name to Electric Park, revealing plans for purchase of fifteen open style cars, and construction of the Park Hill line out So. 21st Street from Little Rock Avenue.

The roller coaster operated at Electric Park in 1908, along with many other attractions.

Towson Avenue tracks extended past Dodson Avenue to Sulphur Springs (later to become South O Street). Further extension out Texas Road (later known as Towson), came under separate corporate ownership of the Fort Smith & Oklahoma Light & Traction Company, reaching south to W Street, turning west on private right of way to cross the Iron Mountain and the Frisco, proceeding into Arkoma, some three miles distance.

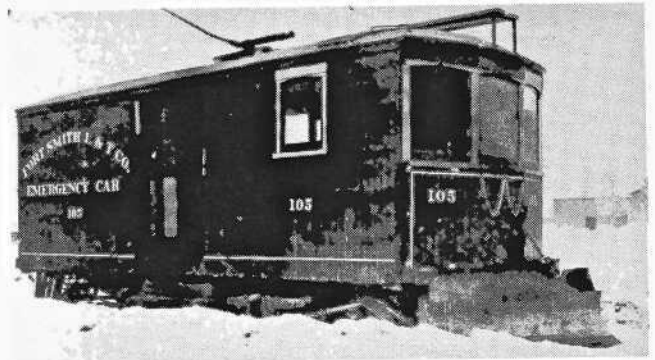
With Sunday baseball prohibited by Arkansas Law, Light & Traction service to a new ball park in Arkoma permitted big crowds to see games across the state line in Arkoma.

James Brizzolara, T. I. Greenstreet, Frank Blocker, Henry Riess, and a newspaper reporter were Gillette's guests on the first passenger car operating to Arkoma.



Courtesy Fred Krock.

Open car on the Arkoma line when the line was new in 1908. The line was built as part of a real estate promotion, and was operated by the Fort Smith-Oklahoma Light and Traction Company using Fort Smith Light & Traction cars and crews. Photo looking east where Arkoma line turned off Texas Road (now Towson Ave.). The standpipe to the right of the streetcar was located just west of the Bailey Hill reservoir.



Car #105, the Light and Traction emergency car, fitted with heavy wooden plow, is at work clearing snow from tracks following a blizzard that crippled Fort Smith in January of 1918. The car was built by FSL&T in their shops in 1911.

Special derails and signals controlled streetcar and train movement at the two railway crossings. An estimated 10,000 visited Arkoma during the first day of service on the new line.

Scheduled service included operation of cars on a ten minute headway between the Frisco Depot and Electric Park from six o'clock in the morning until midnight. There was owl service once each hour, from midnight until six o'clock each morning.

Additions at the shops included construction of a 150 by 70 foot building adjacent to existing facilities for accomodation of thirty cars. Six more open cars arrived in 1908, and six large double truck semi-convertible cars for year around service on the Eleventh Street line were on order.

With improved shop facilities available, four large single truck cars were rebuilt to double truck cars, adding five feet length at the car body center, installing new running gear, motors, controls, and air brake equipment. Shopmen constructed several pieces of work equipment, including an emergency car, express car, line car, box cab locomotive, gondola cars for hauling rock ballast, and a concrete mixer for use in pavement work. Running gear from several of the obsolete cars, with body superstructures removed, were adapted for service as flat car trailers for use in hauling new rails, crossties, water, sand, and various other materials.

Thomas Boles and C. W. L. Armour crossed the river in a rowboat, during late 1908 taking measurements for construction of the Van Buren Bridge. That same year extension out South Twenty-first reached Dodson, and tracks on Texas Road extended south from W Street to a point that would become Fresno Street. From Chicago, Gillette announced purchase of a 2,500 horsepower engine and generator of 1,850 kilowatt capacity. New cars and equipment would make the Light & Traction proportionately equal to systems in Chicago, New York, St. Louis, or Kansas City. Light & Traction's 1908 payroll excluding office forces amounted to \$142,544 total.

Mechanic John Turner invented a track switch mechanism in 1909, permitting streetcar movement to diverging routes at junctions, through manipulation of a foot pedal by the motorman in the streetcar. J. H. Fox, with Turner, incorporated the Automatic Switch Company,

capitalized at \$50,000. A Chicago firm negotiated for purchase of Turner's device.

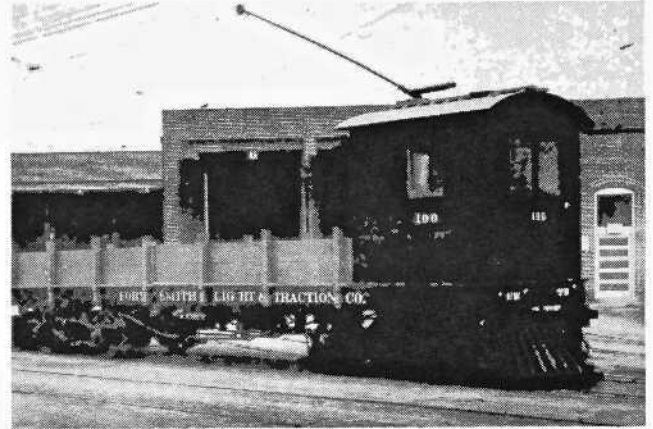
Each summer, many people came to Electric Park in cars moving out Eleventh. Others came via North Fifth, Division, and Eleventh. Residents along North Fifth agitated for regular year around through service, but management declined to extend the North Fifth service, limiting it to times when crowds exceeded capacity of the North Eleventh route.

Light & Traction construction from Electric Park to the river bank commenced almost immediately following receipt of Congressman Ben Cravens' telegram of March 5, 1910, announcing the signing of a special bill by the President, authorizing erection of the Van Buren Bridge.

Bridge Commissioners selected the Kansas City engineering firm of Waddell & Harrington to design and erect the bridge. Known as the Free Bridge, property owners of Fort Smith, Van Buren, and most of Crawford County formed a special bridge district, and were liable for the expense of its construction and maintenance. Designed to provide for passage of private vehicles and pedestrians outside the spans, there were two streetcar tracks and one steam railway track located inside the spans, as a measure to produce rental income from streetcar and railway traffic in a sufficient amount to materially reduce the bridge district's payments. The Bridge Commission failed to secure contracts for use of the bridge by steam railways, but granted a forty-five year franchise giving Light & Traction free use of the structure

on condition that the company provide streetcar service for a five-cent fare, throughout the area.

Light & Traction officers requested charters for construction of an interurban railway to Alma and Mulberry, but subsequent construction amounted to nothing more than local Van Buren transit service. Motives of the Byllesby management appear questionable. Critics later declared the company never seriously considered construction other than local Van Buren trackage, and that the company's real interest in the bridge was in its use as a cheap and convenient means to extend electric power transmission lines and its natural



Courtesy Jim Dew.

Car #100, work car, in front of car barn.



Car #100 in a promotional scheme to sell Thor washing machines. Car #100 was powerful, equipped with four traction motors for movement of carloads of construction material.



Car #8, a resurrected horse car in front of the streetcar barn. The sign says "No one knows where this car was built. Do you?" The car body is in very poor condition and had probably been used as a tool shed or hen house before it was mounted on a railroad hand car for operation during the German Day celebration. The driver in the picture has been identified as Sylvester Thompson.

gas mains. The same critics pointed to how Light & Traction agents alluded to interurban railway construction while securing right of way for power lines and gas mains in Arkoma and South Fort Smith while never seriously considering proposed electric railway lines toward Massard Prairie, Huntington, or McAlester.

Former Oklahoma governor Charles N. Haskell (Okla's 1st Governor) and associates graded roadbed and put track in place along Wheeler Avenue as part of a proposed interurban railway extending from Fort Smith into Oklahoma. With failure to secure capital for further construction, the tracks were removed.

Gillette announced purchase of eight new single truck semi-convertible cars, at the same time proposing installation of automatic block signals along the route to Van Buren. Downtown, streetcars discontinued use of a loop around the city block bordered by Garrison, North Third, North A, and Second Streets. All cars began operating to and from First Street along Garrison, offering service at the Frisco and Iron Mountain Depots. There was no need for use of the loop to turn streetcars, since all Light & Traction cars were equipped for double end operation. Streetcar service to the depots now included cars of all lines, using existing tracks at no additional expense.

During German Day celebration in 1910, the Light & Traction placed an old discarded horsecar body back on the rails, using a pushcar borrowed from the track repair gang as running gear. Pulling the dilapidated relic over streetcar tracks behind mules, management proudly



Car #29, built by Danville Car Company in 1910, is 21 ft. 8 in. long semi-convertible car with a Brill truck. This car is a Pay-as-you-enter car.

pointed to progress in public transit at Fort Smith. Several new streetcars were on public display at the shops, where a new paint room was open for public view. Announcements pointed to new tracks presently under construction to the Van Buren bridge, to cost \$16,000, in addition to seven route miles of new tracks in the city. There was a new spur from Eleventh and North R Street to a Light & Traction rock quarry and crusher plant at Thirtieth and North O Streets. Gillette announced that all older obsolete cars numbered 1 through 14, would be gradually retired. Gross revenue on the Light & Traction increased twenty-four per cent for the year 1910.

Fort Smith civic leaders promoted the idea of an annual Inter-State Fair in early 1911, securing a permanent site for the event at a tract east of Jenny Lind Road and south of Dallas Street. The Twenty-first Street tracks of the Park Hill line were extended to the site from South W Street. Another track from Texas Road was extended eastward along what would become George Avenue (now Fresno Street), to a connection with the Park Hill extension at the fairgrounds. Another track forming part of a route to the fairgrounds extended on South H, between Towson and Twenty-first Street.

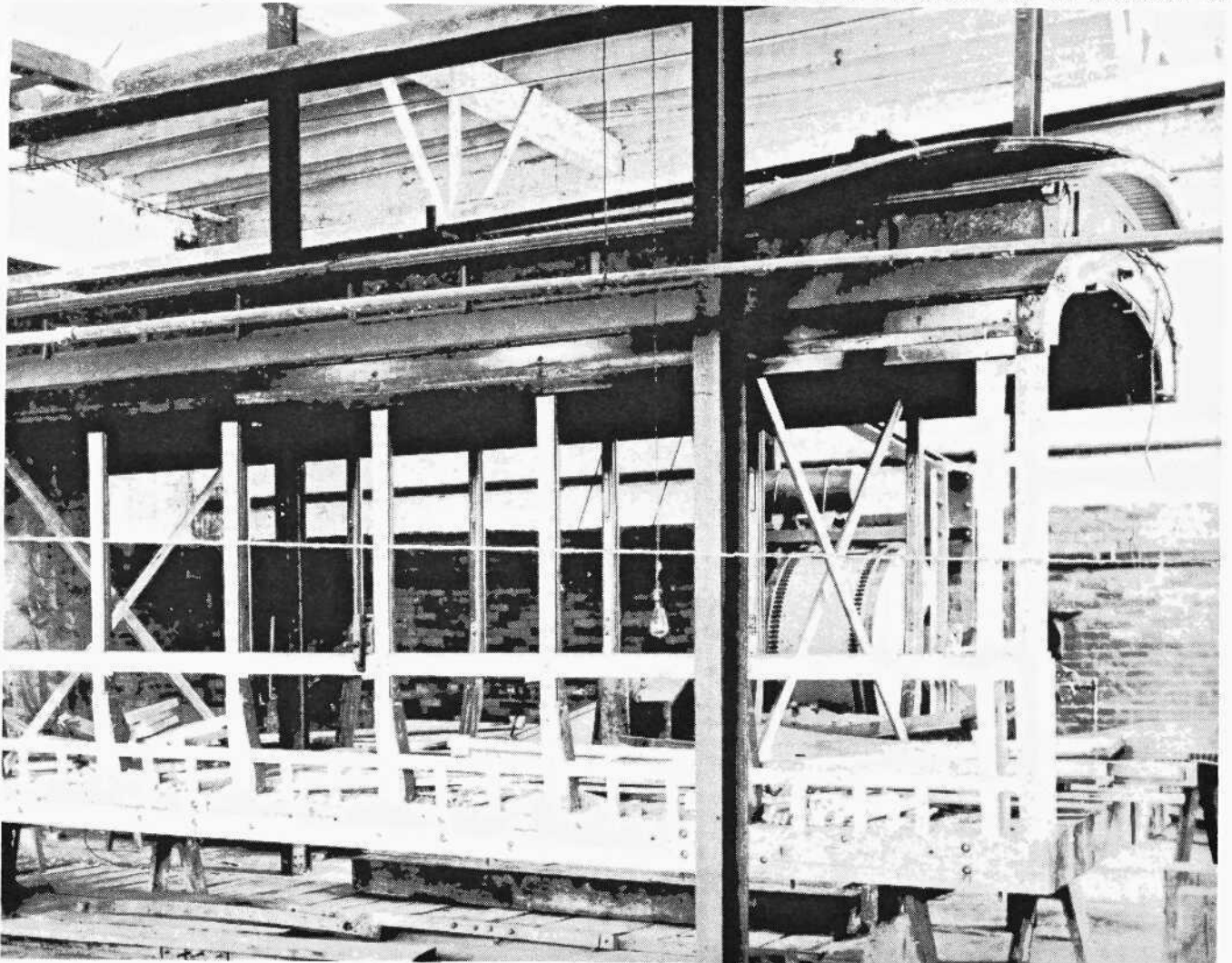
Little Rock Avenue tracks were extended east from Twenty-third, turning south on Greenwood Avenue to

Oak Cemetery. Improvement of existing tracks on Garrison Avenue amounted to a complete rebuilding on concrete foundation, with use of creosote treated cross-ties and new 85 pound rails. Garrison Avenue improvements cost an estimated \$65,000.

As tracks reached the fairgrounds, property owners along Twenty-first between Little Rock (now Rogers) and Dodson Avenues objected to proposed double tracks on that thoroughfare. Light & Traction managers responded with announcement that the single track would remain. Outbound fairground traffic would move over Park Hill tracks as originally planned, but inbound traffic would return by way of Texas Road in a loop traffic pattern.

The city replaced worn and broken brick pavement on Garrison Avenue with creosote treated wooden blocks during 1911. Rails for track rebuilding on Garrison became too hot for workmen to handle under a blistering August sun.

Open style streetcars, despite inherent efficiency of instant loading and unloading features and strong patron appeal during hot weather, proved unsatisfactory to management. Equipped only with hand operated brakes as an economy measure for equipment used only during the summer, open cars sat idle too much of the time. City franchise provisions stipulated that all streetcars be



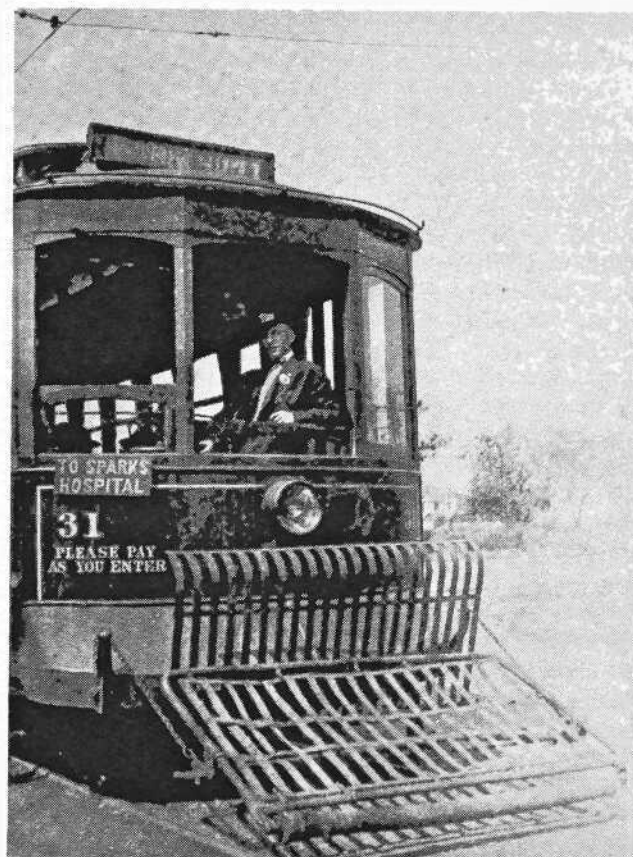
Open style car being converted to closed car in Fort Smith shops.

equipped with air brakes, and that open cars be operated only between May 1st and September 30th. Management had substantial capital invested in twenty-one open cars useful on special occasions during only five months per year. Shop forces rebuilt an open car to a conventional type in 1911, equipping it with carbody, air brakes, heaters, and other improvements. Eventually, six more open cars were modified in an identical manner.

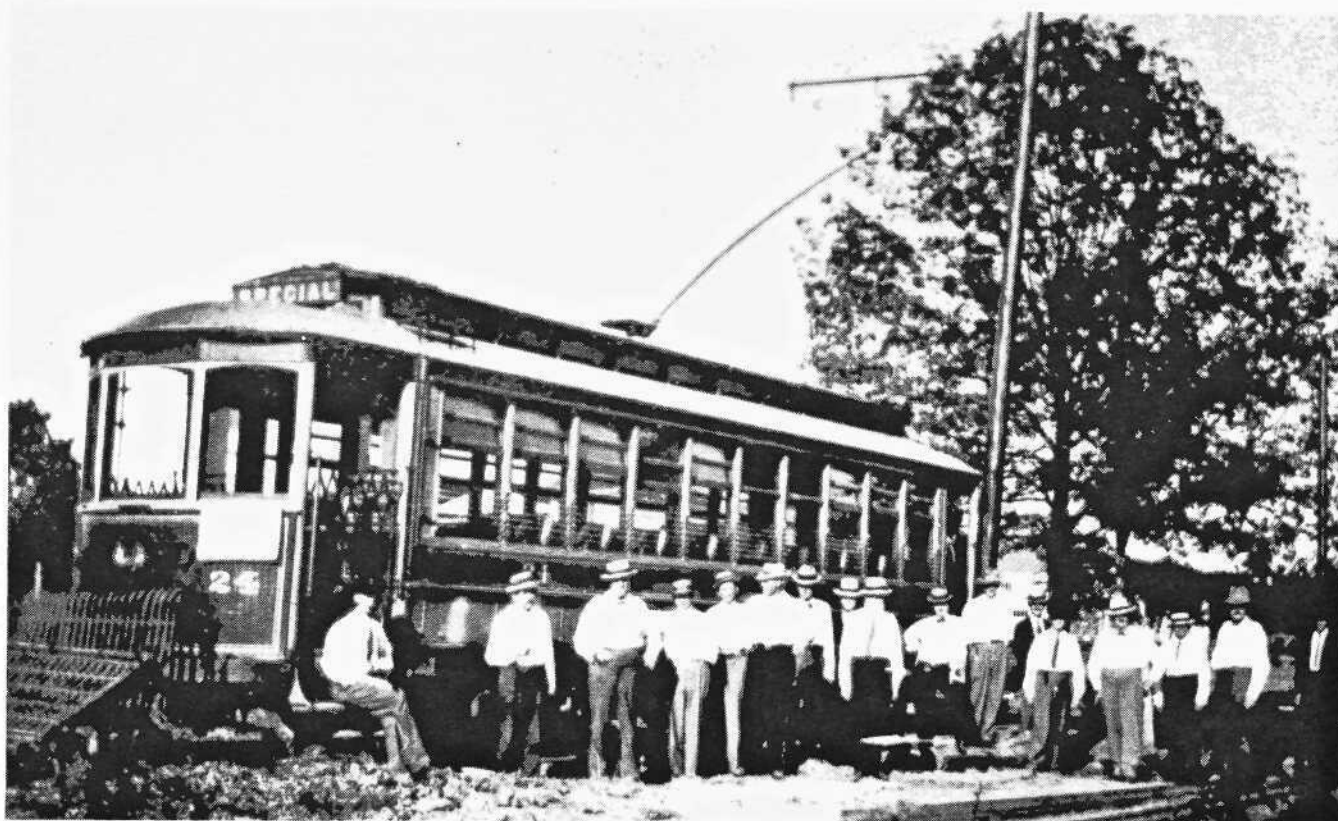
Large crowds attended the Inter-State Fair late in 1911. Besides many local attractions and exhibits, famous shows, races, sports events and other attractions drew many people from both the city and its surrounding territory. Featured as part of the Fair, although held in another part of the city, Ringling Brothers Circus drew sufficient people to produce 35,000 cash fares on the Light & Traction during one day, with no delay nor accidents. With circus grounds located on North Ninth, crowds used both the Eleventh and the Fifth Street routes.

Fairgrounds improvements during 1912 included new Light & Traction loading platforms with capacity for three cars, and new track switches permitted diverting and turning loaded cars. Fair operators constructed a new pagoda style entrance gate to the grounds. Colonel Savage's famous race horse, Dan Patch, arrived in Fort Smith in a private car, in company of other thoroughbreds on a special train. Barney Oldfield drove his famous *Jay-eye-cee* automobile racer. Former outlaw Frank James performed as official starter at the races, and the 101 Ranch show drew hordes of spectators.

Special events at Electric Park drew huge crowds. One season opened with Walter Damrosch conducting the New York Symphony Orchestra. Besides regular baseball at League Stadium, there were exhibition games featuring



#Car 31 showing Park Hill destination sign. Sign just below window on front of car says "To Sparks Hospital."



1911. Official inspection of new *Fairgrounds* route on the opening run.

big league teams that included the Cincinnati Reds and the Detroit Tigers.

As completion of the Van Buren Bridge drew near, big plans for suitable commemoration of the event emerged. Park manager R. J. Mack and civic leaders arranged for big attractions both at the bridge and Electric Park.

One event constitutes what must be termed as a very early operation of official United States Post Office air mail service. By special arrangement, a temporary post office accepted and postmarked cards as airmail. Two aeroplanes with an attending staff of physicians, nurses, and an ambulance stood by in the late afternoon. Each pilot accepted a heavy mail pouch, and mounting his craft, flew aloft toward downtown, to throw his cargo at the post office. One pouch landed in an excavation for construction of the Kennedy Building, sending workmen scurrying. The second pilot was somewhat more accurate, and his pouch hit the post office roof, crashing through a skylight window. First official airmail service took place in New York in an identical scheme, only a few weeks earlier. Second official airmail service happened at Fort Smith on April 1, 1912.

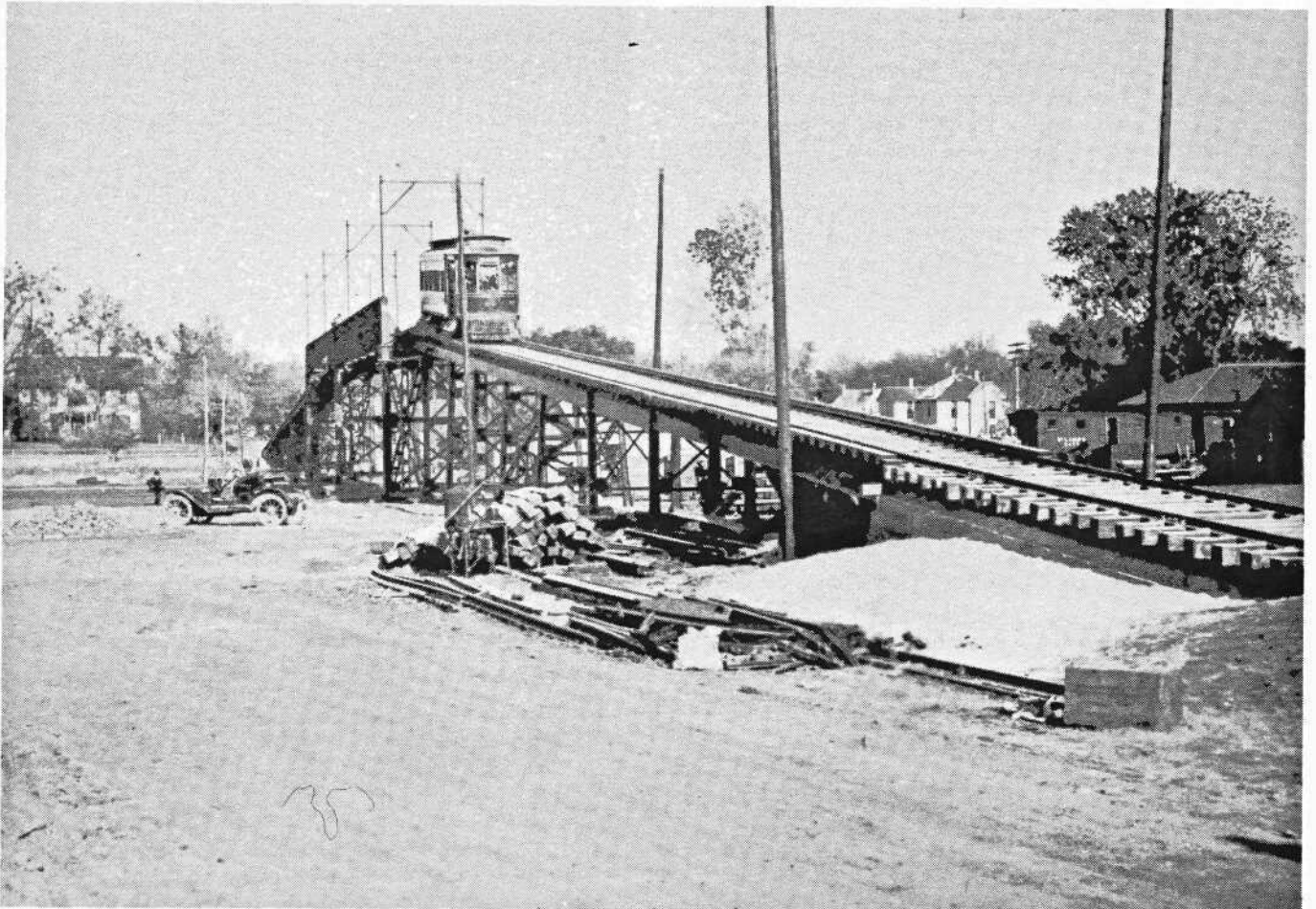
With the Van Buren Bridge complete, the Light & Traction erected a big steel viaduct across the Iron Mountain yards at Van Buren. November 11, 1912, the line

car worked its way up new tracks on Van Buren's Main Street, to the Frisco Depot. Regular service began the following day. Construction continued out East Main, turning northward on Fifteenth Street towards Long Bell Addition.

Garrison Avenue wood block pavement created problems for the Light & Traction. Expanding with each rain, the pavement produced sufficient pressure to push steel rails out of position. Soon the track was out of gauge, pinching wheel flanges, producing severe wheel wear, and eventually derailing streetcars. Light & Traction workmen removed the row of wood blocks resting nearest the outside rail to release pressure and permit expansion against the tracks.

Early in 1913, with the South Fort Smith line complete, the Business Men's Club promoted sale of city lots, offering prospective buyers a free streetcar ride and a barbeque lunch at the new townsite. New industry at south Fort Smith included a foundry, a wheelbarrow works, and a coffin factory.

