

WINDSOR
ESSEX
AND
LAKE
SHORE

Newspapers



PS

INCORPORATED 1952

NUMBER 395

SEPTEMBER 1982



UPPER CANADA RAILWAY SOCIETY
BOX 122 STATION "A" TORONTO, ONTARIO

THE SUNSHINE COUNTY ROUTE

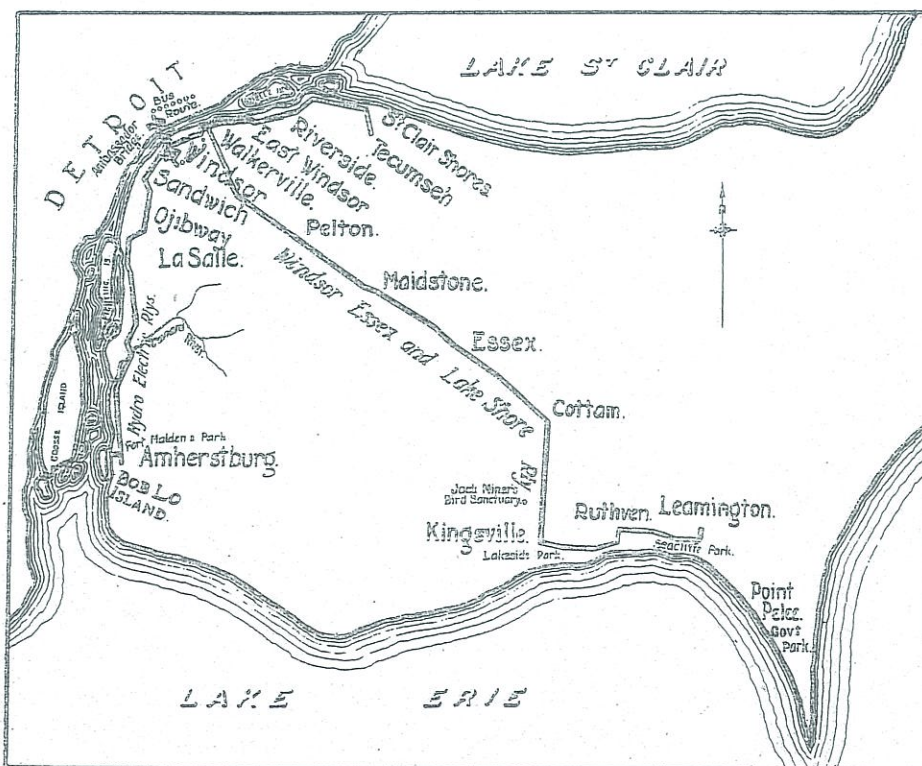
The Windsor, Essex and Lake Shore Rapid Railway, the 36.12 mile interurban line which connected Windsor and Leamington, Ontario, was abandoned 50 years ago this month, on September 15, 1932. The railway was noteworthy in two respects: one was its use, over a period in excess of 20 years, of single phase 6600 volt AC traction power, produced by its own steam-driven generating station; the second was the extensive modernization of the railway as undertaken in 1929-30, including conversion to 600 volt DC power, which was very quickly followed, virtually without parallel in such circumstances, by total abandonment.

The Windsor, Essex and Lake Shore Rapid Railway was incorporated as early as 1879 by Provincial Statute, to extend from Essex Centre to Windsor and to Kingsville. There is no record of what form of motive power was intended, although it would seem probable that the line would have been steam operated. Nothing further happened until 1901, when the lapsed charter was re-enacted, with power to extend also to Wheatley, the undertaking now being promoted by W. Newman and A.J. Nelles, of whom the former was City Engineer of Windsor. After some years of difficulty in obtaining capital, U.S. financing was secured and the Keystone Construction Co. of Philadelphia began building the line. In 1904 power was obtained to extend from Wheatley to Cedar Springs and Chatham, and, in 1905, to extend to Tilbury. Keystone ultimately ran into financial difficulties, and the Ontario firm of J. Piggott and Sons took over to complete the railway.