Van Buren railways complained of losses in local passenger revenue between that city and Fort Smith in 1913. Passengers from points to the east of Van Buren no longer rode to Fort Smith on the Iron Mountain, but left the train to ride the Light & Traction at substantial savings,



Courtesy of Fadjo Cravens

One of the 16-19 series rebuilt cars proceeding across FSL&T viaduct crossing over Missouri Pacific Railroad yards in Van Buren as it approaches the north end of the bridge for movement back to Fort Smith. The automobile is likely the 1909 model Buick owned by General Manager J. Walter Gillette. In the left of the picture is the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Turner, Sr.

especially if his destination lay beyond downtown Fort Smith and he took advantage of transfer privilege. Local traffic on the Frisco also vanished with institution of streetcars on frequent schedules and with only a five cent fare

Prior to opening of the 1914 Inter-State Fair, the Light & Traction constructed a second track along 21st Street between Dodson and the fairgrounds for accomodation of heavy traffic. About the same time, shopmen modified one of the single truck cars for introduction of *Pay As You Enter Plan* of streetcar operation. (Abbreviated as P. A. Y. E. in the traction trade journals).

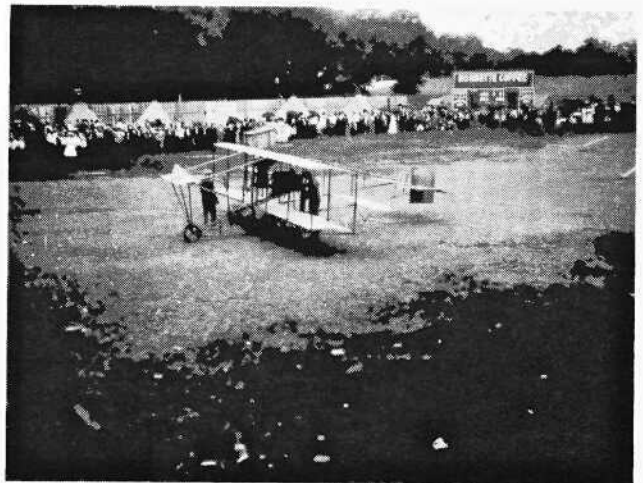
During July of 1914, Arkansas and Oklahoma chapters of Woodmen of the World encamped at Electric Park for one week. Some 600 WOW's boarded special streetcars at the park for movement to Garrison Avenue when the Fort Smith Cadet Band led them in a parade viewed by an estimated 10,000

Late in 1914, pressures mounted to challenge the Bridge Commission's franchise to the Light & Traction, which extended free use of the structure for a term of forty-five years. Following heated exchanges and litigation, the company discontinued service on the bridge December 26, 1914, leaving patrons to choose between a long walk, or patronization of the uninsured jitney motorcars offering to carry passengers for a nickel. With the Bridge Commission and the Light & Traction either unable or unwilling to make concessions, it was the public that was loser. For one year and two days there was no streetcar service on the bridge. Feelings ran high on both sides of the dispute. Banker Iser H. Nakdimen headed litigation that finally forced the company to meet terms of the commission.

One night, a frustrated rider painted a crude sign on the south waiting room at the bridge, inscribing NAKDIMEN, as though to identify the isolated area as a town named for the militant banker agitating against the Light & Traction, causing curtailment of service across the bridge. Vandals greased the track leading down the Van Buren viaduct Halloween night, and the stub car came skidding past the north waiting room onto the bridge span for some distance, reducing the length of the patrons' walk to the south waiting room.

Once city authorities demanded purchase of license and posting of liability bond from jitney operators, they also discontinued service on the bridge. Despite their free use of public roadway, the expense for bond and liability insurance even rendered jitney operation unprofitable. Jitney operators bore practically no expense for right of way, construction, purchase and maintenance of equipment, or employee's wages, but they still were unable to successfully compete with the service of the Light & Traction

Bridge Commissioners and Light & Traction management came to terms December 24, 1915, and bridge service was resumed December 29th. A five year contract superceded the invalid franchise. Regular riders purchased bridge toll ticket books, amounting to an expense of 6¼¢ per ride. The occasional streetcar rider paid a cash toll of 10¢ to cross the bridge. Toll collectors, employed by the Bridge Commission, boarded cars crossing the bridge, collected tolls, and alighted at the end of the structure. Bridge rental for the Light & Traction was based on the volume of car riders, plus charges for



Courtesy Jim Dew.

One of two aeroplanes used during Fort Smith - Van Buren Bridge dedication celebration to fly first airmail over Fort Smith. This was the second airmail flown in the United States.



Fort Smith - Van Buren Bridge at time of completion.

placement of gas mains and electric power transmission lines on the structure.

On a temporary track placed along Grand Avenue between Eleventh and Thirteenth Streets, cars of the North E, and Grand Avenue lines operated, while Light & Traction workmen paved tracks of the regular route on Thirteenth Street.

New business came to the area as consequence of big natural gas developments near the city, coupled with a general improvement in the national economy. Two zinc smelters at South Fort Smith, and another east of Van Buren required movement of workers at unusual hours, and special schedules provided the service. East Van Buren extension to the Falconer Smelter was complete in April of 1917, along a route chosen by Light & Traction engineer Maurice Garlic. Some delay for this urgently needed extension, begun only after receipt of a \$2,500 bonus awarded by the smelter owners, must be placed on the Light & Traction. In movement of carload construction material to Van Buren, the company was adamant against payment of bridge tolls, unloading freight cars at the south approach to the bridge, for movement by horse and wagon. Following toll free passage of empty freight cars across the bridge, workmen re-loaded the cars for further movement through Van Buren to the construction site.

South Fort Smith smelter workers complained of the 10¢ fare on that line, especially since the route failed to directly reach either plant. Many workers paid the regular 5¢ fare to the fairgrounds, and walked the remainder of the distance to their jobs. Critics also pointed to reduced

school fares prevailing on all lines except South Fort Smith, where families of modest means bore the expense of 20¢ per day for high school attendance. On conclusion of a ninety day trial operation at a 5¢ fare, the 10¢ fare remained.

Bankruptcy action against the fairgrounds began in 1916. Closing of the fairgrounds reduced potential revenue on the south Fort Smith line, but new industry came. Opening of a canning factory and a big sorghum plant created new traffic.

New glass plants and other industry produced heavy traffic on the Eleventh Street line, where cars moved with standing room only. During periods of glass plant production, workers moved at unusual hours. Special schedules accomodated glass plant workers, much as they did for the smelter workers. Business boomed in Fort Smith, and traffic became heavy on all lines.

Fort Smith & Western Railroad excursion trains brought big crowds to the city for trade fairs, circus performances, and other events. Some promotions included free streetcar rides for the day, as bonus for purchase of excursion tickets, with a reserved seat for shows at the Electric Park Auditorium.

Streetcar patrons in the Stough Addition were displeased when Electric Park closed for the winter. Finding fences and gates closed, they faced a long walk around the park, which extended between their homes and the carline.

Manager Dan C. Green displayed new 400 candlepower street lights to city authorities in 1917, proposing



Courtesy of Jim Dew.

Van Buren Main Street, looking south, being surveyed for streetcar tracks. Line down center of street shows proposed location of tracks.

installation on Garrison Avenue with new steel posts. Improvements would include removal of center posts, and trolley wire would be supported from posts (Bates Poles) along the curb. City promotions revealed plans for a Garrison Avenue Bridge with charter stipulations and structural provisions for streetcar tracks.

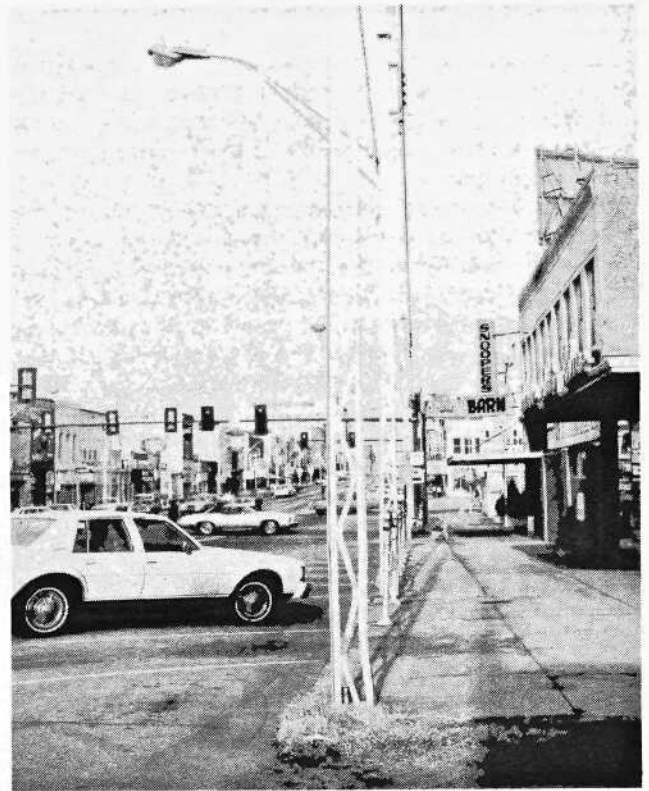
New Light & Traction powerhouse equipment produced electricity for transmission to Alma and Huntington.

Passenger movement between Fort Smith and Van Buren amounted to nearly 40,000 cash fares per month.

Operation of the Arkoma line ended December 1, 1917, in the face of vigorous protests by property owners who instituted lawsuits against the Light & Traction.

Labor unrest spread through the area in 1917, to include the carmen, smelter workers, and telephone operators. Violence erupted in nearby Prairie Creek, where the militia put down striking coal miners. Anarchy is said to have prevailed in Fort Smith, where mayor James H. Wright was removed from office. Civic leaders and invited citizens made up a group calling themselves the Law Enforcement League, and met behind closed doors in the new high school auditorium.

In January of 1918, Light & Traction emergency car 105 worked to clear the tracks following a blizzard that crippled the city. That same year, as large troop movements came through the city on railways during the European conflict, manager Green ordered the Electric Park lunch room dismantled for re-assembly near the Frisco yards, for use as a canteen by soldiers moving on special trains. Green also announced the Light & Traction



Bates Poles, installed in 1917 to hold trolley wires when poles were removed from the center of Garrison Avenue. These poles are still in use the length of Garrison Avenue, from Second Street to Thirteenth Street. Their current purpose is to hold street lights.



View of Garrison Avenue circa 1912-1917. Note street lights and center poles.

would provide quarters and electricity for Fort Smith's Red Cross chapter.

A national influenza epidemic imposed special conditions on streetcar operation in 1918. With quarantine forbidding public gatherings, streetcars were restricted to loadings not exceeding seating capacity, moving with all end windows open and roof ventilators closed. Workers, employed at essential jobs, and more than eighteen years of age, rode about the city in chilly October, complaining bitterly as winds blasted through the streetcars.

Regulations imposed on the Light & Traction included a 1915 state law requiring employment of both a motorman and conductor on all cars operated in Sebastian County. In 1919, with most streetcar systems already initiating one man P. A. Y. E. operation, Federal Judge Frank A. Youmans declared the Sebastian County Streetcar Law unconstitutional. Free to operate one man cars, employment of conductors ended on all lines except North Eleventh. New and more frequent schedules provided improved service. Old cars were modified to front entrance for one man operation. Twenty-six one man cars replaced the sixteen cars formerly used with two men crews. Old schedules formerly spaced cars as much as twenty minutes apart. New schedules provided frequent service, with cars operating on a ten minute headway.

Times were changing in America, and Fort Smith conditions reflected national conditions. Increases in total mileage of paved roads, and steady growth in the number of privately owned automobiles, meant decreasing streetcar patronage. Electric railway

management sought to attract more streetcar riders, to reverse trends in a society that became increasingly automotive oriented. Small one man streetcars operating on frequent schedules at low fares, presented a competitive and attractive alternative to the automobile. New lightweight streetcars consumed far less electricity than the older, heavier cars, producing less wear on existing facilities. Lightweight cars would also permit economy in future extensions of transit service.

A lightweight standard streetcar known as the Birney Safety Car appeared on the streets of many cities. Although Light & Traction cars were already modified for one man P. A. Y. E. operation, Green announced purchase of eight new Safety Cars late in 1920. On delivery, Green operated a demonstration run for invited civic leaders and the press. Advertisements featuring editorials and articles from national magazines appeared in local newspapers to inform Fort Smith of latest developments in local transit.

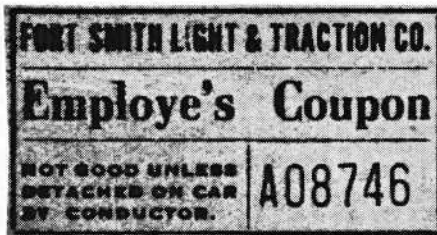
With increased operating expenses in 1920, the Light & Traction secured a 6¢ fare. Chicago headquarters ordered closing of Electric Park in 1919, and beginning next year the buildings were razed. Construction of additional sidings at strategic points permitted more frequent scheduling, particularly along North Fifth, where operation formed a continuous route connected with the Little Rock Avenue trackage. League Stadium baseball games ceased with dismantling of Electric Park, and construction of Andrews Field at South Fifth and B Streets placed sports events some distance from streetcar service.

Sales promotion for the Essex automobile included

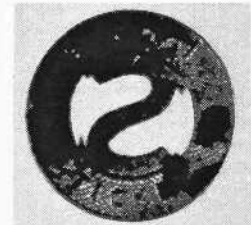
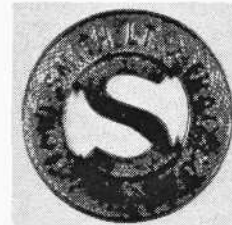
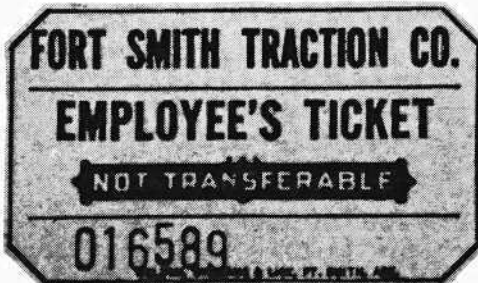


Courtesy of Hazel Geurin Weeks

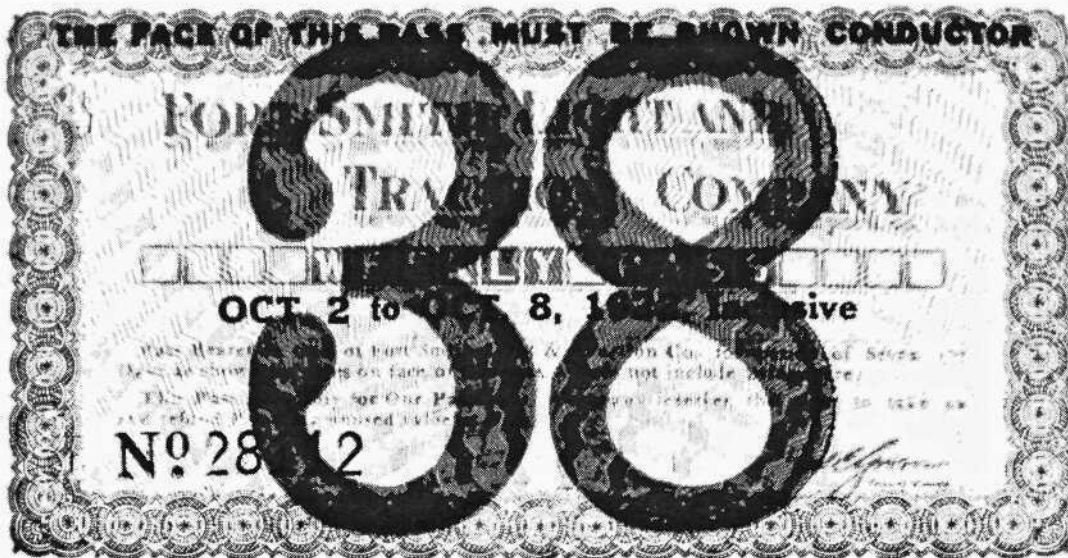
Parade on Garrison Avenue showing streetcars, circa 1912. Note scaffolding on top of First National Bank in the background.



Regular Fare Token - courtesy Les Cole, Jr.



School Token - courtesy Walter Hinkle



FORT SMITH TRACTION CO.

FREE TRANSFER

This transfer good only at point of transfer and on next car leaving point for line indicated by PUNCH MARK.

No. 201696

11th STREET			W. GARRISON E.			E. STREET		
GRAND AVE.			FIFTH ST.			PARK HILL		

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec				
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

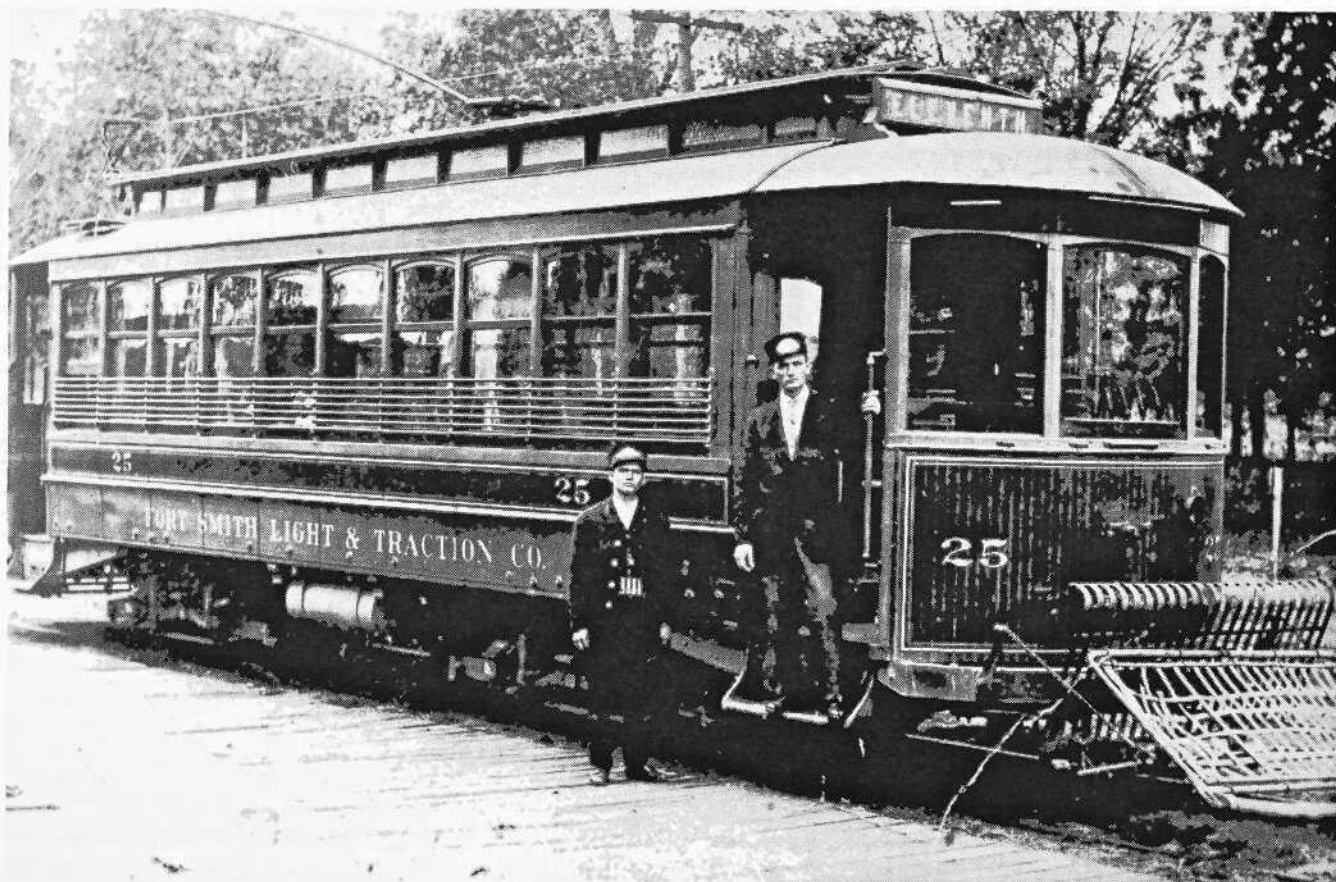


Streetcar operating on Van Buren line during the 1927 flood. Photo was made on Midland, north of the intersection of 10th and 11th Streets.

driving one of the vehicles across the streetcar viaduct in Van Buren, a stunt that encouraged many a flivver owner to take up the challenge and also drive across the structure despite a rough ride, and the almost certain hostility from the streetcar men and city authorities. Van Buren tracks along North Fifteenth were paved in 1920. Carmen agreed to work split shifts to provide maximum service at peak traffic hours, with an idle period of time off during mid-day. New track and pavement on Towson Avenue between H Street and Dodson was installed while streetcars operated on temporary trackage along the west side of the street.

Fifteen inches of snow paralyzed streetcar operation in February of 1921. Although the company managed to maintain service along Garrison, Eleventh, and Towson, streetcars stalled in outlying areas. That spring, the Light & Traction extended permission to the Boy Scouts for setting up Camp Dickenson at the former Electric Park. Later that year, the company delivered its franchises for streetcar operation to city authorities, in a move to place regulation of its operation under a State Corporation Commission.

With Light & Traction's failure to place track on the almost completed Garrison Avenue Bridge in 1922, construction workers put paving material in spaces designed for placement of steel rails. Thousands came to opening ceremonies, crossing the river to Moffett. Soon, there were a number of entertainment attractions in Moffett, only a mile from downtown Fort Smith. Joyland Park, carnival shows, flying exhibitions, and other features drew large crowds to events that Light & Traction



Car #25 at Electric Park on Eleventh Street line.

service failed to reach.

The company purchased life insurance for all its employees in 1922, but announced it would schedule no funds for maintenance during that year. Securing a fare increase to 7¢, the company announced sale of weekly passes good for unlimited rides, for only \$1.25. George Tilles received the first weekly pass, and regular sales began May 29, 1922. At the time, many street railways sold weekly passes in an effort to attract more use of transit facilities. In efforts to improve public relations, management pointed to Fort Smith service, comparing it with other cities, in mileage as related to population:

Fort Smith	33 miles of tracks	33,000 population
Little Rock	36 miles of tracks	75,000 population
Muskogee	15 miles of tracks	30,000 population

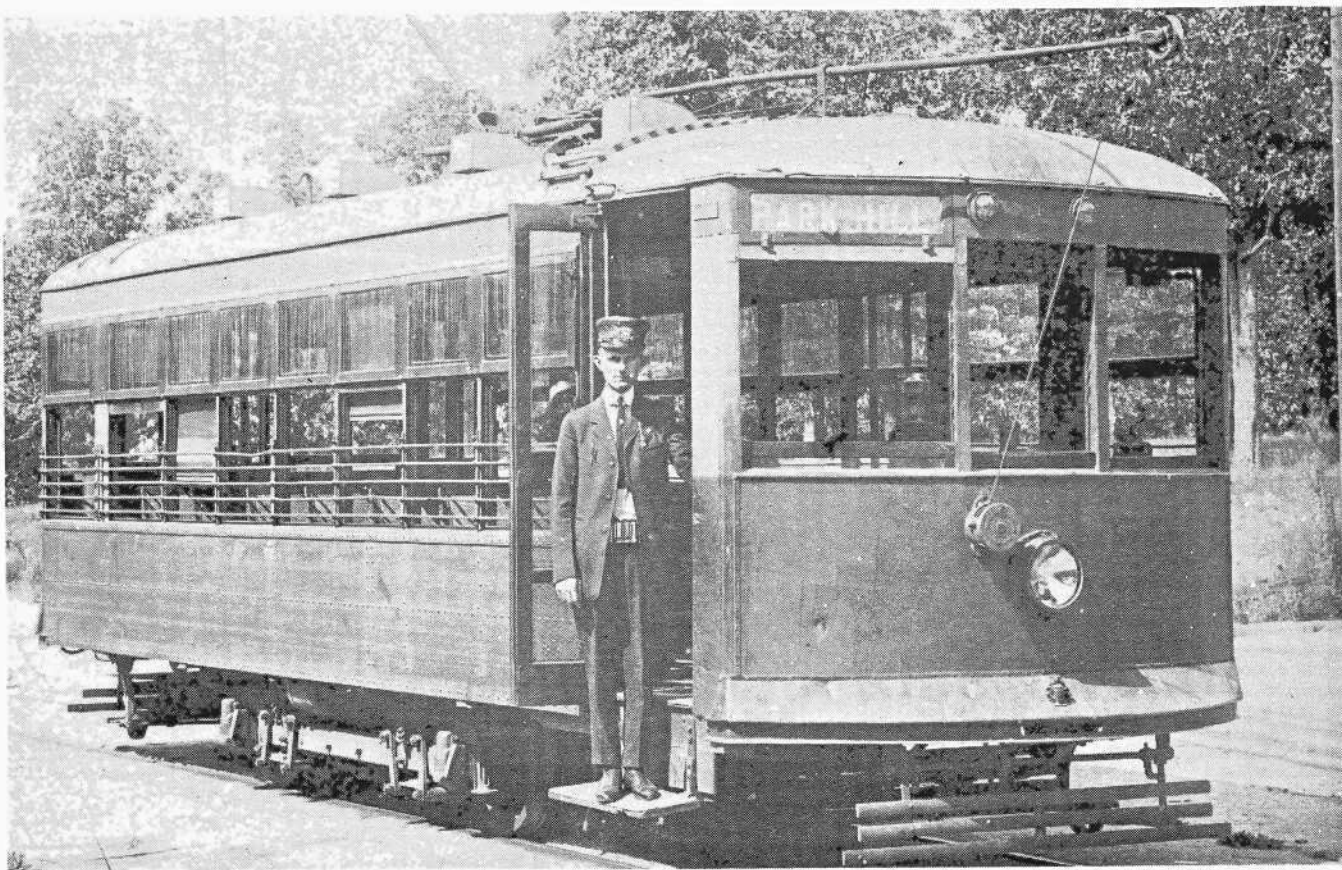
Van Buren Bridge toll collection continued with regular riders purchasing ticket books amounting to 6¼¢ per trip, the occasional rider paying 10¢ cash toll to collectors. Bridge tickets were valid only when presented to the collector in books, to prevent book owners from selling a ticket to the occasional rider who was subject to the 10¢ cash toll unless he owned a book of tickets. Ticket book owners sometimes sold one of their tickets to persons not owning a book, which deprived the bridge commission of the difference between the ticket book rate and the 10¢ cash rate. Van Buren cotton broker Clarence Kidd

challenged the legality of toll collection from streetcar patrons. Offering a detached toll ticket that was refused by the toll collector, he then refused to pay cash toll. In court, Judge Bourland held that toll collection from streetcar riders was illegal, but his opinion was overruled in Arkansas Supreme Court.

In a public spirited gesture, Light & Traction cars carried dashboard banners announcing baseball games and other civic events, even though its service failed to reach Andrews Field by some distance. As protest to payment of an amended privilege tax in 1923, which now included a charge of \$2.50 per streetcar, the company announced discontinuance of the use of dashboard banners.

Garrison Avenue wood paving blocks continued swelling and buckling, at times even floating away following heavy rains. As work progressed in replacing wooden blocks with new brick pavement in 1923, sidewalks were stacked high with new bricks, and people entered stores and offices through alley entrances. Light & Traction forces uncovered the outer rails along Garrison for joint inspection by city authorities and management, agreeing that heavy rails resting on creosote treated crossties supported by concrete foundation should provide adequate support for the new pavement. Subsequent pavement failure along the track provoked heated exchanges between management and the city's engineer.

R. C. Coffy replaced Green as Light & Traction manager. Some years earlier Coffy had relieved Green at



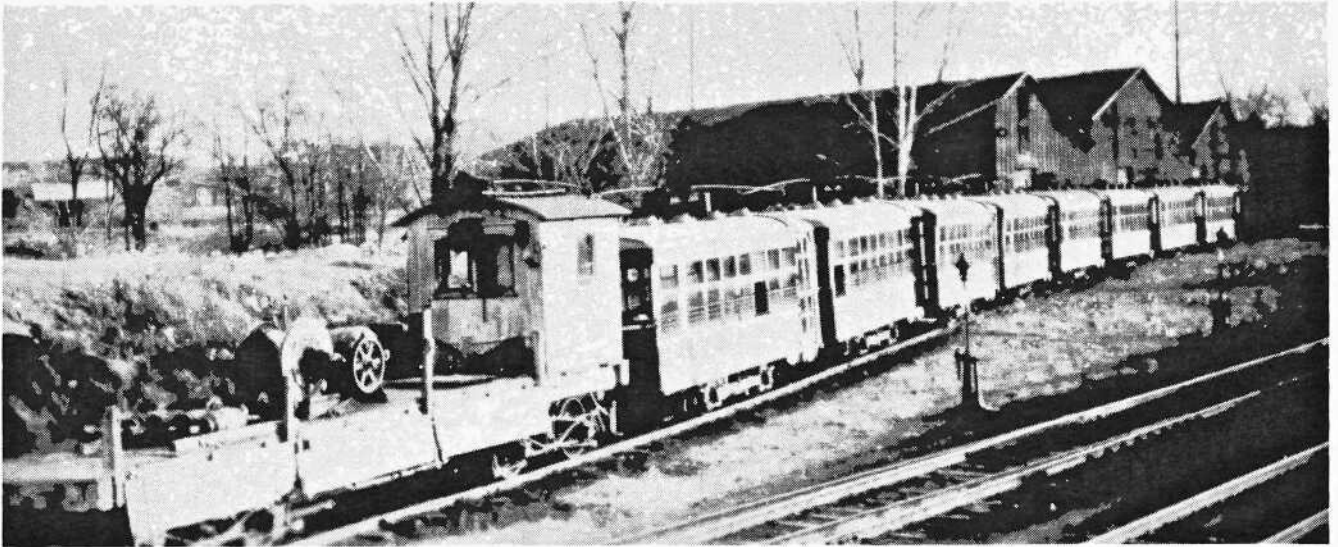
Frank Golden, motorman, standing in door of 1919 Birney Safety car, which was built by the Cincinnati Car Company.
Picture used by courtesy of Mrs. Lillian Hissom, daughter of Mr. Golden.

Everett, Washington. Green received an engraved gold watch from grateful employees and friends, introducing Coffy at a reception.

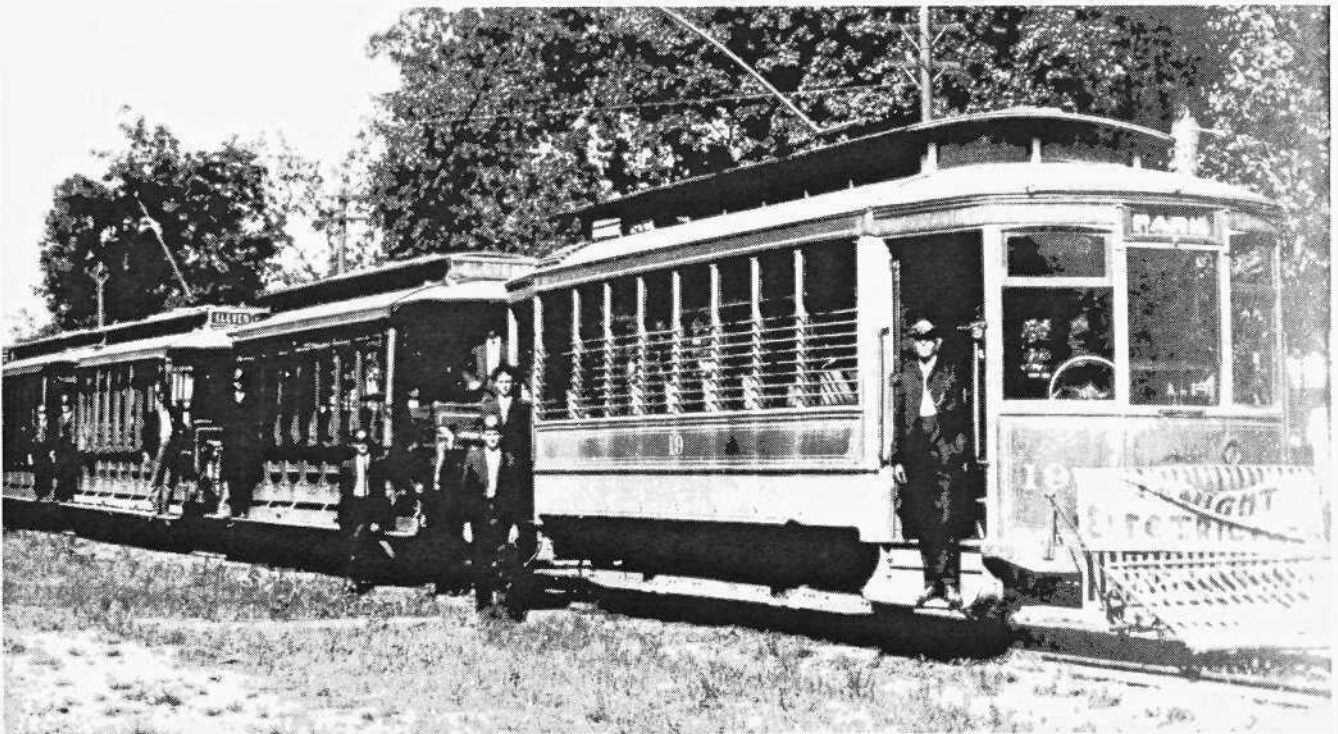
As a regular step in civic improvement, city authorities announced they would pave Greenwood Avenue, notifying the Light & Traction at the same time. With car tracks positioned along the east curb line and resting on rock ballast, the city ordered relocation and pavement of the route along the center line of Greenwood. Objecting to expenses of relocation and pavement, the company announced it would abandon the Greenwood Avenue

track. Litigation dragged along for some months before the company began movement and pavement of the trackage.

The Oklahoma Gas & Electric Company purchased Byllesby's Fort Smith holdings during February of 1923. Electric power properties in Fort Smith, while retaining their corporate identity, would be closely interwoven with O. G. & E. Coffy announced plans for expenditure of large sums for construction of new electric power generating facilities near Tulsa, of a sufficient capacity to supply the Fort Smith area.



Eight Birney Safety cars and Work cars lined up for scrapping.



Photographs courtesy of Fred Krock.

Car #19 is shown here as it was originally built. With only a short period of service as a single truck - manual brake car, #19 and three identical cars were rebuilt with five feet additional body length amounting to two additional windows per car. New double truck running gear and air brake equipment made these cars suitable for heavy service on the North Eleventh Street line.

During 1925, authorities refused to permit reduction of Light & Traction service in east Van Buren. That same year, the United States Supreme Court ruled in a case that was rather important both to the Light & Traction in particular and to street railway management in general. Growing from efforts by city authorities to regulate and control Light & Traction service, the Supreme Court ruled on the case of *Fort Smith Light & Traction Company versus Bourland*, granting the city authority to force a utility company to divert profits from marketing of electricity to make up deficits incurred from its operation of public transit service.

The following year, 1926, fares increased to 10¢ for service between Fort Smith and Van Buren, with 8¢ fare for local service, and discontinuance of weekly pass sales. Six new Safety Cars, slightly different and somewhat more tastefully furnished than the earlier model arrived that same year. New cars were finished with checkered linoleum floors, with cushioned seats covered by green plush fabric. Despite increasing motorbus operation in many cities, Coffy announced the Light & Traction management saw no need for bus service in Fort Smith.

The Fort Smith Light & Traction Company's transportation division became a separate corporation in 1928, known as the Fort Smith Traction Company, a wholly owned O. G. & E. subsidiary.

Fort Smith leaders considered improvement and paving of an east-west thoroughfare for designation as a link through the city for highways under construction in the area. Selecting Little Rock Avenue for widening and new pavement, streetcar service on that line ended, and the improved thoroughfare became Rogers Avenue. Related trackage removal included rails on 21st Street between Little Rock and South H Street, and duplicate tracks situated along the west curb of 21st Street between Dodson and South W Street, leaving the Park Hill line to operate as a single track route.

Service on the South Fort Smith line ended in May of 1929, just one day prior to the final day of school, leaving high school students in that community with no transportation. Removal of Park Hill trackage between South W Street and the deserted fairgrounds connection followed.

In August of 1933, electric power production and marketing of the Fort Smith Light & Traction Company became the O. G. & E.'s Arkansas Division. Citing heavy financial losses of the subsidiary Fort Smith Traction Company, management announced that all operations would cease on November 15, 1933, to be followed by complete dissolution of the corporation.

The following morning a bus company headed by a local attorney, and called the Twin City Coach Company, began operation on essentially the same routes used by the former streetcar lines. The car barn and shops at North 11th and Kelley Highway remained for use by the O. G. & E. as a shop and garage. The streetcars made one final trip northward to the Frisco connection adjacent to former Electric park. Following track removal along the private right of way in the median strip extending out North 11th, the thoroughfare became Midland Boulevard.

Following careful movement on the Frisco to a site located at South 3rd and Garland Avenue, junk dealers

began removal of salvage metal from streetcars. Some car bodies were purchased by individuals for use as makeshift dwellings, tool sheds, sandwich shops, and many other uses. With passage of time these relics of Fort Smith's splendid transit system vanished.¹ Open track work on private right of way was removed immediately, and most of the rails were removed from street pavement during the 1930's. Most scars in the pavement marking former streetcar routes also have disappeared.

In conclusion, it may be said that Fort Smith enjoyed the advantages of a streetcar system that was, for its day, well planned, constructed and managed. Transit service extended to practically every home in the city, serving as many patrons as possible. Decisions to extend some routes, constructed for promotion and development of real estate, were premature in anticipating the city's growth. Few houses were located near the Park Hill tracks along South 21st between South N and the fairgrounds until many years after streetcar abandonment. Population density along parts of the Arkoma and the South Fort Smith lines failed to develop a sufficient degree to support profitable operation during years of streetcar service.

While control and the making of major policy decisions by a holding company in distant Chicago must have appeared as unreal and autocratic to Fort Smith critics of the Light & Traction, it must be noted that patrons enjoyed advantages of frequent service on a well maintained transit system, in cars that were modified to suit special and particular demands for service in the area. Although the Byllesby interests asserted themselves in what appeared as a rather high handed manner, one must remember that the absentee managers were negotiating with local authorities who appeared as both meddlesome and hostile.

Light & Traction was victim of the times. America of the 1930's, despite the Depression, was already well along the way toward becoming an automobile-petroleum-highway oriented society, destined for and dedicated to a concept of immediate and personal mobility that would lead to eventual problems in energy sources and ecological imbalance. Both the automobile and the depression contributed toward the demise of public transit, and the first streetcar systems to be scrapped were those situated in the smaller and medium sized cities.

Although Light & Traction operation could have extended for several more years, involving no further capital investment, and would have produced substantial profits during war years of the 1940's, (bearing in mind of course, the certainty of deficit operation until 1941), still the system would have perished with ending of the wartime transit boom. In cities where streetcars survived into the 1940's, operations produced substantial profits during wartime gasoline and tire shortages. However, streetcar systems surviving the depression to operate through the war years were scrapped almost immediately following the cessation of hostilities. Few streetcar systems remained by 1950 except in some large cities, and in time most of them have vanished.

¹ The remains of seven of these cars have been located. See Chapter III, Remnants and Restoration.

CHAPTER II

STREETCAR TIMES IN FORT SMITH AND VAN BUREN

Public Relations of the Light & Traction Company

A free ride to McCloud Park was offered in 1900 on a trial basis with park admission of 25¢. Many Fort Smith people took advantage of the cool and refreshing free streetcar ride, but failed to spend the 25¢ for admission to the park. At times when park patrons set out for a pleasant outing, they found the cars crowded with free riders, and experienced an uncomfortable trip. On discontinuance of free rides to the park, admission became only 15¢, and with 5¢ car fare in each direction the expense for visit to the park still amounted to only 25¢.

During an unseasonably warm April in 1907, riders agitated for early use of new open style cars. Light & Traction managers declined to bring out the open cars however, pointing to franchise agreements providing for use of open cars only between May 1st and September 30th.

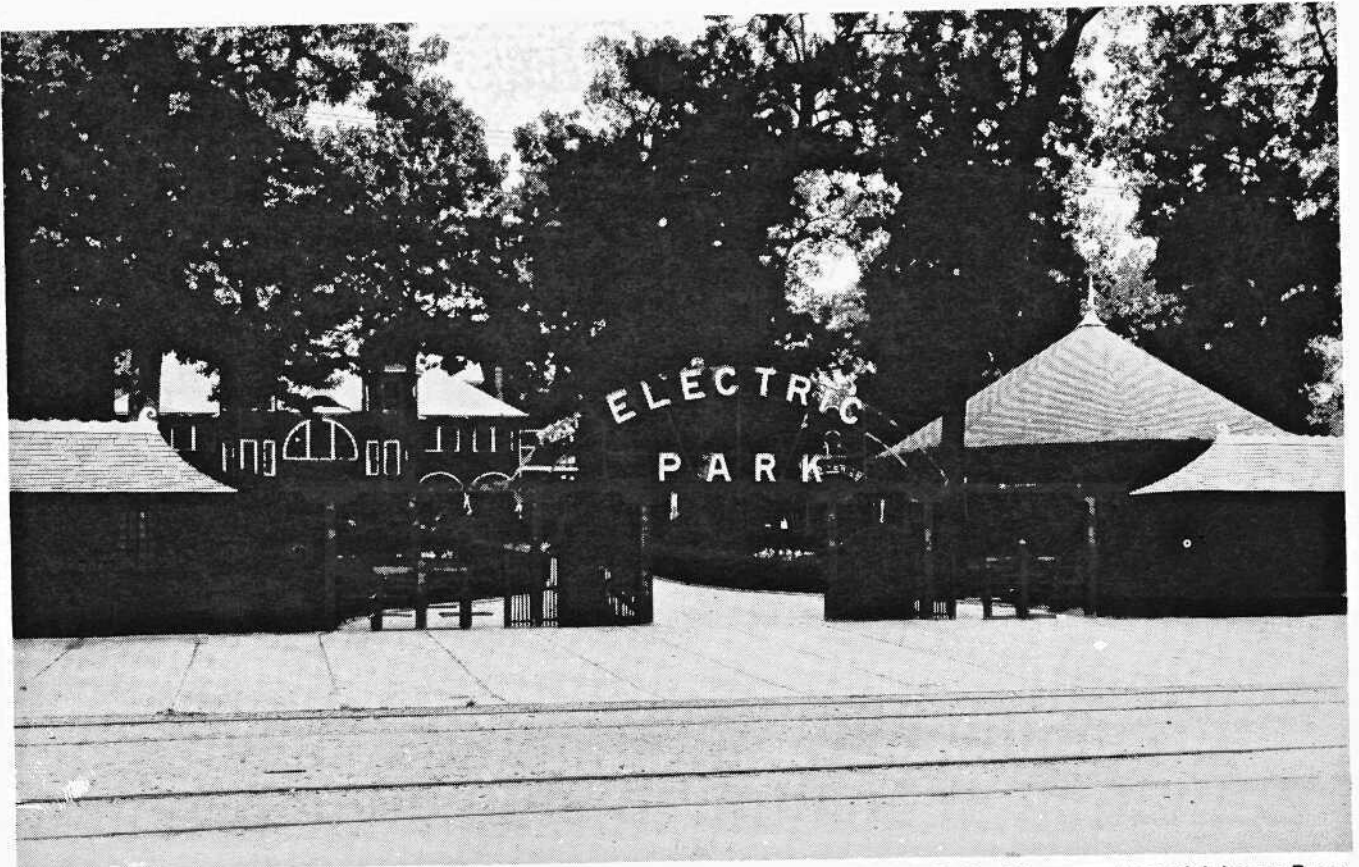
With tracks reaching toward outskirts of the city, Light & Traction agents accepted pledges from future patrons for purchase of ten dollar ticket books. Residents along South 21st were pleased to help make cash available to the company, thus expediting construction. Ticket books

contained 200 five cent coupons, each one good for a regular fare once the carline reached their neighborhood.

To assure patrons the streetcars would operate with safety and courtesy, Light & Traction management forbid its employees to use intoxicants while on duty, further ordering them not to enter saloons while wearing their uniform.

Responding to popularity of attractions at McCloud Park, management expanded and improved facilities, renaming the site *Electric Park*. The park proved to be a valuable asset to the Light & Traction, not so much from operation of the park itself, but from profits obtained by the streetcars moving patrons to and from the facility. Amusement and cultural attractions were placed on fifty-four acres east of the carline. Moorish style buildings included the auditorium measuring 240 x 110 feet, with 2,200 seating capacity. The fully equipped stage was 70 x 40 with proscenium opening of 30 x 33 feet. There were fifteen sets of scenery, complete with sixteen dressing rooms.

The cafe and dance hall were situated in a structure



Electric Park pictures courtesy of Johanna Ruge.

Entrance to Electric Park, through which patrons by the thousands passed to enjoy the well kept grounds and to see featured attractions.



Floral planting which welcomed visitors to Electric Park in 1912. In background is the merry-go-round, shooting gallery, and roller coaster.

called the Casino, which included a first floor dining hall with adjacent smoking rooms and reading rooms. An upper floor functioned as the dance hall measuring 60 x 90 feet with openings onto broad balconies. Dance hall facilities included a piano, band stand, and eight ceiling fans. On the grounds, a semi-circular band shell provided for open air concerts. Other attractions included a penny arcade, lunch stand, refreshment stand, rest cottage for ladies, the park manager's building, a greenhouse, League Stadium Ball Park, and a giant roller coaster. A dazzling feature was use of 5,600 electric lights. Electric supply came from transformers situated in concrete pits beneath the buildings, and there was gas heat for the buildings during cool weather. The park had its own water supply and sewage system.

All attractions except the penny arcade were under direct Light & Traction management. No intoxicating liquors were sold on the grounds. Theater productions were in great demand, and seats could be reserved at the company's downtown office. Western Vaudeville Association troupes appeared regularly, and the Light & Traction maintained its own orchestra. Stage hands, ushers, and grounds keepers worked on a regular full time basis. A local stock company also appeared regularly at the auditorium, and other local groups made use of the facility for programs and meetings. Removable billboards attached to the sides of an unoccupied streetcar moving

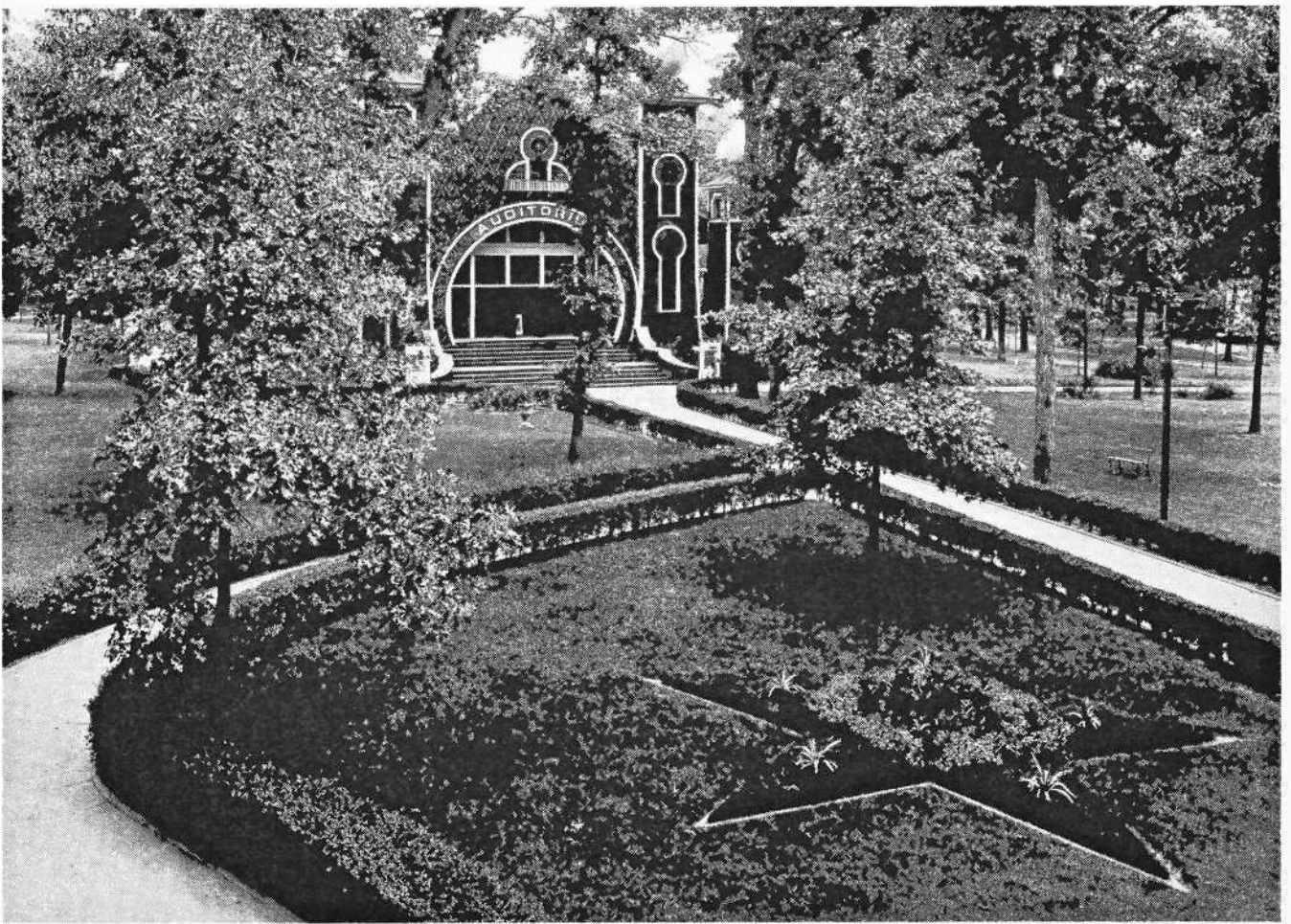
through the city over all lines, advertised featured park attractions.

Free transit was extended to chorus members rehearsing for performance in the annual May Music Festival at the auditorium. Featured soloist in 1908 was contralto Ernestine Schumann-Heink. Visiting baseball teams rode free to scheduled practice and games at League Stadium.

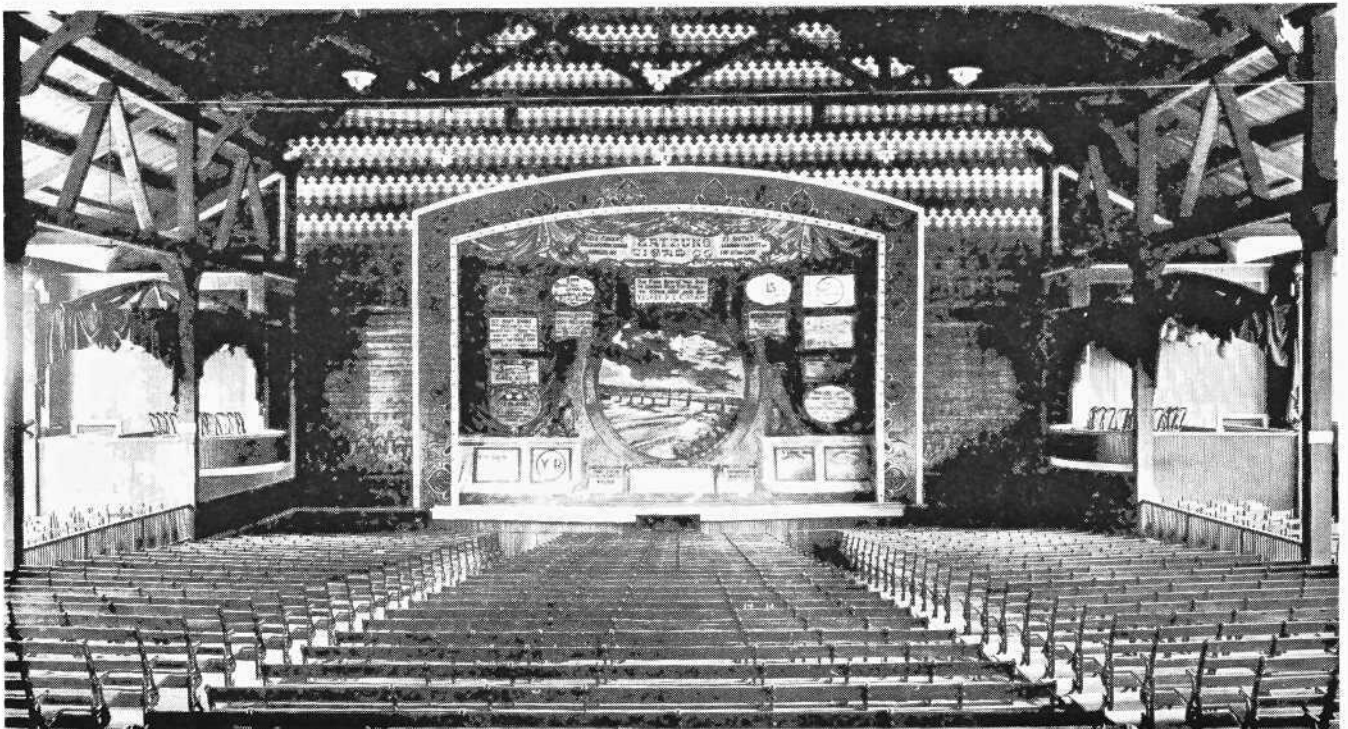
Engineer Thomas Boles worked on various projects, measuring for dimensions of the Van Buren Bridge in 1908. Later he supervised streetcar modifications equipping some cars to produce regenerative power in movement downgrade to assist other cars moving upgrade, operating over the Park Hill line to the fairgrounds. Leaving Fort Smith, Boles managed Hot Springs National Park. Later, President Harding appointed Boles to head the National Park in Hawaii.

Free Light & Traction passes provided city policemen, firemen, and other public employees with transportation, but by 1908 it was apparent that pass privileges covered far too many Fort Smith car riders and the company issued new passes to eligible persons entitled to free transit, declaring old passes invalid. Shortly afterwards, an embarrassed manager Gillette had to pay fare to a new conductor one night in order to reach the carbarn.