The principal difficulty encountered in the actual construction of the line was the prolonged refusal of the Michigan Central Railroad to permit a level crossing of its line at Essex, an impasse which was finally broken when the Board of Railway Commissioners authorized the crossing and decreed that the cost of stationing a watchman at the crossing be equally divided between the two railways. An unusual condition in the franchise granted by the City of Windsor was that permitting the use of T rail provided that the WE&LS would substitute girder rail therefor after three years if the City should choose to so direct.

An order for five 55-foot passenger cars was placed with Ottawa Car Co. in the spring of 1906, and their delivery in 1907 permitted the commencement of operation to Essex in September of that year, although the exact date has not been determined. Four former New York elevated cars were

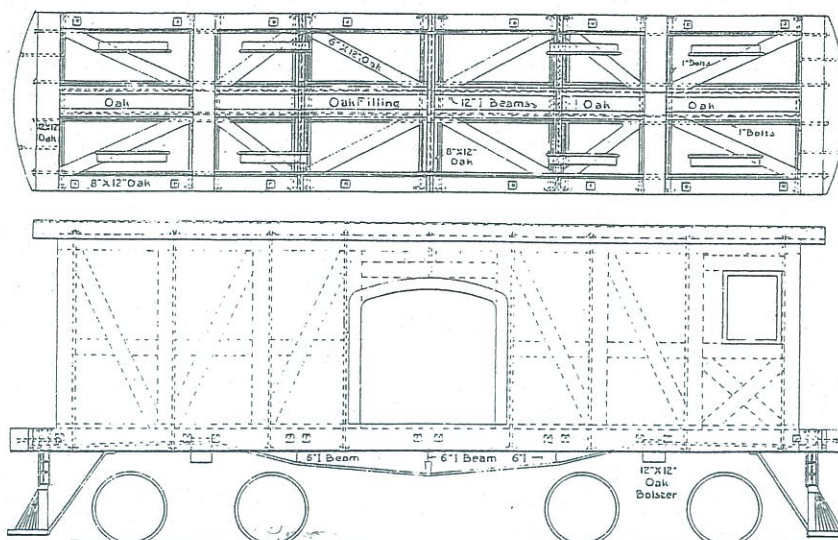
Contd. Page 5



WINDSOR, ESSEX & LAKE SHORE RAILWAY

also bought in 1907, to serve as trailers behind the first WE&LS locomotive, No. 50, particularly in summer excursion service to Lake Erie. The line was completed to Kingsville in 1907, and the first run to Leamington occurred on April 10, 1908.

The operating schedule for most of the life of the WE&LS provided for nine trips a day each way, on a basic two-hour headway. Two of these schedules ran as limiteds for a period, with an 85-minute running time between end terminals, while the local runs took 105 minutes. The line had a very level profile, although there was one 5% grade in Kingsville. The main carhouse, shop and power house complex was located on a spur line on Park Street in Kingsville, and there was one substation at Maidstone. The Kingsville carhouse was a 50-foot x 120-foot brick building, while the power house, a 60-foot x 120-foot brick structure, had an attached concrete block boiler house, 50 feet x 70 feet. Steam was produced by four 360 H.P. Canada Foundry Co. watertube boilers at 110 lb. pressure, with power being generated by two Goldie and McCulloch cross compound slow speed engines each connected to a 500 KW. Westinghouse single phase 6600



Windsor, Essex & Lake Shore—Plan and Elevation of Locomotive Framing

locomotive 50

(From Electric
Railway Journal)

volt AC generator. The normal load approximated 600 KW., although momentary loads of up to 900 KW. could be accommodated. A combined carhouse and freight shed was established on Arthur St. in Windsor, having 60-foot x 120-foot dimensions and brick construction. A combined brick station and corrugated iron freight shed was erected at Essex, a facility that was more auspicious than those accommodating passengers at the larger communities on the line.

Rail on the WE&LS was of 60 lb. and 80 lb. ASCE section, in 33-foot lengths, laid on cedar and jackpine ties. Wooden overhead poles of 30 to 35-foot length supported the 10-point catenary overhead, with a 7/16 steel messenger wire supporting a 3/0 grooved copper trolley wire. Voltage was stepped down from 6600 volts to 1100 volts within the City of Windsor.

More former New York elevated cars were purchased in 1912 for use as trailers, and a further order for motor cars was placed, this time with the little-known Tillsonburg Car Co., which delivered them in 1913. Three cars (one a combine) were purchased second hand in 1920 from the Richmond-Ashland Railway in Virginia. Three cars had been extensively damaged in a fire at Kingsville Carhouse in the spring of 1917, which also damaged locomotive 50. Canadian Railway and Marine World reported that the intention was to have the cars rebuilt by Preston Car and Coach Co., but the Virginia purchase may have been to replace the damaged cars. The fire was said to have originated in a dry kiln used for drying armature, transformer and other coils.

Freight and express traffic was developed on the WE&LS, although it always represented a minor portion of operating revenues, about 25% thereof. Steam road connections existed with the CPR, MC (Canada Southern), Essex Terminal and Pere Marquette. Passenger traffic grew dramatically in the early years, from some 100,000 in 1908 to 900,000 in 1921, the peak year, much of this growth being attributable to the fact that the steam roads did not offer good service to southern Essex County. There was considerable excursion business to Mattenas Park in Kingsville.

The inevitable reversal in the fortunes of the WE&LS occurred after 1923. Highway competition, combined with advancing depreciation as the result of the pounding given the permanent way by the heavy AC equipment, began to put the operation in serious financial straits. Matters were not helped by a head-on collision, in dense fog, on November 15, 1923, near Devonshire Race Track on Howard Avenue, three miles south of the Windsor city limits, in which motorman Orley Wigle lost his life and 13 passengers were injured. The cars (identities unknown) were reported to have telescoped to the extent of about 20 feet of their respective lengths. The motorman of northbound car was ultimately charged with manslaughter.

In mid-1924 some 3000 feet of track were moved from the side to the centre of the road through Cottam Village; road pavement was placed on each side of the track, although the latter was left unpaved. On April 8, 1925 the railway commenced operation of its subsidiary "Highway Motor Coach Line" with two 18-passenger Gotfredson sedan type buses, Nos. 1 and 2. This was in direct response to two other bus operators who had commenced service paralleling the WE&LS line during the

summer of 1924. Six bus trips were operated between Windsor and Leamington having a one hour, 45 minutes running time, tickets being interchangeable with the rail service. Six car runs were withdrawn at this time, leaving the rail operation rather skeletal. Two further Gotfredson buses, of larger capacity, Nos. 3 and 4, were received in the spring of 1926 and a garage was constructed adjacent to the railway's facilities at Kingsville. On September 1, 1926 the operations of the company reached their greatest geographical extent as bus service was commenced, using one of the 18-passenger vehicles, between Leamington and Chatham. This was however short-lived, being discontinued on March 1, 1927 as unprofitable. Total cessation of bus operation quickly followed, on April 17, 1927, the Ontario Department of Highways having agreed not to permit competing bus service by other operators, and full railway service was resumed. Operation at this time included seven daily Windsor-Leamington runs and one from Windsor to Kingsville. There were also two limited runs, daily except Sunday, to Leamington. There was one freight run, daily except Sunday, from Windsor to Leamington, and a second such run between Windsor and Kingsville.

Notwithstanding the elimination of bus competition, the owners of the WE&LS, Dominion Traction and Light (which also controlled the Windsor Gas Company), threatened abandonment in 1927, as deficits began. The stage was being set for the later purchase of the railway by the municipalities through which it passed and its operation by the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario.