During an open house held at the shops in 1908, master mechanic George Chynoweth discussed streetcar



Exterior view of the auditorium at Electric Park. The star flower bed in the foreground was designed by Mr. Ernest H. Ruge, father of Johanna Ruge, who made these pictures of Electric Park available.



Interior view of the auditorium at Electric Park.

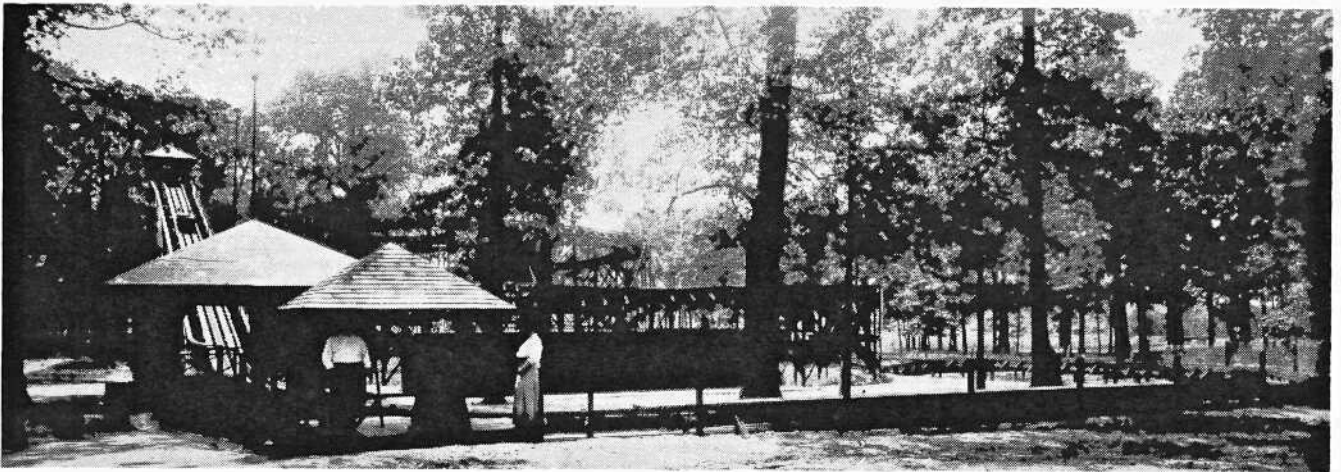
maintenance. New wheels cost \$45 each. The shops and barn housed forty-five cars. Complete facilities included a foundry. There was a wheel press and boring mill in the machine shop. Chynoweth disclosed plans for extensions, construction of a waiting room at Electric Park, and many other improvements.

Regular car riders took service and conditions for granted, but strangers may have pondered over certain instructions displayed inside each car. "Smoking permitted in the last three seats of this car only" and "Do not get on or off this car while in motion." Some might have reasonably concluded he was passenger on the only streetcar where a patron might smoke. Other riders may have been puzzled over how one could possibly get on or off the car and at the same time still avoid being in motion.

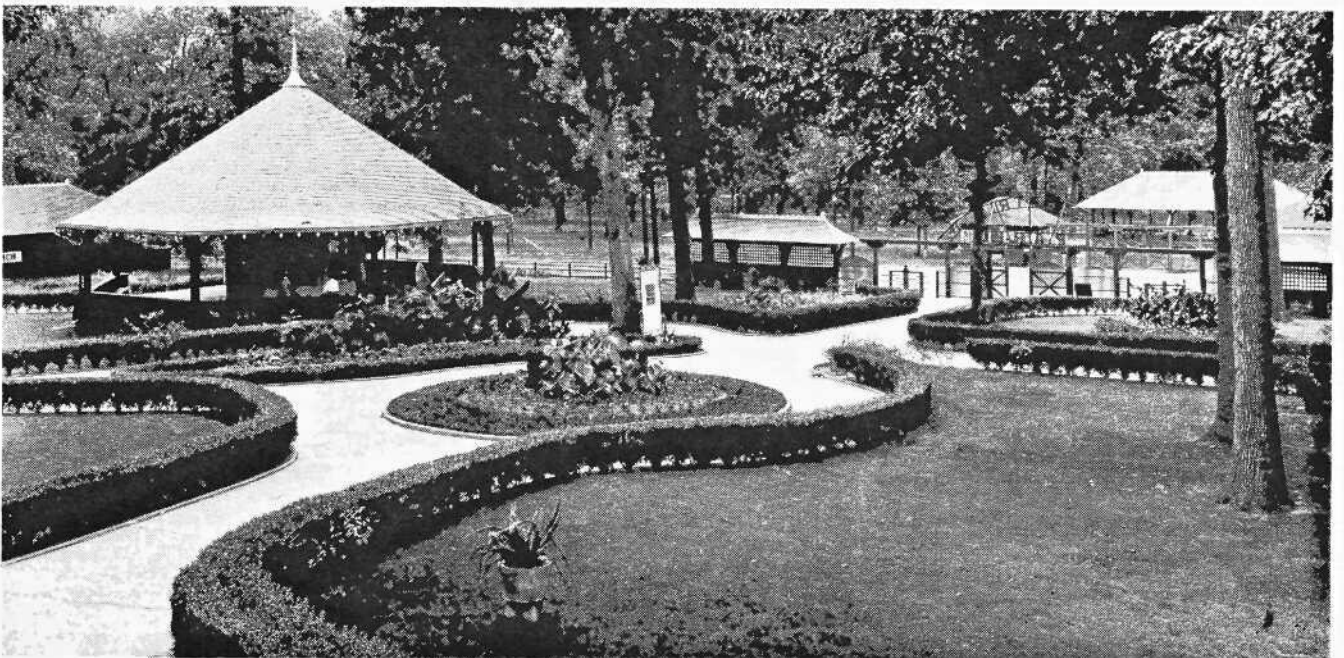
Construction of the Van Buren Bridge amounted to a giant step in development of the area. Situated across a river channel noted for changing its course, the bridge design featured seven identical spans, any one of which might be adapted as a draw span if ever the need arose. By addition of a superstructure and counterbalances

identical to those erected for the original draw span, any of the spans could be raised. Trackage arrangement provided for double track streetcar traffic, with a unique but impractical steam railway track situated between the car tracks. Streetcar and steam railway traffic would not be possible at the same time, due to non-clearance of both car tracks to the center positioned railway track. Efforts to use the bridge for both types of traffic would have been certain to have created delay and expense for both streetcars and trains. Also, the location of the Light & Traction's Van Buren viaduct obstructed the approach route to steam railways that might have used the bridge.

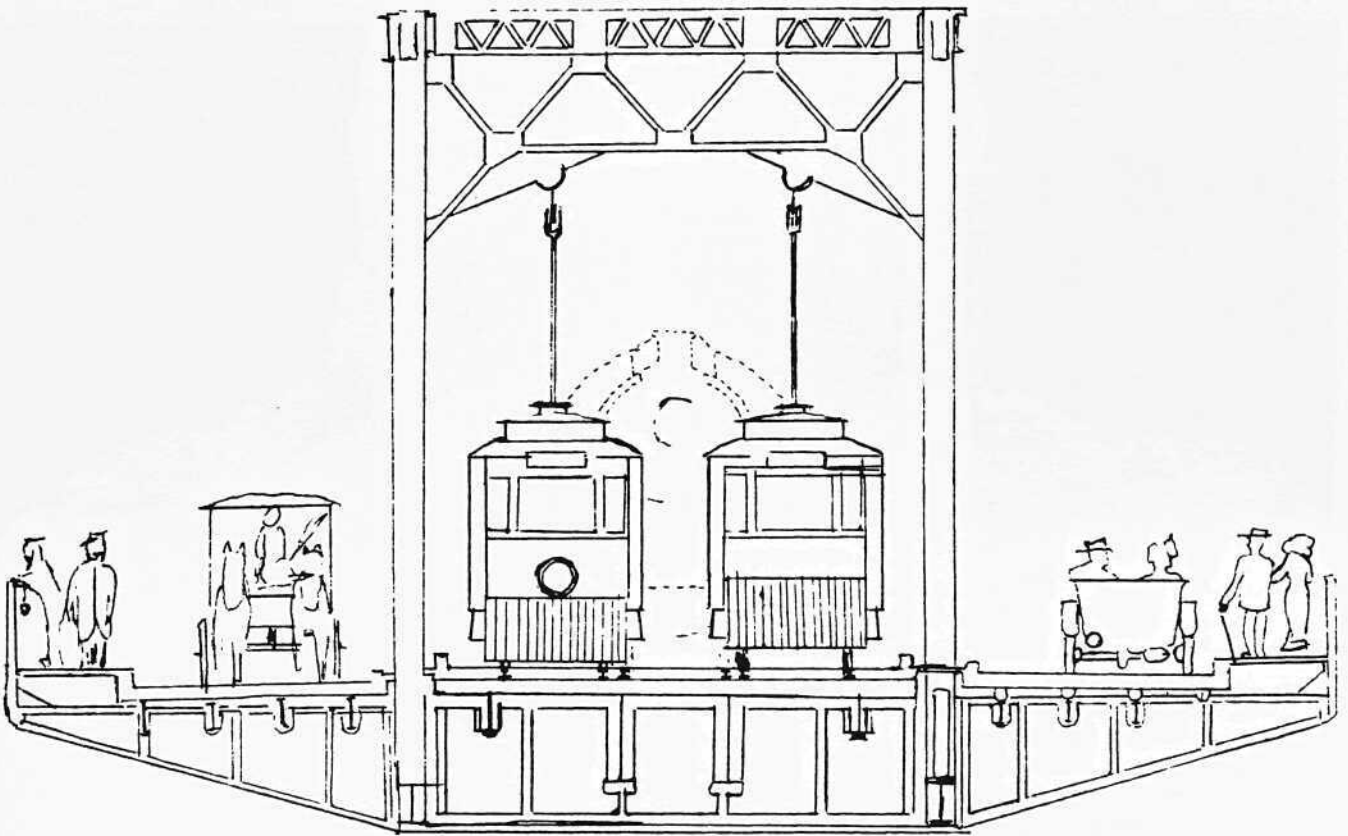
In addition to Byllesby interests making allusions to interurban routes, other promoters discussed electric railways radiating from Fort Smith. The Citizens Traction Company proposed a line connecting Oklahoma City, Sulphur, and Fort Smith. Haskell-Reeves interests proposed a route leaving Fort Smith, proceeding through Oklahoma, and terminating at McAlister. There was a proposal for an electric line to connect Fort Smith, Muskogee, and Oklahoma City in 1910.



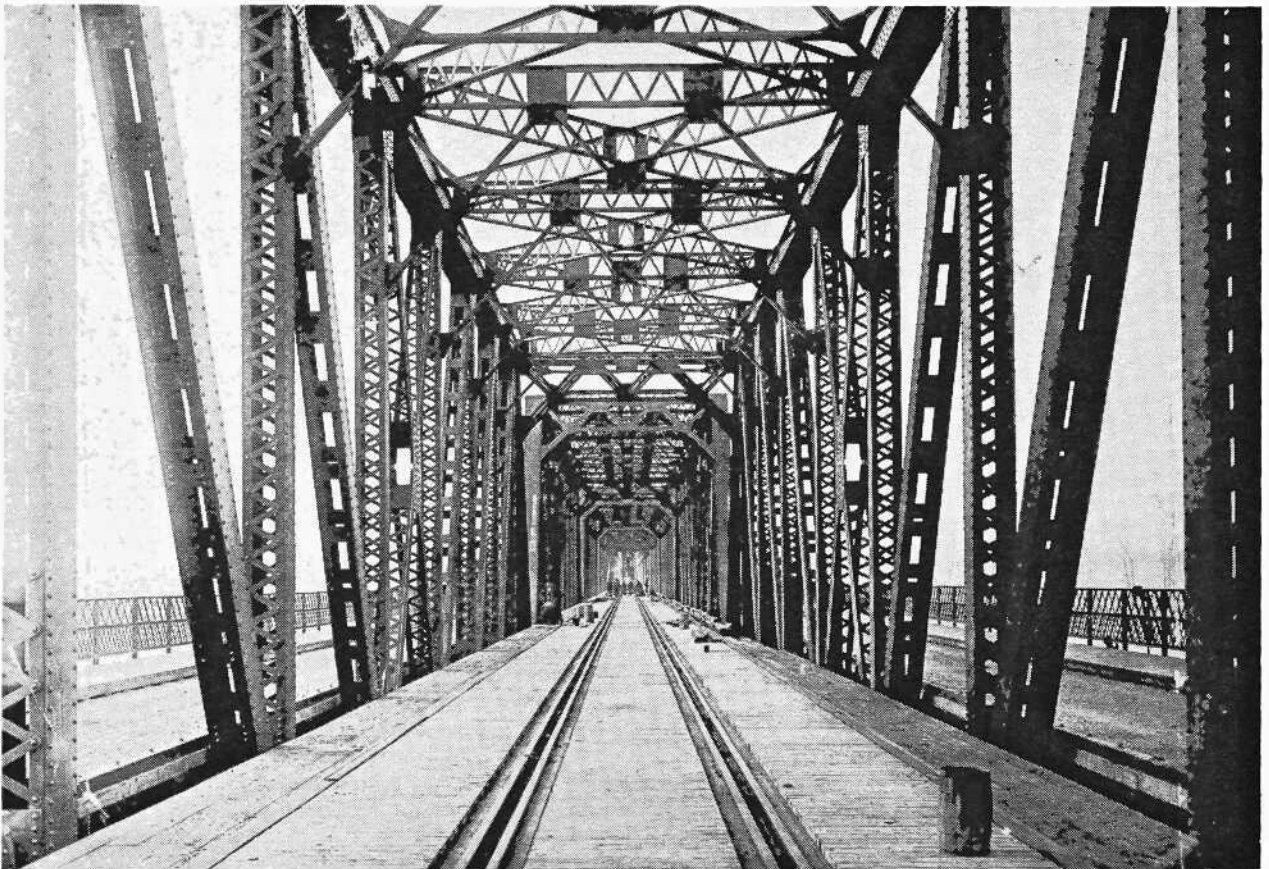
Roller Coaster, Electric Park.



Cement walkways at Electric Park. The round building was a food stand where peanuts, popcorn, etc. were available.

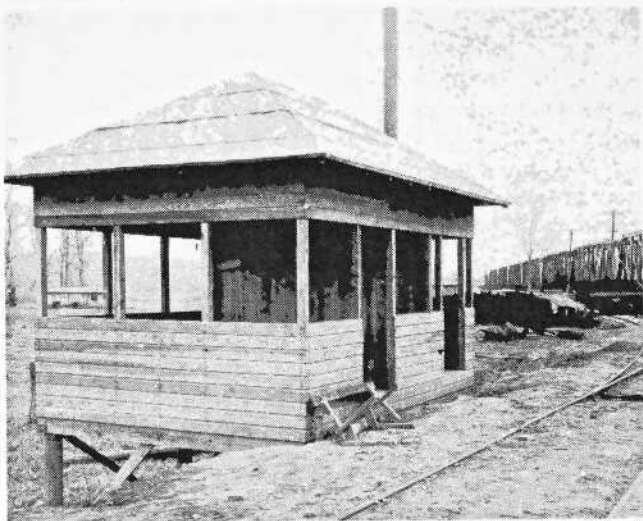


Drawing showing cross section of Free Bridge across Arkansas River from Fort Smith to Van Buren, Arkansas.

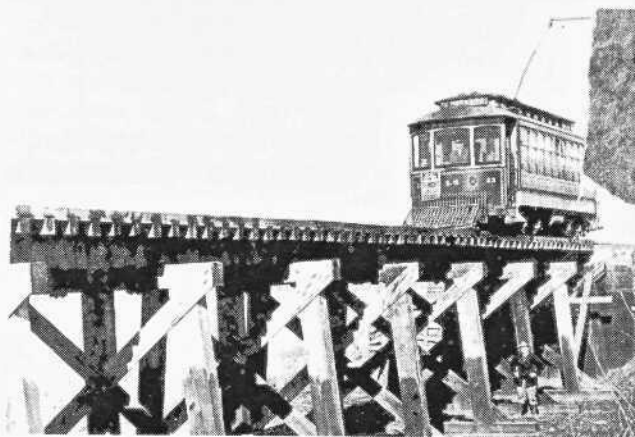


Picture courtesy of Jim Dew.

Inside view of the Fort Smith-Van Buren Bridge under construction shows track arrangement -- streetcar and steam railroad track.

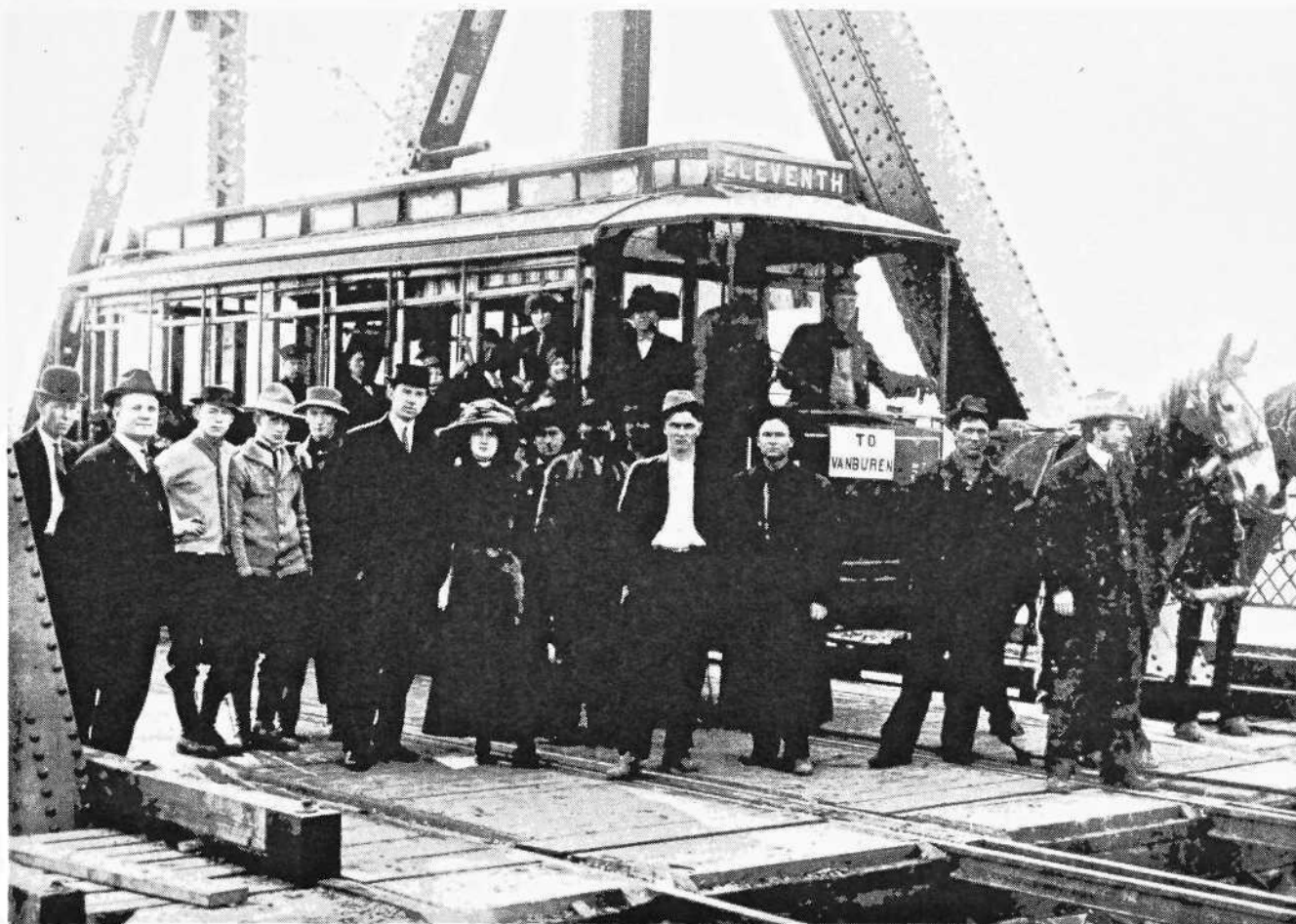


Waiting room, south end of Fort Smith-Van Buren Bridge.

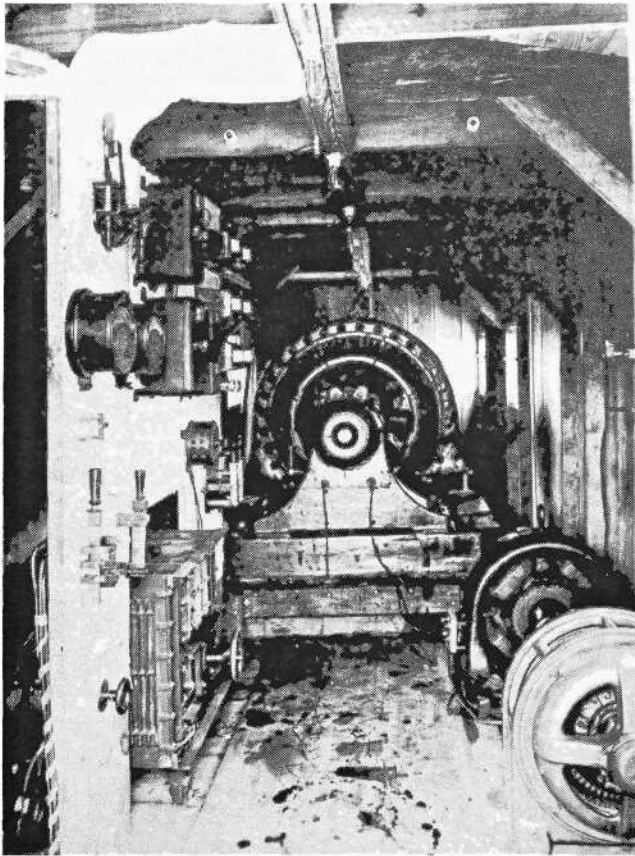


Courtesy Fred Krock.

Trestle on Van Buren line just south of Van Buren Bridge.



Engineers, supervisors, and invited guests appear on conclusion of the first streetcar run across the new bridge between Fort Smith and Van Buren. Overhead trolley wires were not yet in place, and car #51 was moved across the bridge by animal power, driven by William Pink Spradley, Sr.



Photos courtesy of Fred Krock.

Interior and exterior views of the portable sub-station used to boost power during the Fort Smith-Van Buren Bridge opening ceremonies.

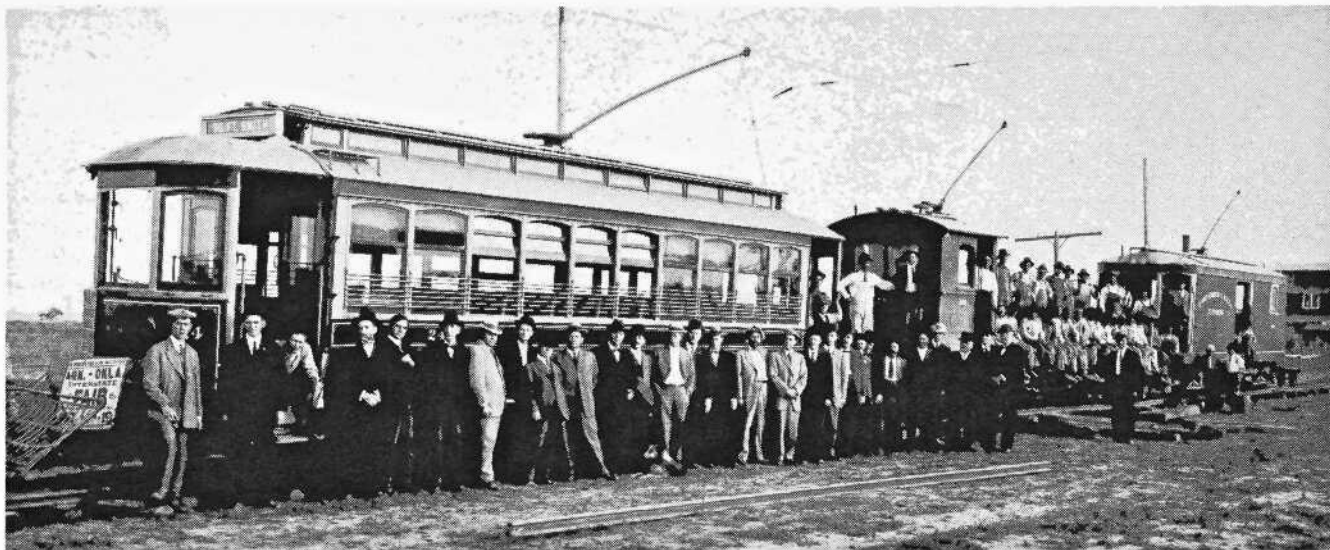
Rather late for an interurban promotion, Iser H. Nakdimen proposed construction of a line from Fort Smith, using the Garrison Avenue Bridge once plans for the structure were final. Nakdimen's line was to have tapped rich and productive dairy and farming lands through Sallisaw to Vian. With a beginning on lower Garrison Avenue, where he owned commercial property, it would extend to Oklahoma towns where he also held extensive properties. Had Nakdimen's promotion materialized, it might have reversed or at least have retarded the steady eastward movement of retail stores from older structures near the river into newer buildings along the east end of Garrison Avenue.

The low population density along the Arkoma line could not produce sufficient revenue for profits. At various times after September of 1911, regular service came in operation as a stub line, with only one car moving between the junction at South W on Texas Road and end of the track in Arkoma.

Approaching the Van Buren Bridge, tracks proceeded along a rather high embankment crossing the low bottomland extending between the Country Club and the river. To assure proper drainage following heavy rains, plans called for a small plate girder bridge located about midway along the embankment, but material for its construction would not arrive for some weeks. To extend service at the bridge dedication ceremony, the Light & Traction erected a short temporary trestle.

Open style car number 51 carrying engineers, construction supervisors, and invited friends, made the





Courtesy Jim Dew.

In a special inspection trip marking completion of the South Fort Smith line on September 20, 1912, city and traction company leaders pose with workmen at the end of the route, prior to return to Fort Smith.

initial trip across the Van Buren Bridge. With trolley wires not yet installed, the car moved behind a team of mules.

Light & Traction power generating facilities were taxed to capacity in movement of large crowds attending opening ceremonies at the bridge, but with employment of the portable substation mounted on a flat car parked on a temporary spur near the river, streetcars moved to and from the site. A total of 36,840 people paid fares on opening day. Later, the portable substation was moved to Van Buren when tracks extended into that city, installed at 4th and Main to boost power for streetcars operating in east Van Buren.

South Fort Smith line track construction halted in August, 1912, approaching the Schulte farm. Roadbed, poles and wire were complete along the entire route. On inspection and testing, a new shipment of rails proved to be of defective quality, and the entire shipment was rejected. On arrival and inspection of a later rail shipment, tracklaying resumed from both ends of the roadbed for a rush to completion. September 30th, businessmen and invited guests boarded a special car at 5th and Garrison for official opening of the line. A ride from the end of the South Fort Smith line to end of the Van Buren line constituted the longest continuous streetcar movement possible within the State of Arkansas.