The Period of Hydro Operation

At a meeting convened in Kingsville on February 1, 1927 attended by no less than 200 persons, including representatives of the Windsor, Essex and Lake Shore, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission and municipalities along the railway, President G.D. Wickett said that the intention of the company was to discontinue operations unless financial relief could be secured, and that an application for permission to abandon would be made within 60 days. It was agreed that Hydro would make a survey of the property, at no obligation, to determine its value as a going concern in order that the municipalities might consider a purchase. The survey was carried out over the ensuing months and was presented at a further meeting on June 10, 1927, at Essex, for transmittal to the respective municipal councils. Officials W.R. Robertson and T.U. Fairlie of the HEPC Railways Division (more familiarly known as Hydro Electric Railways) pointed out that their Essex Division (the local lines in Windsor) had car mile operating costs only half of those incurred on the WE&LS and that they were confident that they could make the latter at least a break-even operation with conversion to 600 volts DC operation. They presented their valuation of the railway at \$296,000, a figure which was agreed to by the Dominion Traction and Light management. The estimated cost of rehabilitation came to a much larger amount, i.e., \$696,496, including the purchase of five new cars, two locomotives, three automatic substations, four new sidings, a telephone system, a block signal system, and extensive track and overhead rehabilitation. Six hundred volts DC operation would permit physical tie-in with the Essex Division (Sandwich, Windsor and Amherstburg Ry.), effecting certain economies. The combined purchase and rehabilitation costs of about \$1 million would produce carrying charges of about \$100,000. It was further proposed that the Essex Division local bus service on Howard Ave. be discontinued and that a local car service be operated on the WE&LS. The municipalities to participate in the purchase were 12 in number, as follows: Windsor, Sandwich West, Sandwich East, Sandwich South, Maidstone, Essex, Colchester North, Gosfield North, Gosfield South, Kingsville, Mersea, Leamington. Hydro agreed to submit model by-laws for the local councils to submit to ratepayers for purposes of voting on the question of purchase of the railway. Debentures for the purchase of the line would be deposited by the municipalities with the HEPC which would in turn issue bonds to secure financing for the rehabilitation.

While negotiations dragged on, the WE&LS continued to make physical changes. 1100 feet of paving was completed on the track on Park Street in Kingsville (shed trackage leading to the shops and power house), while in the same town a 600-foot siding was constructed to the Canadian Co-operative Tobacco Growers Ltd. plant.

January 2, 1928 was voting day in most of the affected municipalities on the question of purchasing the railway, and the result was a resounding "yes" in most cases. However, the process of takeover proved to be a very slow one. A bill was introduced in the Ontario Legislature to validate the purchase and to ratify the agreement with Hydro respecting its acting as operator; the bill passed with all three readings occurring on March 30, 1928. The bill created the Windsor, Essex and Lake Shore Electric Railway Association, consisting of one member from each participating municipality, appointed for a three-year term. The Association was empowered to arrange with any body corporate giving railway service within the County of Essex to operate the WE&LS. Hydro was not specifically mentioned in the bill. The Government ordered, as a condition of the operating agreement, that the municipalities issue debentures to the extent of 10% more than they had been bargaining for, i.e., to the total extent of \$1,100,000. The purpose of this was to make the Hydro bonds more attractive to buyers with the additional security provided.

The agreement between Hydro and the municipalities was signed on January 3, 1929. The WE&LS Association sold a \$1 million bond issue to the Canadian Bank of Commerce, making \$980,000 available for purchase and rehabilitation. The Association offered prizes for a new "slogan" name for the railway; one name which was under consideration was "The Sun Parlour Railway". Ultimately a somewhat similar name, "The Sunshine County Route", won out. However, as of mid-1929, the demurring Townships of Sandwich East and Sandwich South had still not passed by-laws providing for their share of the debenture cost, and the existing WE&LS management announced on July 10 that abandonment of the line would occur on July 22 and that the municipalities would be sued for the agreed purchase price of \$296,000, if the sale was not consummated. The threat, however, was not borne out, and the transfer of ownership finally occurred at midnight, September 7-8, 1929, with the Hydro Electric Railways immediately assuming operations.