Gillette presented city authorities with a Pulmotor to be available for Fort Smith hospitals. Placing the apparatus at Number One Fire Station made it possible to rush the device to any hospital. Byllesby management donated a Pulmotor to each city where the firm operated transit or utility services. The Light & Traction offered free use of an electric fan to any bedfast patient on presentation of his doctor's certification. The offer included installation and extra wiring where required.

Theodore Roosevelt passed through Fort Smith on the Iron Mountain during his 1912 campaign. Escorted from his train to a temporary speaking stand erected on a Light & Traction flat car parked at the foot of Garrison Avenue, the bull moose candidate greeted a large crowd. Excessive noise from passing railway traffic, along with

blasting whistles sounded by unsympathetic locomotive crewmen, prevented Roosevelt from delivering his speech. Shortly afterwards, he addressed a crowd of 2,000 admirers in Van Buren.

In May of 1912 Fort Smith's Union Station opened without ceremony, located at Rogers Avenue and 7th Street, more than one block distant from Light & Traction streetcar service. Shortly after completion of the Light & Traction viaduct, the Iron Mountain opened an attractive new passenger depot in Van Buren.

Fort Smith's distinctive Plaza was dedicated in August of 1913. Little Marguerite Graham christened the new downtown beauty spot that replaced one of the city's eye sores. Mrs. Stanton Suggs delivered an address outlining the need for more parks in the city. Light & Traction supplied the crushed stone for walkways, also contributing toward the expense of comfortable lawn swings, benches, and ornamental light fixtures. Local merchants supplied manpower and florist George Rye provided landscaping service.

Special theater, music, sports, circus, carnival shows, and holiday occasions required special Light & Traction service. Streetcar operation reflected special needs of its patrons. Each New Year's Eve, final streetcar departure from Garrison Avenue was delayed, permitting merrymakers and well wishers to remain downtown past midnight. Occasionally a late theater performance might delay final downtown streetcar departure. The railways at times also delayed departure of evening trains from the city, accommodating both audiences and performers, all of whom moved to and from the city on passenger trains.

Fort Smith leaders worked to promote growth of the city despite the hard times following the 1907 Financial Panic. The city grew from 11,587 population in 1900 to more than 20,000 by 1910, when census enumerators tried to make Fort Smith larger than it really was. Of 4,500 returns, 3,700 were either duplicate or fraudulent, with 304 people residing in an eight room flat on Garrison, 100 miners living in the Hotel Main, 50 listed at the address of a Presbyterian Church on North 9th, and more than 50

others counted twice. Pleading guilty, the enumerators drew suspended sentences and small fines.

Light & Traction superintendent B. A. Hoag was lured to old facilities at North 3rd and A Streets for a surprise retirement party. Hoag received a diamond stick pin, and announced plans for retirement in his native Michigan.

Hagenback & Wallace Shows came to the circus grounds at North 9th and T Streets, permitting movement on both the North Eleventh and the Fifth Street lines. Cars moved on a half-minute headway. The show came to Fort Smith on three special trains.

The winter of 1912 was unusually severe. Many families were destitute, schools closed and gas pressure was low. Charitable agencies were busy. Manager Gillette appeared at the carbarn about midnight to relieve carmen a few minutes early, putting away the cars himself while carmen concluded details of the evening's work.

With improved economic conditions and increased commercial activity in late 1912, the Light & Traction voluntarily increased carmen's wages. Handsome new carmen's clubrooms on the second floor of the Western Union Building included a meeting room, reading room, pool tables, and shower baths. Each carman received a

turkey and a box of cigars for Christmas. Following the holiday season, grateful employees presented Gillette with letters of thanks. Superintendent McCarthy arranged to serve the carmen hot sandwiches and coffee at Padgett's Cafe each evening at nine-thirty, when cars halted briefly while crews enjoyed a warm lunch at company expense. Passengers didn't mind, frequently joining the carmen for coffee.

Although Fort Smith was represented by its Twins baseball team appearing regularly at League Stadium, many stores and businessmen sponsored amateur teams. In the Inter-City league, the Light & Traction team was known as the Trolley Dodgers.

One of Electric Park's biggest days proved to be August 31, 1913. Extra streetcars brought throngs to events that included baseball, band concert, vaudeville, circus acts, boxing, balloon races, more baseball, band concerts, fireworks, drama, and a grand ball at the Casino. Late that year, Gillette resigned to be succeeded by H. C. Hoagland. Hoagland jointly managed Byllesby interests both at Muskogee and Fort Smith. Park manager R. J. Mack's job was abolished at this time, although he later operated the facility under lease. Light & Traction direct



Fort Smith's beautiful Plaza at Texas Corner, near the time of its construction in 1913. Note streetcars on Garrison Avenue in the background.

operation of Electric Park ended, and subsequent activity followed through lease arrangement with private operators.

Light & Traction employees held open house at the clubrooms New Year's Day of 1914. Employees, families, and invited guests enjoyed Hill & Brunoldi's oyster stew, turkey with oyster dressing, ham and pimento sandwiches, hot chocolate, coffee, candies, nuts, cigars, and fruit.

Hagenback & Wallace shows drew thousands of spectators to new circus grounds bordered by South 16th Street, L Street, Bluff Avenue, and M Street in 1914. Barnum & Bailey Shows appeared later that same week. Both productions were part of activities connected with the Inter-State Fair. A new bandstand at the fairgrounds featured the Fort Smith Cadet Band, and there were the usual exhibits, along with horse and automobile racing.

Light & Traction schedules reflect retrenchments in 1914, with cars operating on a twenty minute headway during some hours of the day. With the legal battle over payment for use of the Van Buren Bridge, followed by discontinuance of service over the structure in 1915, public image of the Light & Traction did not improve despite improving business conditions. A Fort Smith industrial boom followed big natural gas developments in the immediate area.

Manager Hoagland returned to Muskogee in September 1916. His position was taken by Dan C. Green, formerly manager of Byllesby interests at Salt Lake City, Utah. At Fort Smith he instituted measures to improve both public and employee relations of the Light & Traction. Green took steps to provide more frequent and

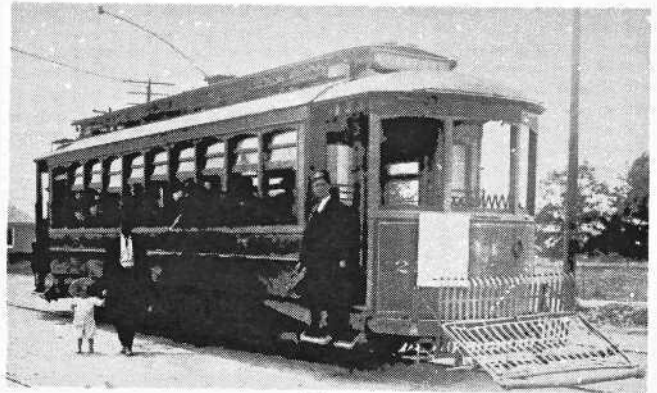


Photo courtesy of Fadjo Cravens.

Car #25. Left to right: Ray Lester, age 3, E. V. Lester, conductor, and Pete Perketto, Driver. Note catcher on front of car. This photograph is a post card which was postmarked May 25, 1911.

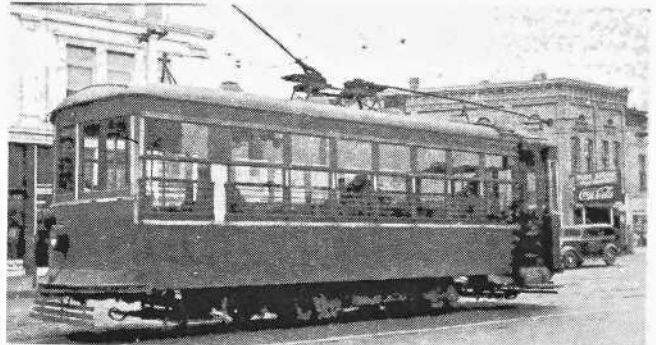


Photo courtesy of Fadjo Cravens.

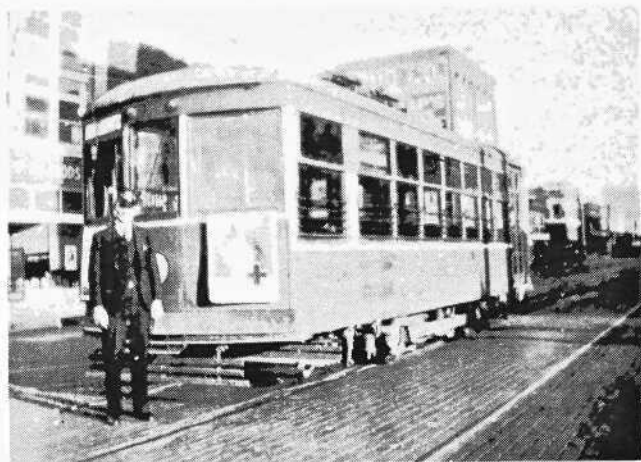
Car #225, Birney Safety car, taken the last day the streetcar ran on Grand Avenue, November 12, 1933.



League Stadium at Electric park was the site of all important baseball games in the Fort Smith - Van Buren area. Car #21 is one of the double truck semi-convertible cars, and is shown proceeding toward Fort Smith.

convenient service to the public, preparing for introduction of one man streetcar operation that eventually proved to be of mutual satisfaction to both the public and the carmen.

During the 1918 wartime emergency, streetcar operation in many cities was marked by introduction of the so-called *skip stop* plan. Cars no longer made service stops at each intersection. On many systems they skipped, (i. e. eliminated) half the car stops, offering service only at alternate street corners. The *skip stop* plan



Courtesy Lillian (Golden) Hissom

Frank Golden, motorman, standing by a Birney Car on its final day of streetcar operation in Fort Smith, November 15, 1933.

was not adopted at Fort Smith except to a limited degree. Stops were eliminated for all cars at 4th and 12th on Garrison Avenue. The location of eastbound stop at 13th Street was moved for the Grand Avenue, North E Street, and Little Rock Avenue cars. Grand and E Street cars began making stops around the corner on North 13th Street, and Little Rock Avenue cars began making stops at the southeast corner past 13th, thus avoiding possible delay when cars waited on Garrison when more than one car waited at the old stop. Otherwise, all car stops remained as they were, located at the near corner of all intersections except at Texas Corner, where eastbound cars stopped at the far corner to avoid congestion at this busy junction.

With the new Safety Cars operating, and all other cars modified for one man crews, the Light & Traction offered more frequent schedules, providing improved service. Despite traditional resistance from city authorities and citizen groups, the company secured slight fare increase in line with increased operating expenses. In 1922 at a mock trial during a Rotary Club meeting, Green faced a kangaroo court, accused of selling popular weekly streetcar passes to an unsuspecting public. Traction employees held a dinner dance at club rooms now located at 301 Garrison. Speakers included Green, who introduced guest speaker Lee S. Olney of the Mississippi Valley Power Company. One hundred fifty employees attended the affair, with Miss Esther Mitchell presiding. Jack Archer won election as chairman for a one year term.



Garrison Avenue during last days of streetcars in Fort Smith.

During labor unrest growing out of the railroad shopmen's strike of 1922, Van Buren strikers fired on strikebreakers who arrived in coaches attached to the rear of a Missouri Pacific passenger train. Shortly afterwards, city authorities, fearing a new outbreak of violence, were alarmed to hear a series of loud explosions coming from the vicinity of the streetcar viaduct. A passing streetcar set off signal torpedoes stolen from an unoccupied caboose by small boys, who scaled the viaduct to place them on the streetcar tracks.

Motorists frequently picked up waiting streetcar patrons, driving them to local destinations and collecting a nickel. Known as jitney operators, such motorists moved passengers on a casual basis, obliged to follow no schedule, offering no regular or dependable service, and avoiding payment of liability insurance for protection of their passengers. Still, jitney operators materially reduced amounts of revenue ordinarily obtained by the Light & Traction. The streetcar industry generally adopted a haughty attitude toward unfair jitney competition, pointing to informal jitney operation, proclaiming to a public now in the throes of national prohibition to remark: "The prophet who said jitneys would empty the streetcars also declared that prohibition would empty the jails."

The 1923 Light & Traction dinner dance was held at the American Legion Headquarters. In August of that year, Green introduced his successor R. C. Coffy.

With new Garrison Avenue brick pavement in place, safety zones were painted at streetcar stops for protection of patrons boarding and alighting from the cars. The abandoned Arkoma carline right of way between Texas Road and the Oklahoma State line was deeded to highway authorities for use in building a new roadway.

Oldest and smallest of the double truck streetcars, number 15 proved to be something of a failure in conversion to one man operation. Fort Smith car riders readily changed their boarding habits from rear entrance to front entrance on the single truck cars converted to one man P. A. Y. E. operation, but on modification of car 15 for one man operation, Grand Avenue patrons for some reason still attempted to board at the rear, just as they had when the car moved in charge of a two man crew. Final assignment for car 15 was in regular school trip service, which required use of a large car. Boistrous youths picked away at the rattan covered seats, and the company reluctantly installed plain wooden seats as a less comfortable but more durable substitute.

With reorganization of the Fort Smith Light & Traction Company transportation division to the Fort Smith Traction Company in 1928, there is little evidence of further attempts at improvement of public relations. The company's corporate name fails to appear on streetcars in photographs made during the final years of operation.

Except for abandonment of the Arkoma, Little Rock Avenue, and South Fort Smith lines prior to 1930, the system was practically intact during its final years. Tracks and equipment were in good condition despite effects of the depression.

Discontinuance of streetcar service in most cities usually amounted to a conversion or substitution of motorbuses by the owners of the transit company. Cessation of streetcar service in Fort Smith was rather unusual to the extent that it marked the complete liquidation of the company. Institution of bus service the following day marked the beginning of a new, entirely different, and completely un-related company.

LABOR RELATIONS OF THE LIGHT & TRACTION COMPANY

Light & Traction carmen assumed a role as agents of the company, constituting the only direct contact between the management and the patrons. The working carmen and the clean, fast moving streetcars created the company's public image. Performing their tasks in smart uniforms, carmen drew sufficient wages to provide a reasonably comfortable living for themselves and their families. Except for the few people affluent enough to have use of a horse and buggy, riders on horseback, or a very small number owning automobiles, the Light & Traction amounted to the only means of mobility for Fort Smith people during the early years of the Twentieth Century.

In November and June, each carman chose his hours and the line of his choice. Priority was based on the carman's position on the carmen's seniority list. In 1913, there were forty-two regular motormen, a like number of conductors, and twenty-two extra men. Oldest of the carmen were the Wofford brothers who worked as a team on the Park Hill line. Crews worked hard on the busy Eleventh Street line, but frequent service along the rather long route demanded employment of from five to seven pairs of carmen at all hours. The Arkoma and the South Fort Smith lines were regarded as soft jobs, but on each route the regular operation required the service of but one

crew at a time. Special service during events at Electric Park, the fairgrounds, sports, circus performances, and other feature attractions frequently demanded employment of every available carman and operation of every available streetcar.

Carmen often were called upon to assist elderly and infirm patrons. Light & Traction employees frequently received public notice for their courtesy, ability, and kindness in the treatment of less fortunate passengers. Personal mobility in a private buggy, or use of the horse drawn hack that served as the taxi of that day, was not available to persons of limited means. Light & Traction passengers included not only the regular patrons of the busy city, but also the aged, crippled, blind, and infirm.

Relations between the carmen and the company were cordial and informal under management of J. Walter Gillette, during early years of expansion and construction. Following Gillette's resignation there were improvements to existing tracks and equipment, but only limited expansion of the system itself. Subsequent operation of Electric Park came through leasing and contracts. The company resisted authorities in the dispute over operation of the Van Buren bridge. Informal relations between carmen and management also changed.

In 1914, carmen observed modifications and tests being conducted on one of the smaller streetcars. Chicago engineers supervised platform alterations and installation of a farebox where patrons would deposit their coin into a device that eventually would replace the conductor. During tests, modification, and observation, employment of a conductor continued, but patrons no longer boarded the car at the rear where the conductor customarily worked. In the P. A. Y. E. operation plan, passengers boarded cars at the front. Conductors still supervised and assisted in loading and unloading, in making change for fare payment, but the patron now placed his fare in the coin box. Fort Smith tests and experiments were in charge of professional engineers employed by the Byllesby Engineering & Management Corporation, controlling managers of the Light & Traction. Findings and conclusions of the P. A. Y. E. experiments produced platform designs that became standard for one man operation in many cities, and future design of new streetcars would also reflect Fort Smith tests.

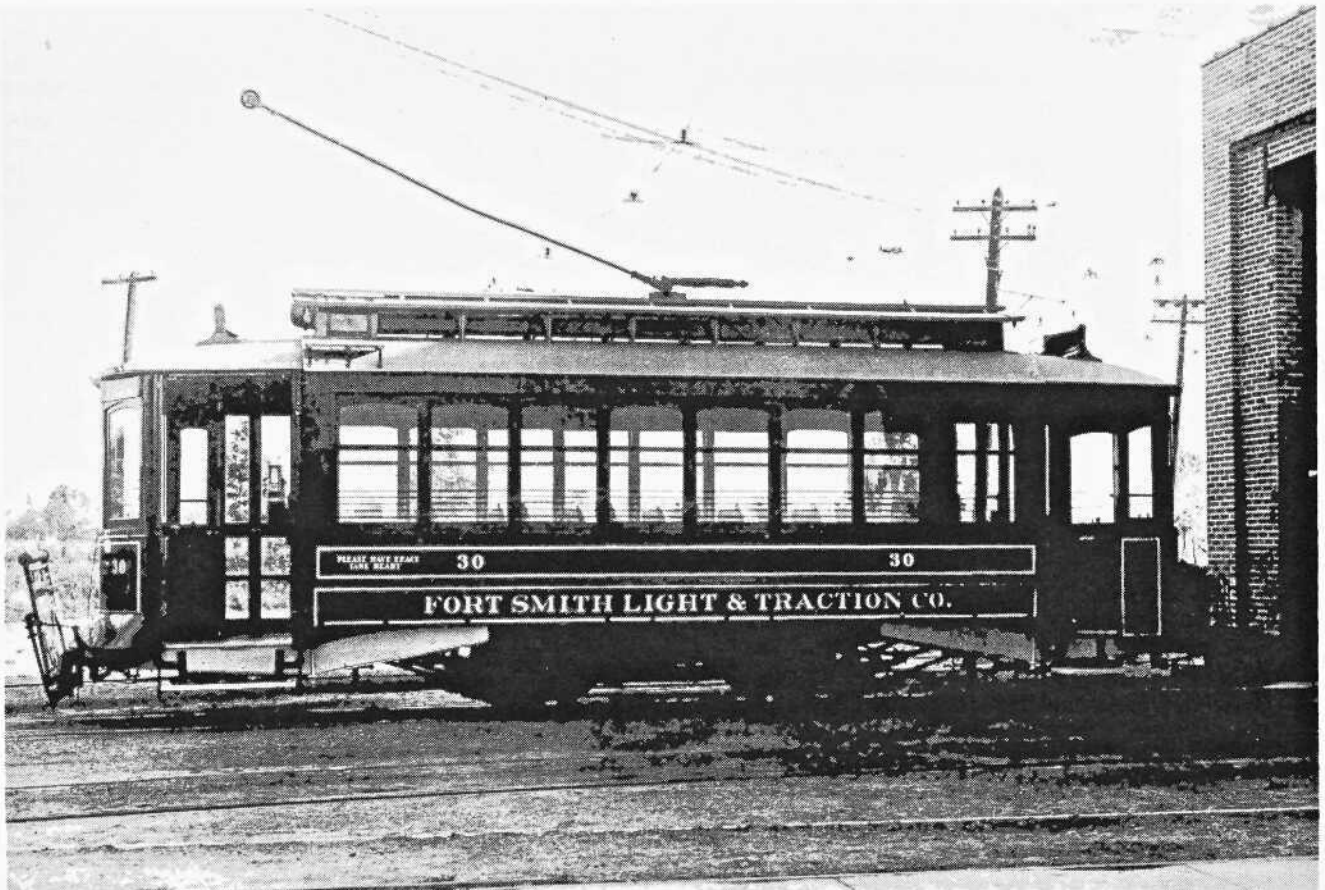
Fort Smith carmen began active unionization in 1914 as an effort to resist what appeared to be inevitable reductions in employment that were certain to result from introduction of one man streetcars. On the evening of October 6th, union committeemen met cars on Garrison Avenue, instructing crewmen to proceed to the barn, beginning a strike that lasted twenty-four hours. Manager Hoagland met with the committee, announcing that union membership was no bar to employment by the Light & Traction, but declining to discuss making a contract with

the carmen. Hoagland contacted mayor Read, who declined to extend police protection for strikebreakers, but appointed commissioners Bruce and Singleton as agents to promote strike settlement. The carmen, as members of Amalgamated Street & Electric Railway Employees of America, Division 674, reached agreement at once. The orderly shutdown and speedy settlement at Fort Smith is in marked contrast to the violence and sabotage of the strikes at Texarkana, Little Rock, Muskogee, and other cities where carmen remained jobless during long strikes, eventually losing jobs to strikebreakers.

Through union efforts, Fort Smith carmen secured passage of a state law forbidding one man car operation. Known as the *Sebastian County Streetcar Law*, the measure prohibited operation in Sebastian County with a crew comprised of less than a motorman and a conductor. Only the Van Buren local stub car could be regularly operated by one crewman. Following a long period of litigation, the law was declared unconstitutional. On February 5, 1919 the Light & Traction was free to adopt one man streetcar operation.

Contract negotiations failed late in 1916, and the carmen voted to strike. Manager Green agreed to the carmen's terms prior to strike deadline, and settlement included union dues payroll checkoff. Fort Smith carmen belonged to one of the only two locals in the entire United States where union dues could be withheld from paychecks.

At four o'clock one morning in January of 1917, carmen



Car #30 as modified for rear entrance pay as you enter, and front exit style of operation.

on an owl run observed a fire at the home of representative Jo Johnson, as the car moved down Jenny Lind Road. Motorman B. L. Wofford and conductor G. W. Grace alerted Mrs. Johnson, Miss Grace Johnson, and Miss Mable Brooks with considerable difficulty, then turned in a fire alarm. Wofford and Grace each received five dollar checks from Johnson on his return from the legislature in Little Rock.

With contract negotiations failing in December of 1917, carmen went on strike for one week. At the time, general labor unrest prevailed in Fort Smith. Carmen sought no pay increases during the wartime emergency of 1918, but pressed for raises in 1919. Green verbally consented to pay increases in time to avert a strike, and the carmen made concessions that included provisions for one man car operation on condition that the *Sebastian County Streetcar Law* became invalid.

By late 1919, practically all Fort Smith streetcars operated as one man P. A. Y. E., but displaced conductors were absorbed by employment as motormen. Institution of more frequent service provided for operation of additional cars. Although some carmen changed hours, and others had to temporarily work irregular shifts as extra men, nobody lost work when the streetcars were changed to one man operation.

Carmen received another pay increase in 1920, and

contract provisions provided for operation of split shift assignments, where a motorman might work during peak traffic hours in early morning and late afternoon, with an idle period during the middle of the day.

Carmen accepted wage reductions in 1922, reflecting general trends in national efforts for a return to more stable economic conditions following wartime price inflation. During wartime wage increases, the cost of many items increased at an alarming rate for both management and labor. In 1922, national policy included efforts to reduce prices through wage reductions.

With more normal conditions in 1923, followed by generally improving business conditions up to 1930, carmen's wages remained stable until the beginning of the depression. In the final years up to 1933, job reductions, instead of wages, were matters of greatest concern to the carmen as the curtailment of service and discontinuance of operations on the Little Rock Avenue and South Fort Smith lines reduced the number of available jobs.

On cessation of streetcar operation in 1933, a few younger carmen secured jobs as bus operators with the company taking over Fort Smith and Van Buren transit service. Operation of O. G. & E. electric service absorbed some of the workers displaced by abandonment of streetcar operation. Other carmen of advancing years in 1933, simply retired when streetcar operation ended.

ACCIDENTS and ROBBERIES

An early streetcar accident during 1899 claimed the life of Confederate Army veteran Earnest Beck, when he was struck by a Little Rock Avenue car. The slightly deaf Beck, in the company of Mayor Garrett and Judge Spradling, appeared to be puzzled as his companions stepped back quickly on hearing the gong sounded by an approaching streetcar. Before Garrett and Spradling realized Beck had not heard the alarm, he was struck and fatally wounded.

An Eleventh Street car and a runaway horse collided in 1907, injuring passengers Breslin and Morris. Assistant superintendent Gaskill stated that the accident was unavoidable.

Motorman Amis died from injuries he sustained in a fall from a moving car in 1908. A Negro, a conductor, and Amis engaged in a playful scuffle, when Amis was thrown from the streetcar. Carmen made up a collection for his widow and family. That same year, bartender Frank Burns was shot as he rode to work early one morning on car 12. Motorman Lee Cannon and conductor J. P. Pierce identified his assailant as H. B. Lewis, alluding to an argument between the two men during the previous evening.

In 1911, a chain gang prisoner at work sweeping Garrison Avenue was struck by the streetcar manned by motorman E. J. Goff and conductor Art Junkin. Jessie Capps of Paw Paw, Oklahoma, leading a cow on Garrison, was thrown into the path of a moving streetcar, but suffered only minor injury. In a lawsuit against the Light & Traction, Mrs. J. C. Boyd charged carmen had carried her past Dodson Avenue on the South Fort Smith car, letting

her off unassisted as she carried an armload of parcels at stop 4, where she fell to the ground. An expectant mother, Mrs. Boyd alleged that carmen's negligence caused premature accouchement. That same month, wagonmaker Frazier walked across Garrison, stepping aside to avoid a moving automobile, he was struck by a Little Rock Avenue car manned by motorman Lemon and conductor Watt. On the evening of December 1st, an outbound South Fort Smith car collided with the Arkoma car near junction of the two lines, injuring motorman Frank A. Schaffer and one passenger.

In February of 1912, five-year-old Walter Caldwell was killed as he crossed the tracks on North 5th, when car 31, manned by motorman James Hughes and conductor Homer Webb ran over the youth. Jackscrews raised the car to permit removal of the body. Hughes was charged with murder, but later was exonerated of all blame. In March, Guy Tuskeson was hit by car 31, shattering his buggy at 5th and C Streets, but sustaining no injuries. That same month Negro Sanford Lewis was hanged from a trolley pole near the Main Hotel. Some participants in the lynch mob were brought to trial, and drew fines and sentences. Lewis' crime amounted to his having been victim to a pistol whipping while his assailant's pistol fired by accident, fatally wounding Andy Carr. The hanging, by a mob incited to violence, was contrived to draw attention away from the killer of Carr.

Businessman Frank Bollinger, Sr., passenger on an inbound Grand Avenue car, narrowly missed injury from a bullet fired near Grober's Grocery in June, 1912. Late one

July evening in 1912, motorman Northup lost a leg. Electric Park had closed for the night and three heavily loaded cars began movement toward the city. For some reason the headlight failed on the first car and the motorman stopped near the Frisco connection to determine the trouble. Number 19, the second car halted behind the lead car, but Northup in a small single truck car number 14 was unable to stop, his car running under the platform of car 19, severing Northup's leg.

The next month, at the conclusion of a League Stadium baseball game, two heavily loaded open cars departed for the city. Motorman, V. T. Buel, responded instantly when a passenger ringing the bell shouted, "Stop! I lost my hat." Car 53, piloted by motorman Davis and following closely, could not stop, and struck the leading car, knocking it some twenty-five feet. Both cars were still operable and proceeded toward the carbarn. Car 53 halted at the barns, where passengers transferred to an undamaged car for conclusion of the trip.

That same August, Saturday night crowds engaged in fights on loaded outbound streetcars. Eight Whites in a car near 800 North Eleventh were crowded by Negroes returning home from a minstrel show. The Blacks left the car at North S Street, and carmen took the Whites back downtown. Police and other recruits returned to S Street, but found no trace of the Blacks. The interior of car 23 was a bloody mess, and most windows were broken. Willis Perry started the fight and his fine was \$200. One week later, Light & Traction special officers rode outbound Eleventh Street cars, arresting eight men who included both White and Blacks. Frank Washington drew a \$75 fine and a sixty days sentence, others were fined ten and fifteen dollars each. The following week, fifteen men were arrested, and Ben Lindsay was fined fifteen dollars. Of those charged, only one was a Negro.

During September of 1912, when a trolley wire broke at Texas Corner, temporarily halting service, an inbound Little Rock Avenue car was stranded at the convent. Several strong male passengers pushed the powerless car a few feet to a descending grade, boarding and riding the car as it coasted to Texas Corner.

Bee Lester, proprietress of a resort on old North First Street, was killed when a streetcar struck her automobile at North 5th and A Streets. Her chauffeur, Charles Knight, escaped injury. Bell Stark of 105 North 5th, described the accident. Motorman was Charles Leonard with conductor John Gentry.

On the last car out Eleventh Street one night in November 1912, passengers William Briscoe and Guy Taylor argued. Conductor Frank Schaffer put Briscoe off at stop 13, notifying special officer W. N. Oxford who boarded the car with Officer Storey as the car returned to the city. Briscoe, armed with a rifle, met them at stop 13. Oxford and Storey disarmed the angry Briscoe who put up a big fight. Troubles on the Arkoma line included theft of 1,500 feet of trolley wire one night in 1909. Arkoma carmen frequently found dead livestock on the tracks, where owners place them in a scheme to hopefully get the streetcar to strike the carcass, since the Light & Traction was liable for killing farm animals. R. B. Bingham sued for \$150 over loss of a cow in November, 1912. Charles A. Gowens alleged that his sixteen-year-old daughter was carried past her stop on Towson Avenue, being hugged

and kissed by the conductor as she tried to leave the car. That same court session, Mrs. Minnie Pilgrim sought \$15,000 for injuries already received from a derailment at the fairgrounds in 1911.

Hiram Martin sued the Light & Traction in March of 1913, seeking \$10,000 damages, alleging a streetcar carried him past stop 11 to stop 12, where he fell in the darkness. At 5th and Garrison on April 5, 1913, as motorman W. Howard and conductor C. W. Sparks approached the intersection, James and Monroe Sparkman attacked Howard, stabbing him in the abdomen. When a second motorman Ed Pennewell came to Howard's aid the Sparkmans attacked him also. At Van Buren in May, aged C. C. Stockton was struck by a streetcar on Main Street. Carmen reported the accident to Light & Traction headquarters, and car 105 came to take the injured Stockton to Sparks Hospital. The motorman was not blamed for the accident.

Mrs. Nellie Conn of Van Buren, sued the Light & Traction in June of 1913, for failure to assist her in alighting from the streetcar, seeking \$10,000 settlement for a broken leg, and Mr. Conn asked for an additional \$2,000. In September at 5th and A Streets, the daughter of the venerable Rev. Auguste Karnop lost a foot attempting to save a dog that ran under a streetcar. Subsequent lawsuit produced a decision that carmen were not guilty of negligence.

An outbound South Fort Smith car moving in heavy fog on September 29, 1913, veered off Texas Road tracks onto the Arkoma line at the junction near stop 10, even though the switch was always kept lined for the tracks to South Fort Smith. Striking the waiting Arkoma car at full speed, the impact knocked the vehicle a distance of some fifty feet. Both cars were badly damaged.

Eleven-year-old Negro student Robert Jones, of 1111 South B Street went on an errand for his Howard School principal in November of 1913. On observing he had gone past his destination on North Eleventh, the youngster jumped from the speeding streetcar, striking his head and suffering a concussion. Taken to his home, the youth died from his injuries.

In December of 1913, two armed robbers held up the Arkoma car near the Frisco crossing, relieving crewmen of approximately \$25. One passenger lost 36¢, and the other patron was already penniless. Motorman E. M. 'Casey Jones' Northup and conductor T. O. Miller completed the trip, notifying authorities on return to the city. Later that night a Fort Smith & Western railroad engineer described the same two bandits, who boarded his locomotive and robbed him at gunpoint. That same month a Park Hill car derailed at Towson and Rogers, and motorman W. F. Brown with conductor Lem Lloyd blamed the mishap on a switch that was partly obstructed with crushed rock ballast.

Violence continued on outbound Saturday night North Eleventh streetcars, and twenty-two men were arrested on January 23, 1914 following a brawl. Mail carrier Charles F. Bain brought suit in February for injuries he sustained on Garrison Avenue, alleging the streetcar, which struck his wagon, moved at excessive speed and was operated by an inexperienced motorman. Late in the evening of February 1, 1914, Midland Heights merchant T. L. Johnston was robbed and beaten by two Negro bandits

who boarded the last car out Eleventh Street. Motorman Davis and conductor Dempsey alerted special agent Oxford at the carbarn but his passengers protested innocence. In June a streetcar struck a motor car driven by Mrs. E. O. Simpson at North 18th and E Streets, the impact throwing Mr. and Mrs. Simpson and Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Hawkins from the machine. The Simpsons accused the motorman of not looking in the direction he was moving. In November George Tilles sued the Light & Traction for injuries he had sustained in stumbling over a suitcase sitting in the aisle of a crowded Eleventh Street car, asking \$2,500 damages and charging the carmen with negligence. That same month an inbound car split the switch approaching Electric park, slightly injuring passenger Alvin Goldstein. Eddie Jones brought suit against the company for death of his son, who was thrown from the crowded vestibule of an Eleventh Street car as it entered a sharp curve near the suburban crossing. Bicycle rider W. G. Laster was struck by a car at South 18th and H Streets, and his parents brought suit for \$10,000.

Masked bandits held up motorman Muthershed and conductor Clint Skaggs at the waiting room near the south end of the Van Buren Bridge in January of 1915. Besides fare money and personal funds from both carmen and passengers, the robbers also took watches. Fred Honea and Gus Young of Van Buren were arrested, but released when two robbers fitting descriptions of Honea and Young held up motorman P. I. Davis on Division Street one week later.

With Light & Traction service across the Van Buren Bridge withdrawn during 1915, there were jitney accidents. On March 11th, R. L. Shinn's jitney overturned and burned near the south end of the bridge. Shinn leaped from the jitney, and there were no passengers. The Dennis White jitney struck six-year-old Marie Hill near stop 4 on Eleventh Street in April.

A broken axle on a Park Hill streetcar created problems July 14, 1915. With the car body supported by emergency blocking, workmen placed skids under the disabled portion of the running gear and towed the crippled car to the shops. There was a thirty minute disruption of streetcars at Texas Corner, while the car moved very slowly over switches and crossings. That same month, Iron Mountain machinist Jim Rushing resisted efforts of officer Miller Wells in attempts to unload the inebriated Rushing from a Van Buren car. Wells' pistol fell from its holster to the street, discharging and fatally wounding Rushing. The two men were friends, and the accident was considered to be most unfortunate. In August, an inbound Fifth Street car collided with a fire wagon, overturning the wagon, injuring firemen Charles Wheeler, Will McKinley, and Carl Bollinger. Motorman Brown had seen Chief M. J. Brun proceeding along a Street in his automobile, but failing to stop at the blind intersection. The accident pointed to needs for an alarm bell to protect movement of fire department vehicles.

One of the most bizarre Light & Traction accidents involves the collision of speeding southbound owl car 22 with an eastbound Union Taxi, at the intersection of North 5th and C Streets on August 24, 1915. The taxi passenger, a young man from one of the city's leading families, had been a guest at a resort situated on North 1st Street.

Although the taxi driver, Jim Crowe recovered, his passenger died from internal injuries. Light & Traction attorneys acquiesced to wishes of the victim's mother in final settlement for the accident, agreeing never to operate car 22 again. In a trip through the paint shop, car 22 emerged as car 80.

On the evening of February 8, 1917, Wesley Blocker operated an outbound Grand Avenue car at Garrison and 13th Street, striking a buggy driven by Dr. Epler, throwing Dr. Epler from the vehicle. Both the streetcar and buggy were making left turns as an inbound Little Rock Avenue car waited at the intersection. Epler blamed bright streetcar headlights for the accident. Only five days later at stop 7 in Midland Heights, Elijah Phillips ran headlong into a streetcar bound for the carbarn about midnight. On conclusion of the final trip out Eleventh it was regular practice to reverse the car at Waldron Road and proceed on the outbound track back to the barn. Phillips, apparently unaware of the practice, assumed the car was on the usual inbound track bound for the city as he ran to board the vehicle, not realizing he was running directly into its path.

On the evening of February 23, 1917, as two streetcars approached Garrison and 13th Street, bright lights blinded motorist Fagan Bourland, causing him to strike a steel pole, extensively damaging his Marmon automobile. Late in October, a speeding northbound Eleventh Street car struck an eastbound automobile occupied by T. H. Miller and family at the intersection of H Street, derailing the streetcar which careened toward the curb. Striking a post, it came to rest across the double tracks. Shortly past midnight on March 2, 1917, thieves removed copper wires between Waldron Road and the carbarn. Walter Grier and Will Earp were arrested as they attempted to sell stolen scrap copper wire to salvage dealer Max Feenberg.

On February 17, 1918, a streetcar crushed Win Harper's automobile against a trolley pole at 9th and Garrison. The automobile was driven by Harper's fourteen-year-old nephew and occupied by a party from Mulberry. Elva Chastain died from injuries sustained in the accident. Motorman J. M. Woodward and conductor J. M. Pew were exonerated from all charges.

The creosote treated timber support and wood block pavement on the draw span of Van Buren Bridge burned June 10, 1918, consequence of a short circuit in an iron conduit pipe incasing electric power transmission cables. Attorney Ed Matlock noticed smoke as he drove across the bridge to his home in Van Buren, alerting bridge watchman Tom Arnold by telephone at the ice plant. Arnold shut off the gas main and turned off the high voltage lines in time to avert a catastrophe, but firemen were unable to extinguish the blaze. Streetcar patrons walked the length of the draw span for a short time until Light & Traction workmen could place temporary timbers for support of the tracks. Several weeks passed before new flooring and tracks were in place, but the loss was fully insured.

Van Buren car 16 split a switch at Texas Corner August 18, 1918, creating a traffic jam and short delay. One week later, motorman J. Harrison stopped his streetcar in front of a grocery store near Little Rock Avenue and 18th, to pick up a basket lunch from his wife, a grocery clerk. Miss Ruth Seaman, not expecting the streetcar to stop, nor its

motorman to alight, struck Harrison with her automobile, inflicting only slight injury.

Shortly after delivery of the Safety Cars, two of the new vehicles collided at a very low speed in a severe ice and snow storm that completely obscured vision at North E near 17th. Both motormen believed they were about to enter the passing tracks situated only a short distance away, colliding headon, but inflicting no injury and only slight damage. Three boys on a motorcycle collided with a Park Hill car at 21st and Dodson in September. On October 2, 1920, car 25 collided with a Crabtree cab at 7th and Garrison. When the motorman chided cabbie Harmon Durden for driving onto the tracks in the path of the streetcar, Durden drew a knife, threatening the retreating carman, drawing a large crowd. On November 3, an outbound Eleventh Street car operated by shop foreman Benjamin Bullis struck the automobile driven by J. E. Johnston of Muldrow as it turned off Grand onto 11th in the path of the streetcar. In December, a streetcar collided with Fred Brown's roadster at 4th and Garrison. With the roadster hardly damaged, but resting on the streetcar fender, motorman T. I. Davis and several husky passengers picked up the automobile and set it on the pavement, where its driver cranked the engine and sped away.

Brakes locked on one set of trucks on a South Fort Smith car at Texas Corner, Christmas Day of 1920, delaying streetcars as the operator moved from point to point so other streetcars could switch around the crippled car. With machinists arriving on emergency car 105 making temporary repairs to the malfunctioning brake rigging, the car was soon on its way.

Walter Hamm brought suit for \$5,000 in January 1921, alleging his collar bone was broken when an inexperienced operator on the Park Hill line closed the door before he entered the streetcar. Motorman A. R. Brooks was a robbery victim on the E Street line. As motorman Whetstone changed the trolley pole at the end of the Park Hill line, three bandits took \$30.00 at gunpoint one night in March. Shortly past midnight in April, two men boarded a Van Buren car, paid fares, then drew pistols and robbed motorman C. O. Humphrey of cash. Humphrey hid his watch, but the bandits took conductor C. H. Howard's cash and watch before leaping from the streetcar to speed away in an automobile. A Grand Avenue car was held up by a masked bandit with a driver accomplice. The motorman and his three passengers lost approximately \$100.

On July 2, 1922, an Eleventh Street car sideswiped the wagon belonging to Jenny Lind farmer M. M. Allen as he sold chickens from the vehicle near North F Street. The jolt injured Allen as he was knocked to the street. On the evening of July 3rd, motorman C. C. Purvis made a stop for two men at South R Street on the Park Hill line. One man jerked the trolley pole from its wire while the other bandit took money and watch from Purvis at gunpoint. Purvis later identified Elbert Michels and Foley Scarf, who were charged with highway robbery.

July 12, 1922, a forty mile per hour wind blew down a line pole, damaging the roof of a Grand Avenue car, but otherwise causing no injury. Later that month Simon Yaffe brought suit against the Light & Traction, seeking \$500 damages for loss of sight in one eye, following a collision between his automobile and an Eleventh Street car. In August, Luke Smith and Mildred Waters overturned

in a Ford coupe proceeding along the tracks approaching the Van Buren smelter, as tires followed ruts near the rails. On August 22, 1922 at North 5th and C Streets, a streetcar operated by motorman Apperson collided with an automobile driven by Charles Mills. Neither Apperson, Mills, nor his three passengers were injured, but the automobile was badly damaged. Mills' passengers included Mrs. J. D. Plymale, Mrs. E. Armstrong, and an unidentified sister-in-law. Manager Green and Jim Reddick raced automobiles as they returned from a Rotary Club outing that same month. Motorcycle officer Ellig took them before Judge Fishback, who fined each man \$9.50.

In October at Van Buren's Meyer School, little Audrine Clinton was painfully, but not seriously injured when she was struck by a streetcar. Park Hill passenger Mary Turner received a \$200 settlement for injuries she sustained when a streetcar made a sudden and jolting start. J. L. Reece sued for \$20,000 damages for injuries sustained October 7, 1922. Reece alleged that when the conductor on car 21 ordered him to stand back so a lady could board first, he was struck by an automobile driven by Miss Myra McCann, and suffered a skull fracture and other injuries. In November, Park Hill car 32 collided with an Oldsmobile driven by L. E. Prall, overturning the automobile and injuring the driver. Joe Throne, operating car 207 in December, collided with a taxi driven by Charles Carson, at 7th and Garrison, injuring Carson and badly damaging the taxi.

Thieves purloined manager Green's Hudson from the Country Club on New Year's Eve. Halting the South Fort Smith car near the end of the line, they ordered motorman Plant into the automobile at gunpoint. Taking his cash and watch, they released him at a deserted spot near the canning plant. That same night, three masked men held up the Van Buren stub car, taking cash at gunpoint from motorman Hargrove. The Light & Traction announced it would place guards on one-man cars, and two-man crews would be armed to resist robbers.

On the evening of May 3, 1923, motorman H. M. Upchurch was robbed near the Van Buren smelter stop. F. Ben Walker brought bloodhounds that led him to Bill Decker's house, only a few hundred feet away. Decker, charged with robbery, was later released when Frank Hand was taken into custody.

One man operation of the big Van Buren cars began May 16, 1923, with senior operators John E. Daley and W. W. Cope serving as inspectors to assure smooth operation. One week later, a service truck, owned by a local service station operator, struck an outbound Little Rock Avenue car at Texas Corner. The truck driver failed to see the streetcar in a driving rain.

At four o'clock in the morning of July 23, 1923, three bandits robbed motorman F. J. Golden on the South Fort Smith line near an area known as 'Society Curve' near the Suburban Junction, taking \$50 belonging to the Light & Traction, ignoring the five passengers, and throwing the controller handle into the weeds. The bandits fled in a Ford automobile.

The July 28, 1923 crash at Eleventh and Grand Avenue amounted to the most spectacular accident on the Light & Traction. A small truck cut in front of car 25, inbound on Eleventh and loaded with standing passengers. Both the streetcar and the truck were southbound, and occupants

of the truck were homeward bound to Jenny Lind after attending the Goben revival meeting when suddenly the driver moved to make a left turn, cutting in front of the moving streetcar. Although the driver and two infant children were only slightly hurt, there was one fatality, with two serious injuries, and six slight injuries. Some of the passengers in the small truck had been riding with legs dangling from the rear of the vehicle.

On August 1st, northbound car 80 picked up a roadster at Eleventh and North F Streets. Both vehicles moved at low speed when the automobile crossed directly in front of the streetcar. Fifteen passengers lifted the roadster from the streetcar fender, and there were no injuries. On August 24th, motorman H. L. Clegg reported that as he proceeded toward Van Buren a young man came forward to inquire of an address, and picked his pocket, taking \$15 from a bag attached to his belt. In October, Park Hill motorman Roy Taylor was robbed at South 21st and O Streets. The bandit boarded the streetcar at Texas Corner, and as the last remaining passenger rang the bell to get off at O Street, pointed a pistol at Taylor's back, taking his money and watch. The robber fired his pistol into Taylor's shoulder, wounding him seriously, but not critically. Taylor brought the streetcar back to Sterling Drug Store to report the robbery.

Two masked robbers took approximately \$30 and a watch from motorman C. O. Humphrey on November 21,

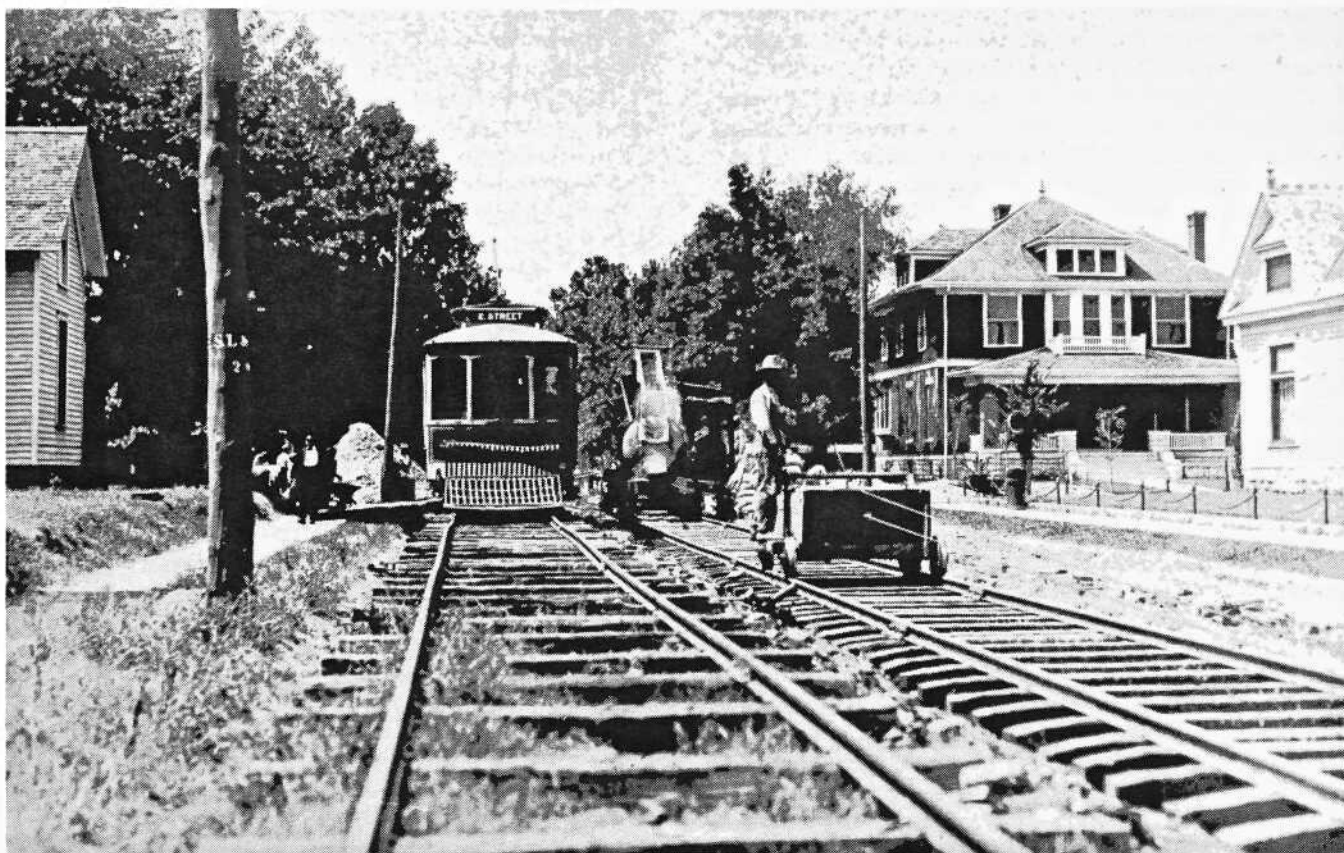
1923. Boarding the South Fort Smith car at Mill Creek crossing, and riding to a stop near the Advance Military Academy, the bandits ignored the passengers.

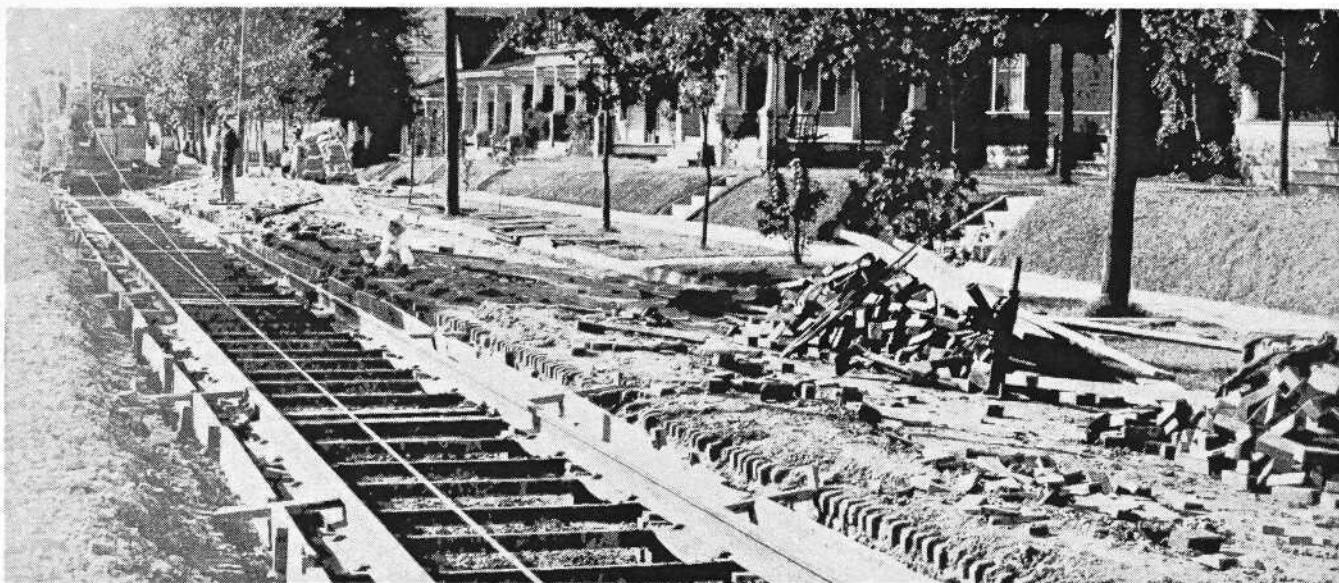
Two masked bandits took an estimated \$600 from checker C. J. Jordan at the carbarn on December 1, 1923. Arriving at the carbarn on conclusion of operations shortly after midnight, each motorman dumped contents of his farebox into a sack, placing it on a rack in Jordan's office. Jordan, proceeding with sorting and counting the day's receipts, failed to note activities in a hallway leading to his room. A number of carmen observed two masked men calmly enter the carbarn. Motorman E. S. Parker assumed the two masked men might be some sort of joke until one of them fired a pistol into the air. While one bandit covered Jordan and the carmen, the other one picked up the loaded rack filled with money bags. Both proceeded to a large black touring car, where an accomplice waited with the motor running. The three bandits sped eastward on Kelley Highway toward Waldron Road.

Light & Traction employee Charles McClure slipped out of the carbarn when he saw the masked bandits arrive, and telephoned police from the fire station across the street. Night police captain Wells and officer Taylor responded, and with Jordan they hurried eastward from the barns, out Kelley Highway, but found no trace of the bandits.

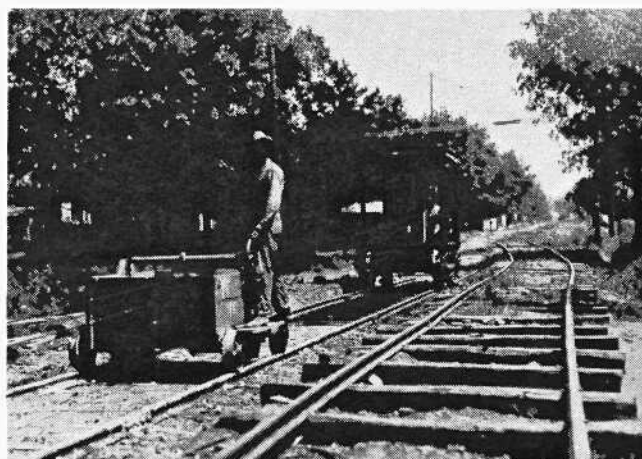
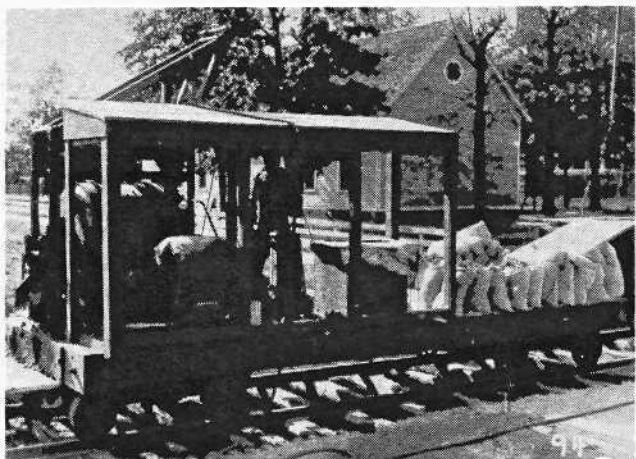
CONSTRUCTION

TRACK RECONSTRUCTION ON NORTH E STREET IN 1911

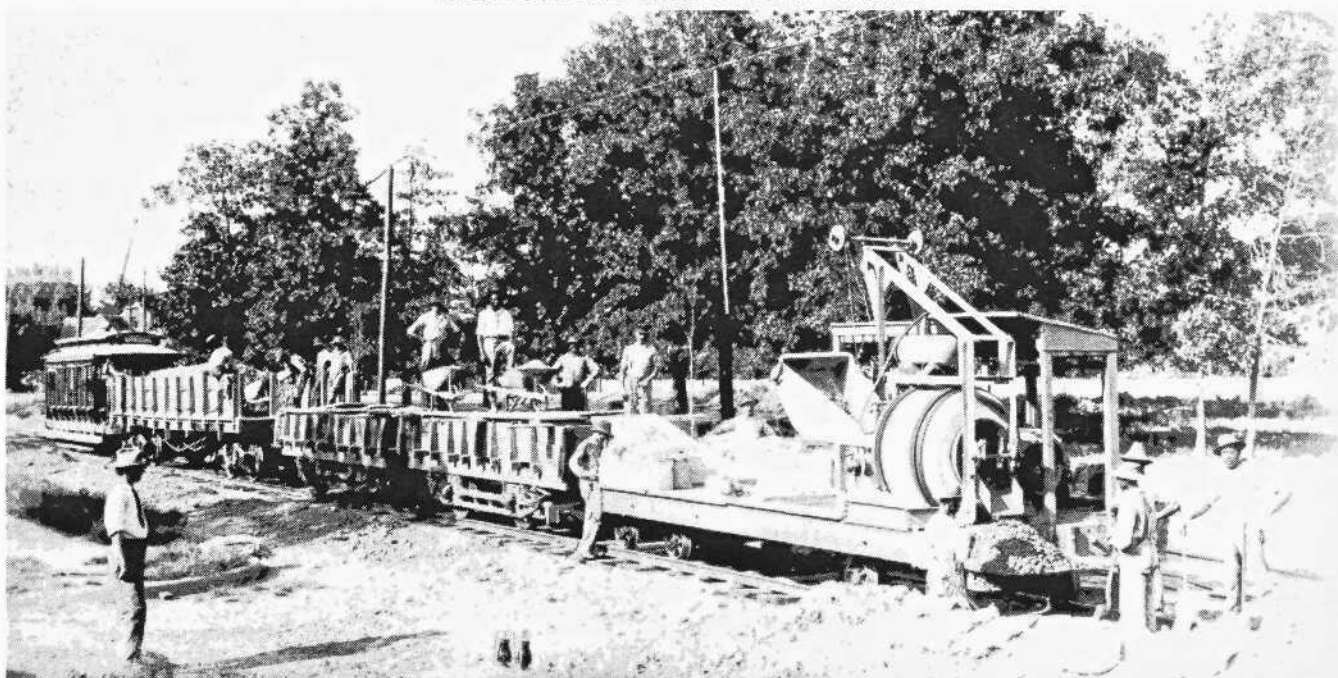


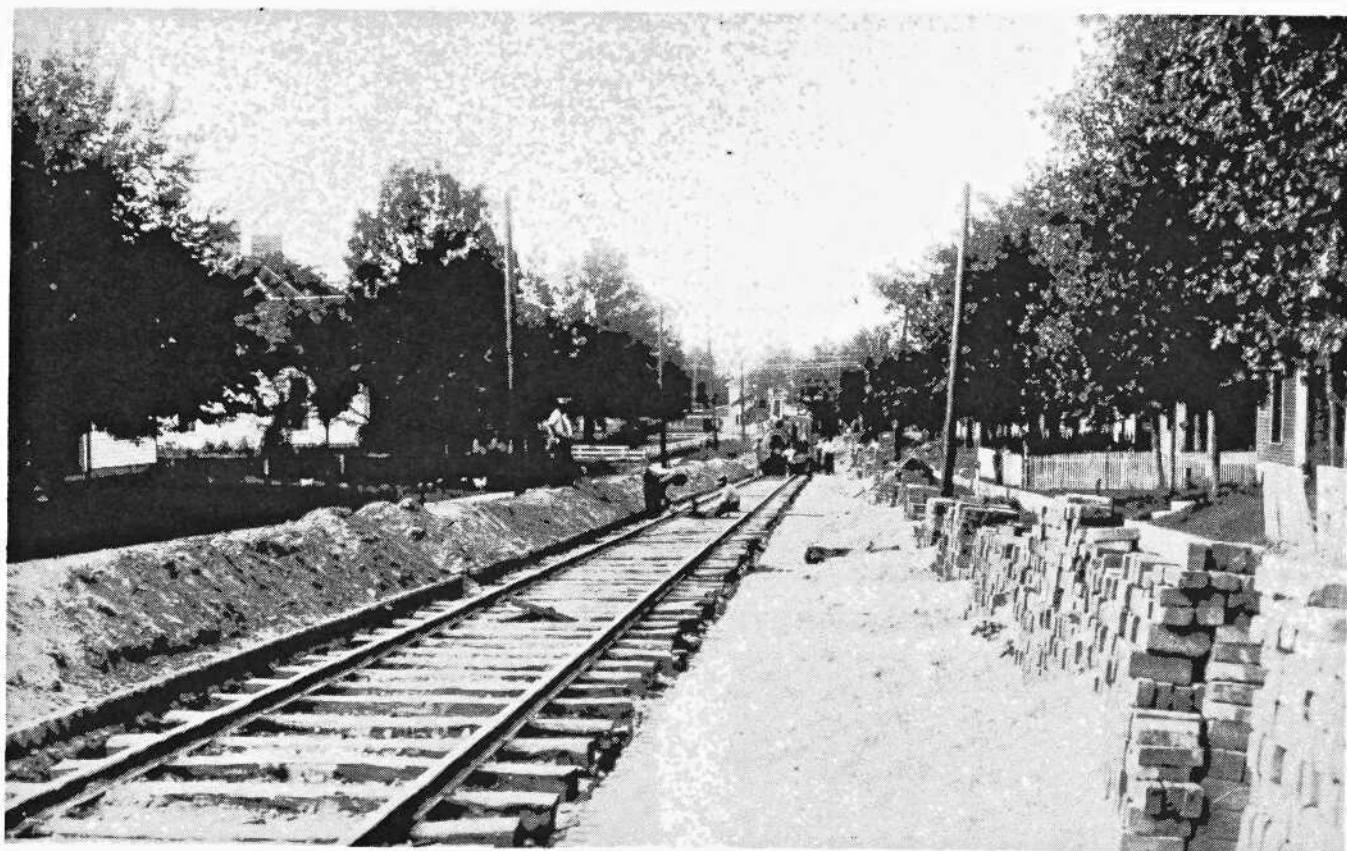


TRACK RECONSTRUCTION AND PAVING CIRCA 1911



CONCRETE MIXER and TRAIN





BONDING and CONCRETING SOUTH 21st and E STREETS

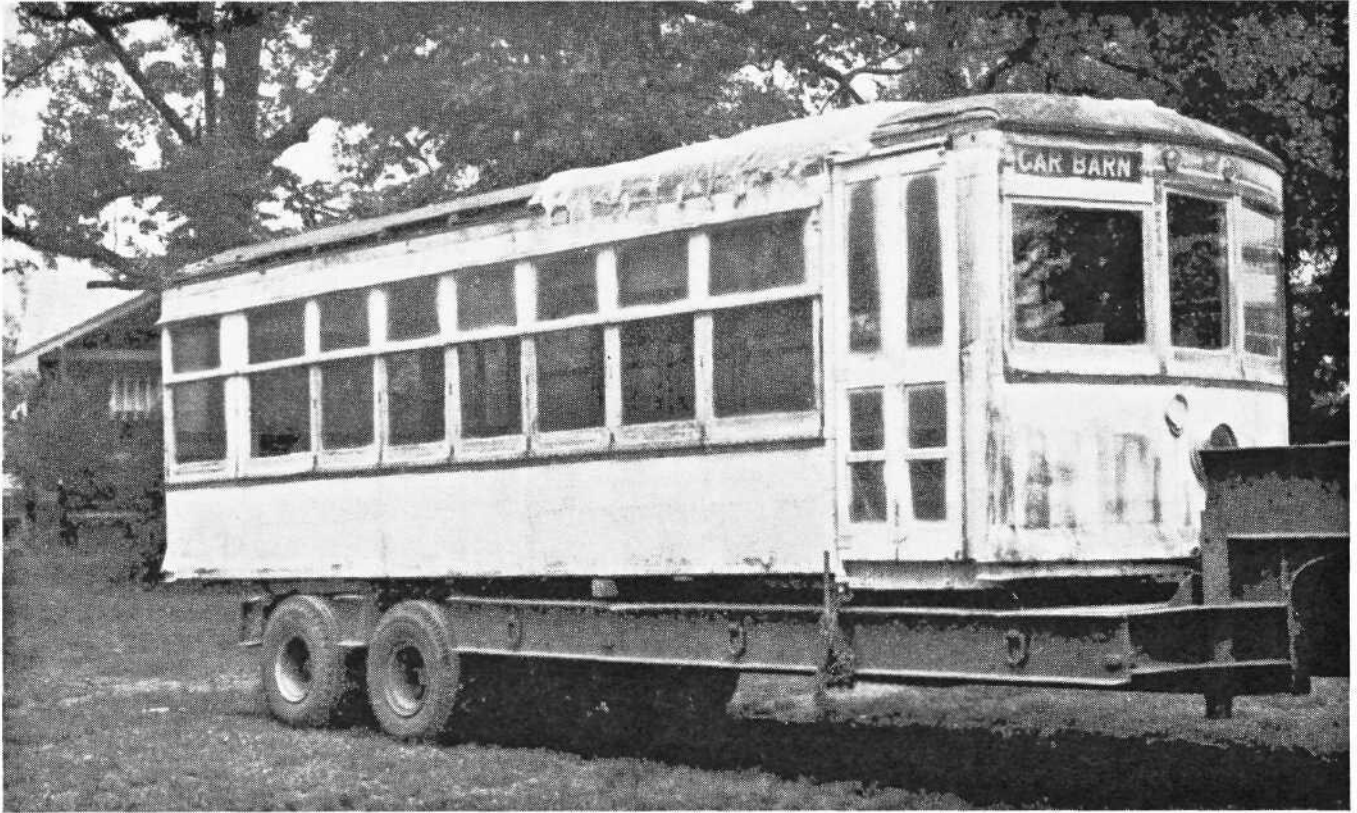


CHAPTER III

REMNANTS and RESTORATION

by Amelia Martin

Photographs by Dr. Art B. Martin



Birney Safety car #205 at Mulberry, on truck ready for historic trip to car barn in Fort Smith for restoration.

On Wednesday, June 21, 1979, for the first time in forty-six years, proudly displaying its "Car Barn" destination sign, a Fort Smith street car traveled Fort Smith streets on its way to the car barn where it had spent so many nights in the past. Though aged and faded by time, and having to be hauled "piggyback" on a truck (courtesy of Senator Gene Rainwater), it was part of a dream fulfilled for the members of the Fort Smith Streetcar Restoration Committee and the people of Fort Smith.

This homecoming was the result of a series of events -- some accidental, others planned.

Early in 1978, Dr. Art Martin suggested to his wife Amelia, co-editor of the *Journal of the Fort Smith Historical Society*, that an article be written about the Fort Smith streetcar system for *The Journal*. Research for the

article led to Fred Krock and Charles Winters, two natives of Fort Smith who had spent years collecting Fort Smith streetcar pictures and information.

Contact was made first with Fred Krock, who now lives in California. He immediately called Charles Winters, currently a resident of Kansas City, Missouri -- and both of them generously made their collections available to the Fort Smith Historical Society.

In addition to other materials, Mr. Winters gave to the Society, for publication, his unpublished manuscript of the history of the Fort Smith streetcars and the Fort Smith Light and Traction Company, which owned and operated the Fort Smith streetcar system. The research and manuscript were done as a part of Mr. Winters' graduate study at the University of Missouri at Kansas City.¹

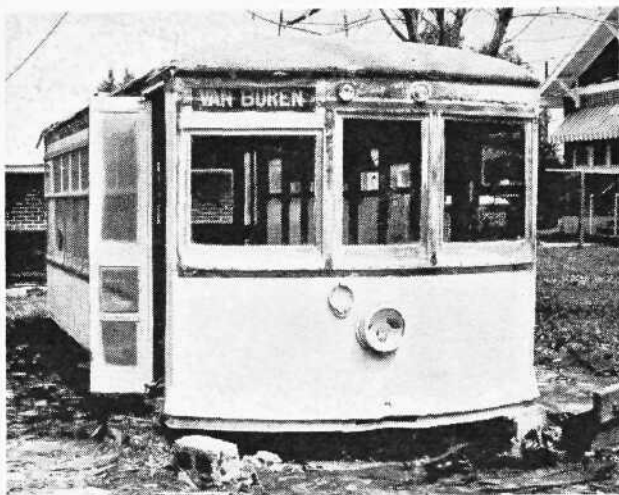
¹Mr. Winters' history of the Fort Smith Western Railroad, prepared for his Master's thesis, is currently in the process of publication. Also, a recent publication of the Oklahoma Historical Society, Volume III in the *Oklahoma series*, carried his account of the Fort Smith and Western Railroad, 1915-1923.

The July 1979 issue of *Railfan & Railroad* magazine carried a three page story about Mr. Winters entitled, "Interesting Railfan, Number 195 Charles E. Winters." Mr. Winters' vocation is switchman for the Norfolk & Western Railroad -- his avocation, running a steam locomotive on weekends at the

World of Fun park in Kansas City

In addition to Charles Winters' interest in railroads, streetcars, and locomotive photography, he shares an interest in music with his wife. They are both avid opera fans. Mrs. Winters, the former Ann Kathryn Pollard, is a medical microbiology technologist. They were married in Kansas City on May 24, 1947, and they have three children.

Charles E. Winters, the fourth of six generations to be named Charles Edward Winters, was born March 8, 1927, at Fort Smith, Arkansas, the son of Charlie and Janet (Matlock) Winters.



Another view of car #205

Until this time, it was believed that no remnants of the Fort Smith streetcars still existed, but, as if predestined, while the manuscript of the streetcar history was being edited for publishing, a Fort Smith Birney Safety car was advertised, in an antique journal, as being for sale in Shreveport, Louisiana. The advertisement was called to the attention of Charles Winters, who immediately called Dr. Martin, and the idea of a streetcar restoration for Fort Smith was born.

A committee was formed to investigate buying the streetcar in Shreveport and returning it to Fort Smith for restoration. The committee, headed by Dr. Martin, was composed of J. T. Gilliam, manager of the Fort Smith Division of Oklahoma Gas & Electric Company; Lem Bryan, attorney; Albert Black, retired streetcar motorman; Jimmie Delle Caldwell, president Belle Fort Smith Tour; Victor Carey, president Heritage Foundation; Amelia Martin and Carolyn Pollan, Fort Smith Historical Society; Paul Latture, manager of the Fort Smith Chamber of Commerce; and Chris Whitt, manufacturer.

Subsequent publicity led to the finding of the remains of six other Fort Smith streetcars -- five Birney cars and #10, one of the early electric cars. Two Birney cars were in Mulberry, the property of the Paul Alexander family; one Birney at Booneville; one Birney on the farm of H. H. Snip Carroll at Lavaca; one Birney in Cedarville, on the farm of Elmer Smith; and the last, car #10, at Turner Bend, Arkansas.

The family of Paul Alexander gave the better of their two cars to the restoration committee, together with a generous money donation to help with the restoration, in memory of Mr. Alexander.

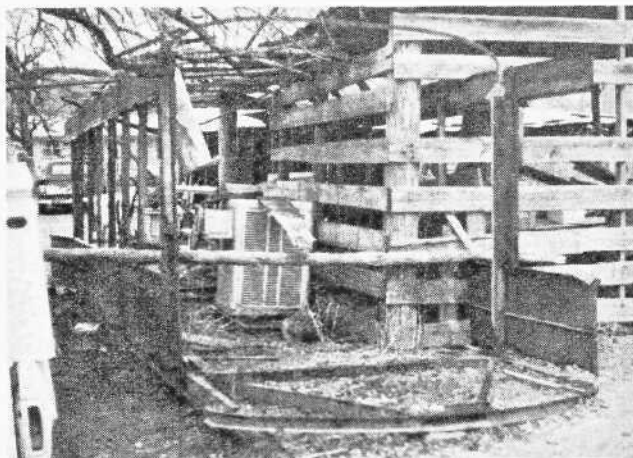
Goals of the Fort Smith Streetcar Restoration Committee are.

1. Restoration of two original Fort Smith Birney streetcars constructed in 1919.
2. Operate, if possible, on Fort Smith's streets as a part of the historic transportation that influenced the development of Fort Smith.
3. Create an effective tourist attraction to Fort Smith.
4. Eventual creation of a Fort Smith Transportation Museum.

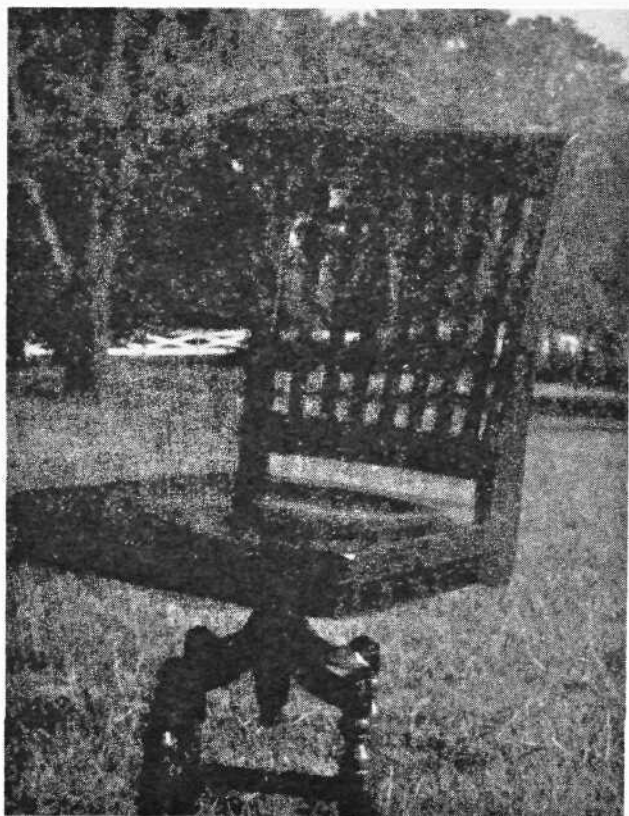
Restoration plans are in progress, with Steve Iverson, of the Illinois Railroad Museum, serving as consultant to the Fort Smith committee.

Arrangements have been made with the city of Fort Smith to house the cars in the former streetcar barn for restoration, and car #205 has made its trip home. Tentative plans have been made to bring the car from Shreveport in September.

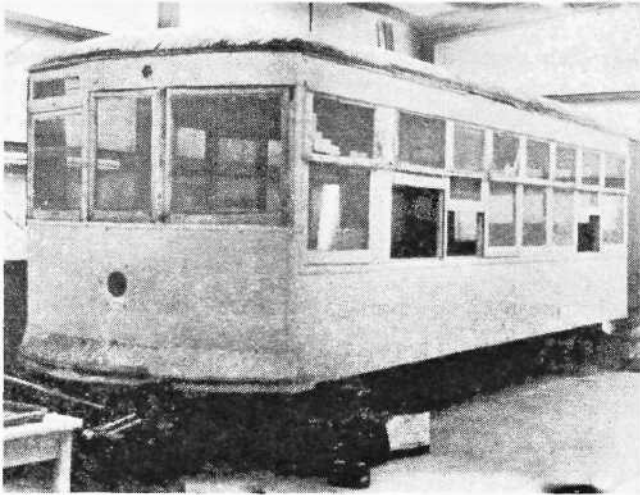
All restoration work will be a labor of love, financed by volunteer donations of money and labor. The Fort Smith Streetcar Restoration Committee is a non-profit organization, and all contributions to the restoration are tax-free.



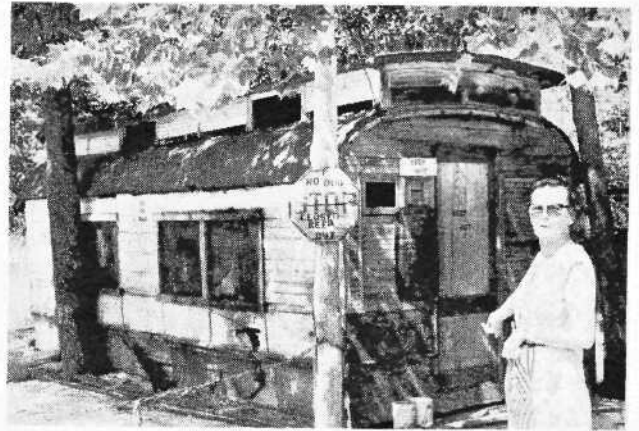
Remnant of Birney Safety car found at Cedarville, Arkansas



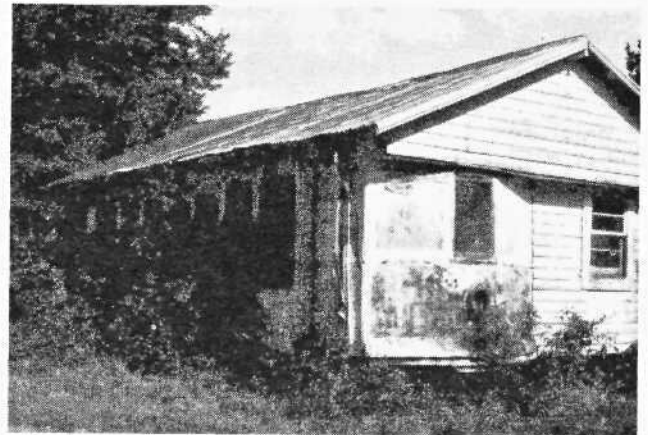
Motorman's chair from car at Cedarville - now owned by Mrs. Carrie Spradley Bushmiaer of Kibler, AR, daughter of William Pink Spradley, Sr., motorman for Fort Smith Light and Traction.



Birney Safety car #224, Shreveport, Louisiana. After retirement from service in Fort Smith, this car was used for a diner in Ashdown, Arkansas. It will be returned to Fort Smith for restoration.



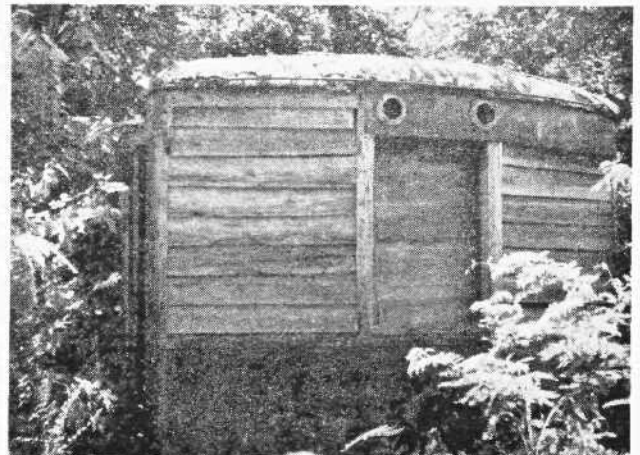
Mrs. Flora Turner of Ozark standing in front of car #10, early Fort Smith electric car, which is now located at Turner Bend, Arkansas. Currently used for storage and a dog house, this car was used as a tourist cabin at one time.



Car #221, also on Alexander farm at Mulberry, built into a building.



Skeleton of Birney Safety car at Lavaca.



Birney Safety car at Booneville.

APPENDIX I

ROUTES

North Fifth Street Line

Beginning at North 11th (Midland Boulevard) and Division, cars proceeded on paved single track along the center of the street to 10th, moving to north side of the street on private right of way to 6th. Private right of way continued, crossing the Suburban railway, turning onto 5th with middle of paved street track beginning at North O and proceeding to Garrison. Passing sidings were near N, K, and G Streets. In early years car went to the foot of Garrison at First Street, at times service ended at the loop comprised of a track surrounding the block bordered by Garrison, No. 2nd, North A, and No. 3rd. The Fifth Street line was later combined with the Little Rock Avenue line, when cars operated on Division and Fifth as described, heading east on Little Rock Avenue line. Still later, the Fifth Street cars moved as described to Garrison, then headed out Towson Avenue as a combination with the Park Hill line during final years.

Eleventh Street - Van Buren Line

From foot of Garrison on double tracks in center of paved street to Texas Corner, cars turned onto 11th where the same style double tracks extended to a point where Midland Boulevard now begins, continuing double track private right of way in the center median strip to Waldron Road, crossing the Suburban railway, junctioning with the rock crusher spur at Q Street, Fifth Street line at Division Street, the carbarn at Kelley Highway, the Frisco connection diverging at a point near Plum Street, and a siding near the entrance to Electric Park. At Waldron Road, the route became single track private right of way along the west side of the roadway to the Van Buren Bridge, where double tracks set in bridge pavement carried the line across the bridge, followed by single track extending across the viaduct, entering middle of pavement on Van Buren's Fourth Street west to Main, north to East main, east on East Main, north on Fifteenth, east on Poplar, north on 20th, parallel to Frisco tracks on a private right of way, east on Alma Boulevard, south on Arkebauer Lane, and east on private right of way to the smelter. There was a passing track near 17th on Poplar.

Except when smelter operation required through-service operation, local Van Buren service came from the so-called *stub* car moving between Fourth Street and the smelter. A spur located at Fourth and Main permitted passing when needed.

South Fort Smith Line

From foot of Garrison, the route extended to Texas Corner on double track center of paved street, south on Towson on single tracks to Rogers, double track to South A, single track to Dodson, passing junction with the Park Hill tracks at South H Street. At Dodson, tracks moved to the west side of the roadway for private right of way, passing Arkoma line junction at South W Street, turning east on Fresno to Jenny Lind Road where tracks connected with Park Hill line at the fairgrounds. Continuing south along the side of Jenny Lind, crossing Suburban railway, extending south on private right of way, turning east on Savannah, and south on 31st to run along the side of the street to the South Fort Smith depot. Although the route is described as running along certain streets in this outline, practically all the route beyond the Suburban crossing was on private right of way. Although there were rutted and un-paved paths where motorists sometimes drove parallel to the tracks, most of what we know as streets along the South Fort Smith line were not streets during the years of Light & Traction service.

Arkoma Line

From a terminal situated at various times at the foot of Garrison, Texas Corner, and finally Texas Road and South W Street, (Texas Road became Towson) Arkoma service used tracks of the South Fort Smith line to the junction at South W Street. From the junction, Arkoma tracks diverged southwest descending a grade on private right of way, then turned west crossing Missouri Pacific tracks at grade. Proceeding west on what became Arkoma Road, the route crossed the Frisco at grade, extended around a hill some distance south of Schuller, continued south and west roughly parallel to Lowery and crossing that thorough fare near Blocker Street, continuing south on Choctaw, southwest on Gillette, turning onto Osage, onto LeFlore, and terminating on Eames, only a short distance from the Poteau River. Much of the Arkoma line has become automobile roadways.

Park Hill Line

Beginning at the foot of Garrison, but at various times using the 3rd Street loop, service began at first out Garrison to 13th, continuing out Little Rock Avenue, turning south on 21st onto single track as far as South H Street. When tracks were constructed on South H, Park Hill service diverged from Garrison at Texas Corner, proceeding south on Towson, east on H Street with single track extending along the center of the pavement, for connection with the track on South 21st Street, continuing south on 21st to Dodson. There were passing sidings on H, between 17th and 18th, and when required, cars met at the junction on 21st and H Streets. South of Dodson on 21st, park Hill cars moved on private right of way situated on the west of the curb as far as South W Street. With construction of the fairgrounds, Park Hill track was extended from W Street south to a connection with the South Fort Smith line. Anticipating increases in fairground traffic, a second track was installed situated on the east side of 21st between Dodson and South W Street, extending further in concrete pavement to South X, and on private right of way southward to a point beyond what now is called Dallas Street at the fairgrounds. Following fairgrounds bankruptcy, the west track from Dodson to the fairgrounds was removed. With abandonment of the Little Rock Avenue line, track between that line and H Street along 21st was removed. With South Fort Smith line abandonment, track between the fairgrounds and South W was pulled up, leaving only a single track route via Towson, South H, and South 21st Street to W for Park Hill service. Final period of Park Hill operation was as a combination with the North Fifth Street line, with cars moving between 11th and Division to 21st and South W Street in a continuous route.

Little Rock Avenue Line

Service began at the foot of Garrison, extending east on double tracks to 13th, and further east on Little Rock Avenue, passing junction with the Park Hill line at 21st. Double track ended just east of 23rd, single track continued to Greenwood, where the line turned south on private right of way at the east side of the curb line, with track ending at Oak Cemetery.

Grand Avenue Line


Beginning at the foot of Garrison, service extended to 13th, where cars turned northward on double tracks extending almost to D Street, further extending on single track, turning east on to Grand Avenue, passing a junction with the North E Street line. Continuing eastward on Grand, the route ended at Albert Pike Road. Passing sidings were at 16th, and 32nd and track crossed the Suburban railway near 31st Street.

North E Street Line

From the foot of Garrison, cars moved over the same tracks as the Grand Avenue route to a junction at Grand Avenue and North E Street, diverging to the latter street to continue on center of paved street tracks onto Blackburn, turning south on May, and east on Park to cross the Suburban railway. Continuing east with tracks on private right of way beside the roadway, the North E Street line terminated at Albert Pike Road. Passing sidings were situated near 17th and near Lecta Avenue.

LEGEND

Single track in street pavement: 

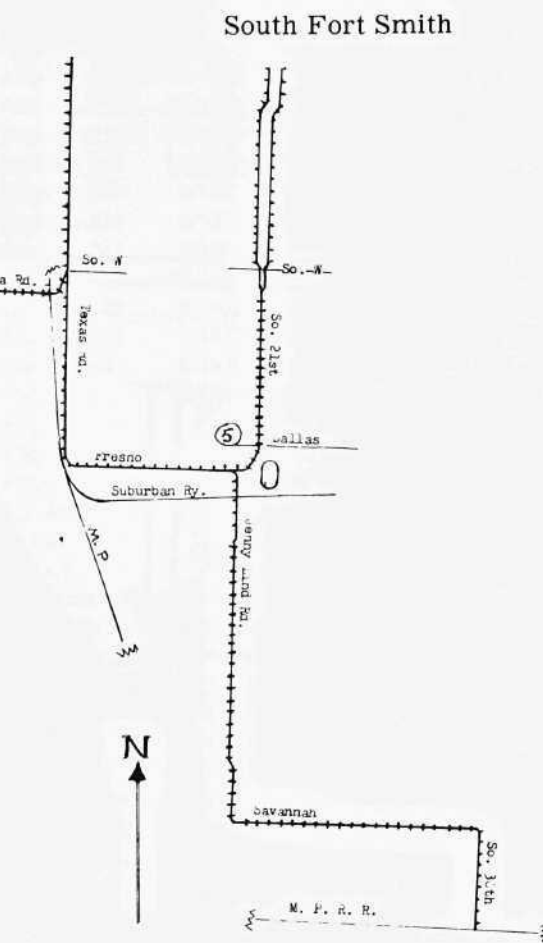
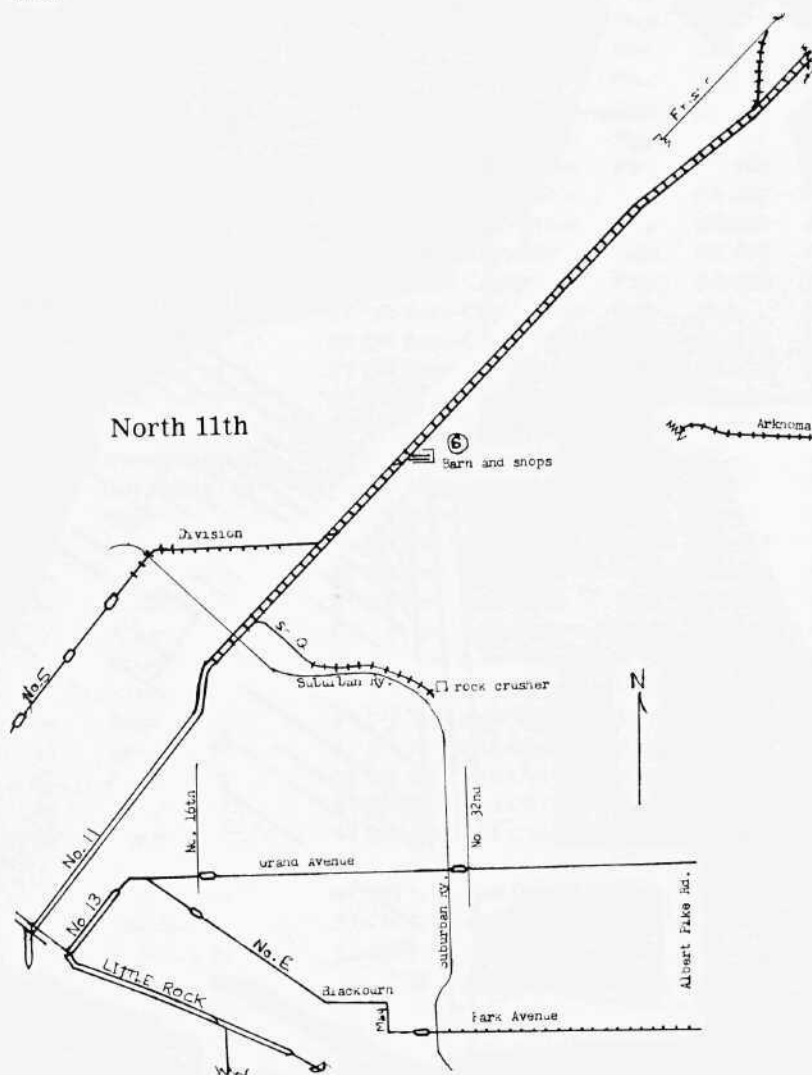
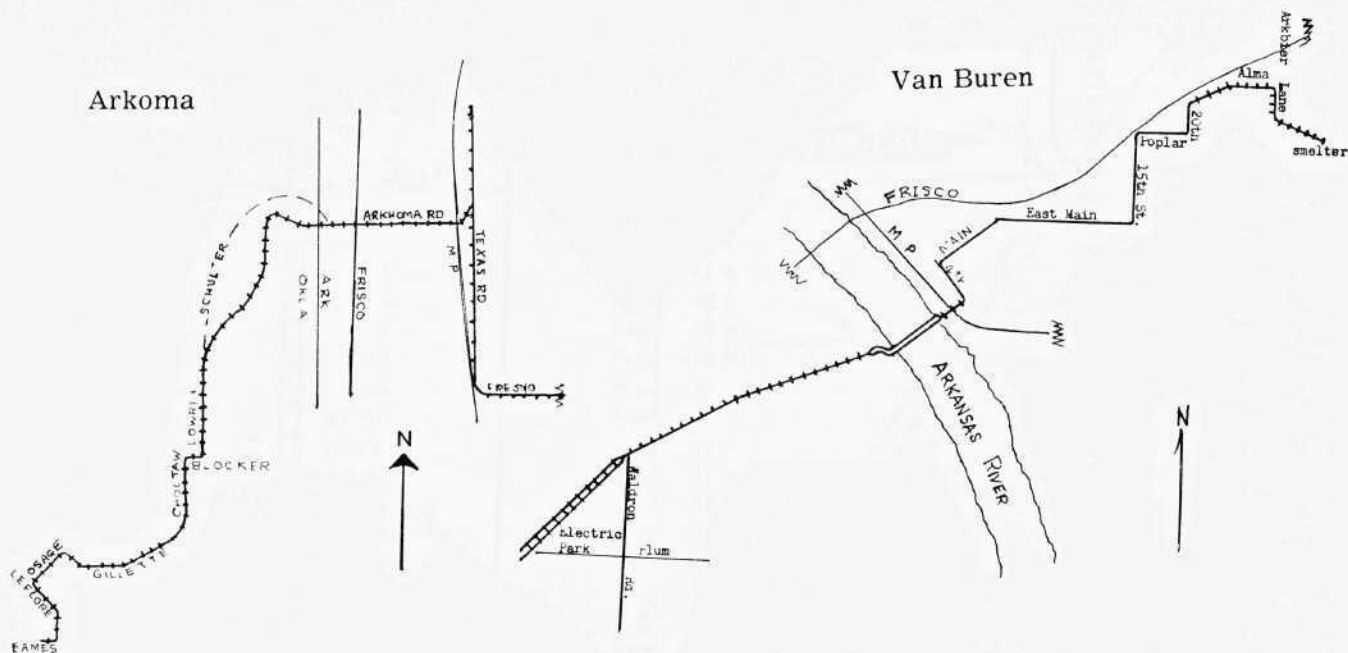
Double track in street payment: 

Unpaved track at side of street/roadway: 

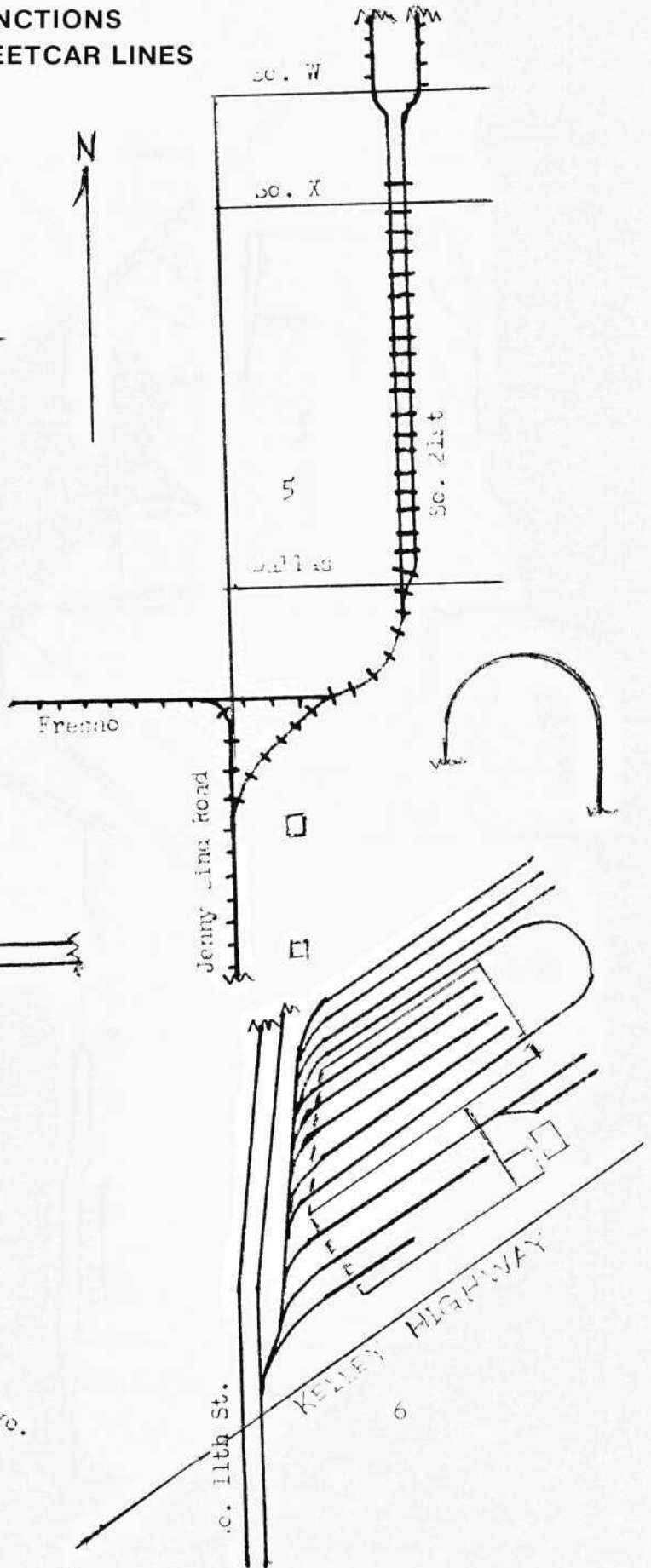
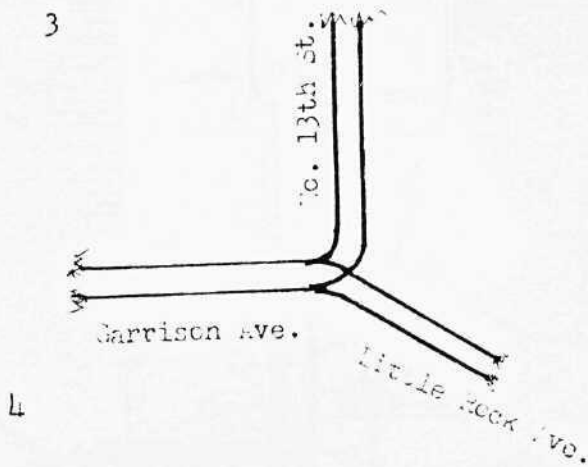
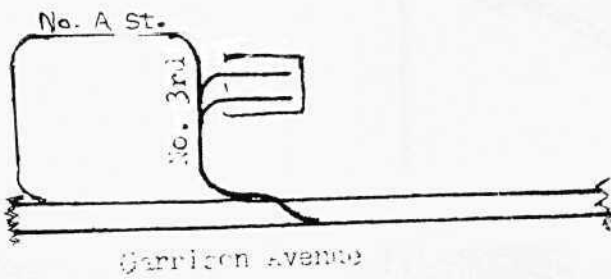
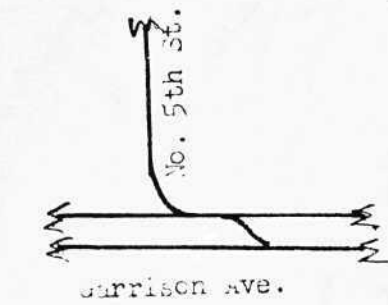
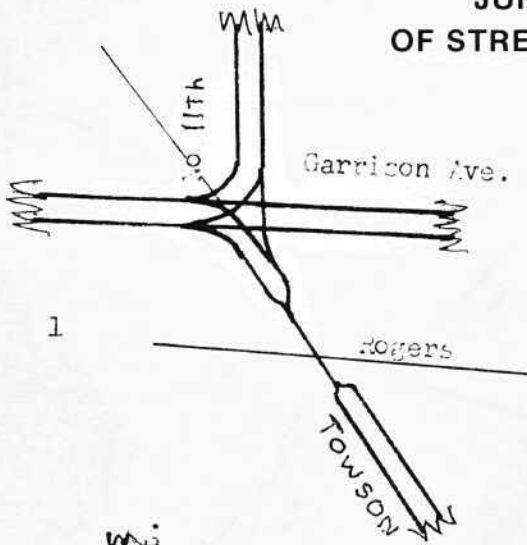
Double track in unpaved median strip: 

Single track on private right of way: 

Double track on private right of way: 



JUNCTIONS OF STREETCAR LINES



APPENDIX II

EQUIPMENT OF THE FORT SMITH LIGHT & TRACTION

Car Number	Type	Length	Style	Use	Motors	Builder and Order Number	Date	Remarks
	(Portable		On railway					
1	Substation)		Flatcar		None			to Van Buren
1	Streetcar		ST DR	Psg	12 A			Note 1
2	Streetcar		ST DR	Psg	12 A			Note 1, Burned
3	Streetcar		ST DR	Psg	12 A			Note 1
4	Streetcar		ST DR	Psg	12 A			Note 1
5	Streetcar		ST DR	Psg	12 A	American 274		Note 1
6	Streetcar		ST DR	Psg	12 A			Note 1
7	Streetcar		ST DR	Psg	12 A			Note 1
8	Streetcar		ST DR	Psg	12 A			Note 1, Burned
9	Streetcar		ST DR	Psg	12 A			Note 1
10	Streetcar		ST DR	Psg	12 A			Note 1
11	Streetcar		ST DR	Psg	12 A			Note 1, to Water Car
12	Streetcar		ST DR	Psg	12 A			Note 1
13	Streetcar		ST DR	Psg	12 A			Note 1
14	Streetcar		ST DR	Psg	12 A			Note 1
15	Streetcar 26'		ST DR 5-Window End	Psg				Blt as FS-VB #3
16	Streetcar 21'		ST DR	Psg	GE-516	St Louis 503	/1905	Rblt to 26' DT DR 11/1909
17	Streetcar 21'		ST DR	Psg	GE-516	St Louis 501	/1905	Rblt to 26' DT DR 1/1908
18	Streetcar 21'		ST DR	Psg	GE-516	St Louis 508	/1901	Rblt to 26' DT DR 10/1908
19	Streetcar 21'		ST DR	Psg	GE-516	St Louis	/1905	Rblt to 26' DT DR /1910
20	Streetcar 28'		DT DR Semi-Convertible	Psg	GE-202	American 782	10/1908	
21	Streetcar 28'		DT DR Semi-Convertible	Psg	GE-202	American 782	10/1908	
22	Streetcar 28'		DT DR Semi-Convertible	Psg	GE-202	American 782	10/1908	Renumbered 80 ca 1915
23	Streetcar 28'		DT DR Semi-Convertible	Psg	GE-202	American 782	10/1908	
24	Streetcar 28'		DT DR Semi-Convertible	Psg	GE-202	American 782	10/1908	
25	Streetcar 28'		DT DR Semi-Convertible	Psg	GE-202	American 782	10/1908	
26	Streetcar 21' 8"		ST DR Semi-Convertible	Psg	12 A	Danville 547	9/1910	Brill Truck
27	Streetcar 21' 8"		ST DR Semi-Convertible	Psg	12 A	Danville 547	9/1910	Brill Truck
28	Streetcar 21' 8"		ST DR Semi-Convertible	Psg	12 A	Danville 547	9/1910	Brill Truck
29	Streetcar 21' 8"		ST DR Semi-Convertible	Psg	12 A	Danville 547	9/1910	Brill Truck
30	Streetcar 21' 8"		ST DR Semi-Convertible	Psg	12 A	Danville 547	9/1910	Brill Truck
31	Streetcar 21' 8"		ST DR Semi-Convertible	Psg	12 A	Danville 547	9/1910	Brill Truck
32	Streetcar 21' 8"		ST DR Semi-Convertible	Psg	12 A	Danville 547	9/1910	Brill Truck
33	Streetcar 21' 8"		ST DR Semi-Convertible	Psg	12 A	Danville 547	9/1910	Brill Truck
34	Streetcar 21'		ST DR Rblt from Open	Psg	GE-264	FSL&T	12/1911	Note 2
35	Streetcar 21'		ST DR Rblt from Open	Psg	GE-264	FSL&T		Note 2
36	Streetcar 21'		ST DR Rblt from Open	Psg	GE-264	FSL&T		Note 2
37	Streetcar 21'		ST DR Rblt from Open	Psg	GE-264	FSL&T		Note 2
38	Streetcar 21'		ST DR Rblt from Open	Psg	GE-264	FSL&T		Note 2
39	Streetcar 21'		ST DR Rblt from Open	Psg	GE-264	FSL&T		Note 2
40	Streetcar 21'		ST DR Rblt from Open	Psg	GE-264	FSL&T		Note 2
50	Streetcar 21'		ST DR 10 Bench Open	Psg	12 A	American 585	/1905	
51	Streetcar 21'		ST DR 10 Bench Open	Psg	12 A	American 585	/1905	
52	Streetcar 21'		ST DR 10 Bench Open	Psg	12 A	American 585	/1905	
53	Streetcar 21'		ST DR 10 Bench Open	Psg	12 A	American 585	/1905	
54	Streetcar 21'		ST DR 10 Bench Open	Psg	12 A	American 585	/1905	
55	Streetcar 21'		ST DR 10 Bench Open	Psg	12 A	American 585	/1905	
56	Streetcar 21'		ST DR 10 Bench Open	Psg	12 A	American 585	/1905	
57	Streetcar 21'		ST DR 10 Bench Open	Psg	12 A	American 585	/1905	
58	Streetcar 21'		ST DR 10 Bench Open	Psg	12 A	American 585	/1905	
59	Streetcar 21'		ST DR 10 Bench Open	Psg	12 A	American 585	/1905	
60	Streetcar 21'		ST DR 10 Bench Open	Psg	12 A	American 585	/1905	
61	Streetcar 21'		ST DR 10 Bench Open	Psg	12 A	American 585	/1905	
62	Streetcar 21'		ST DR 10 Bench Open	Psg	12 A	American 585	/1905	
63	Streetcar 21'		ST DR 10 Bench Open	Psg	12 A	American 585	/1905	

Car Number	Type	Length	Style	Use	Motors	Builder and Order Number	Date	Remarks
64	Streetcar	21'	ST DR 10 Bench Open	Psgr	12 A	American 585	/1905	
65	Streetcar	21'	ST DR 10 Bench Open	Psgr	12 A	American 642	/1906	21E Truck
66	Streetcar	21'	ST DR 10 Bench Open	Psgr	12 A	American 642	/1906	21E Truck
67	Streetcar	21'	ST DR 10 Bench Open	Psgr	12 A	American 642	/1906	21E Truck
68	Streetcar	21'	ST DR 10 Bench Open	Psgr	12 A	American 642	/1906	21E Truck
69	Streetcar	21'	ST DR 10 Bench Open	Psgr	12 A	American 642	/1906	21E Truck
70	Streetcar	21'	ST DR 10 Bench Open	Psgr	12 A	American 642	/1906	21E Truck
80	Streetcar	28'	DT DR Semi-Convertible	Psgr	GE-202	Renumbered from 22 ca	1915	
100	Locomotive		DT BCF Railroad Coupler	Freight	514	(4 Motors) FSL&T		Automatic Air Brakes
101	Trail Flat		ST Railroad Coupler	Freight	None	Modified from Streetcar,		Automatic Air brakes
102	Trail Flat		ST Railroad Coupler	Freight	None	Modified from Streetcar,		Automatic Air Brakes
103	Trail Flat		DT Railroad Coupler	Freight	None	FSL&T		Automatic Air Brakes
104	Trail Flat		DT Railroad Coupler	Freight	None	FSL&T		Automatic Air Brakes
105	Emergency		ST AR	Work	564	FSL&T		Hand Brakes
108	Express	33'	DT AR Railroad Coupler			FSL&T	/1911	Welding Equipment
110	Trail Flat	36'	DT Railroad Coupler	Freight	None	FSL&T		Automatic Air Brakes
111	Trail Flat	36'	DT Railroad Coupler	Freight	None	FSL&T		Automatic Air Brakes
112	Line Car		DT AR 1/2 Cab, 1/2 Deck	Work		FSL&T (Pneumatic Platform, Deck for Wire Reels)		
200	Streetcar	27' 9 1/2"	ST AR Birney Safety Car	Psgr	GE-264	Cincinnati 2420	12/1919	
201	Streetcar	27' 9 1/2"	ST AR Birney Safety Car	Psgr	GE-264	Cincinnati 2420	12/1919	
202	Streetcar	27' 9 1/2"	ST AR Birney Safety Car	Psgr	GE-264	Cincinnati 2420	12/1919	
203	Streetcar	27' 9 1/2"	ST AR Birney Safety Car	Psgr	GE-264	Cincinnati 2420	12/1919	
204	Streetcar	27' 9 1/2"	ST AR Birney Safety Car	Psgr	GE-264	Cincinnati 2420	12/1919	
205	Streetcar	27' 9 1/2"	ST AR Birney Safety Car	Psgr	GE-264	Cincinnati 2420	12/1919	
206	Streetcar	27' 9 1/2"	ST AR Birney Safety Car	Psgr	GE-264	Cincinnati 2420	12/1919	
207	Streetcar	27' 9 1/2"	ST AR Birney Safety Car	Psgr	GE-264	Cincinnati 2420	12/1919	
220	Streetcar	28' 1/2"	ST AR Birney Safety Car	Psgr	GE-264	American 1425	/1926	
221	Streetcar	28' 1/2"	ST AR Birney Safety Car	Psgr	GE-264	American 1425	/1926	
222	Streetcar	28' 1/2"	ST AR Birney Safety Car	Psgr	GE-264	American 1425	/1926	
223	Streetcar	28' 1/2"	ST AR Birney Safety Car	Psgr	GE-264	American 1425	/1926	
224	Streetcar	28' 1/2"	ST AR Birney Safety Car	Psgr	GE-264	American 1425	/1926	
225	Streetcar	28' 1/2"	ST AR Birney Safety Car	Psgr	GE-264	American 1425	/1926	

EXPLANATION OF SYMBOLS

ST Single truck, or four-wheel street car.

DT Double truck, or eight-wheel streetcar.

DR Deck roof style

AR Arch roof style.

BCF Box cab freight style

SD Side door baggage car

Note 1. Cars numbered 1 through 14 represent rolling stock on hand prior to FSL&T control. Two single truck cars are known to have been operated by FSVB Company, and the rest must have come from McCloud's FSSRY. Both firms owned cars that became FSL&T. Some of these early cars, with car body removed, were modified for use as flat cars and other construction equipment

Note 2. Cars 34 through 40 were rebuilt from open cars of the 50 through 70 series, with conventional car bodies, air brakes, heaters, new seating, motors and other improvements for one man P. A. Y. E. operation

Dimensions listed are for carbody length between end panels; in other words the figures do not include the platforms. All cars were equipped with two motors except where otherwise noted

Colors Early color schemes for FSL&T cars is said to have been green and maple yellow, with cherry window sashes, gold leaf stripes and lettering. Roofs were light brown and running gear was black

Later, the cars were finished same as above except carbody was solid dark green with silver leaf stripes and lettering

Final colors were same as early scheme, except carbody was traction orange with a yellow band around the window area. Black stripes bordered between the orange and yellow, and lettering was also black. Window sashes were red

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