A.F. McGill, Superintendent of the Essex Division, was placed in direct control of the WE&LS, the intention being to co-ordinate the operation of the two properties, with economies

passenger main compartment with plush upholstered bucket type transverse seats (two pairs longitudinal) with tables placed between the end seats (abutting the compartment partition) and those next to them, and a 10-passenger smoking compartment containing two 5-passenger leather upholstered settees. The car interiors were lit by seven centre line dome fixtures, five in the main compartment and two in the smoker. The trailer had a central main compartment with 28 plush upholstered seats. There was a 15-foot solarium at each end of the car, with that at one end being provided with 5-passenger plush settees on each side of the car. The solarium at the other end was furnished with four large plush upholstered chairs on each side and a 4-place settee upholstered in hand buffed Spanish leather fitted into the curvature of the car end. Interior finish of the equipment was of birch mahogany, and the exteriors were finished with a blue and yellow livery with "The Sunshine County Route" emblazoned across the sides in a distinctive lettering style. Wide vision single pane brass sash windows, 30"x42", made each of the units in effect an observation car. A mesh window guard was attached to the bottom of the sash, the guard being concealed in a window pocket when the window was closed; this arrangement avoided fixed exterior window guards. The cars were heated electrically by underseat units. Perhaps the most exotic touch of all consisted of the metal bar assemblies, with circular drumhead sign, affixed to the dashes of car 502. Like those placed on buses of that era, these attachments provided a rough simulation of the railing on a railroad observation car, and in the case of 502 emphasized the deluxe accommodation provided in that car. The attachments are visible in the photo of car 502 reproduced on Page Two of this issue, in company with three other WE&LS 500's.

Niagara, St. Catharines and Toronto Ry. steeple cab locomotive 12 was acquired for the WE&LS and was refurbished as the latter's No. 9. Locomotive 50 was totally reconstructed as an elongated steeple cab unit, numbered 10. Hydro continued to make other physical improvements to the property in 1930. Four thousand feet of track were reconstructed through the town of Essex, in connection with a street widening scheme, with 100 lb. ARA #A rail on the existing oak ties and concrete foundation, with a new paving base and brick pavement. A passing siding was installed on Howard Ave. near Tecumseh Road to permit local service, using 80 lb. rail and brick paving; this siding had equilateral turnouts at each end to permit the passage of standard railroad equipment. When the City of Windsor widened Arthur Street in 1930, 700 feet of track had to be relocated to the new centre line and rebuilt with 80 lb. thermit welded rail on cedar ties and brick paving. A new spur was constructed at the Leamington freight shed and the previously mentioned spur was laid to Seaclyff Park on a 66-foot right-of-way using 80 lb. ASCE rail on cedar ties and stone ballast. Additional freight shed accommodation was constructed at Kingsville and Leamington, with arrangements having been made with the local fruit growers' association to cover the cost.

During a major portion of 1930 the railway operated with DC power at the Windsor end of the line and AC power at the Leamington end, with a shuttle bus operation connecting the two segments, requiring through passengers to transfer twice. The HEPC Annual Report for 1931, which mentions this operation, does not explain precisely why the bus link was necessary, but it seems fairly obvious that sections of the line had the overhead de-energized as the work of conversion to DC progressed. The Report mentions that excursion business to Lake Erie was virtually non-existent in 1930 because of this operating constraint. Carload freight traffic nosedived in 1930 also, with only one car having been originated from the canning factories at Kingsville and Essex during the last six months of the year. During that period the Heinz plant at Leamington shipped nothing, owing to depressed economic conditions. On the "up" side, arrangements were completed with CN Express to double the rate paid to the WE&LS, providing some \$6000 to \$8000 more revenue per annum. Kingsville Shop was closed after the two locomotives had been completed. The WE&LS assumed the Howard Ave. local service on December 15, 1930, on a 15-minute headway, and Hydro expected that it would earn "a good profit". As the planned three city cars were never acquired by the WE&LS, it is assumed that borrowed SW&A equipment was used. As 1930 closed, the management continued to express the hope that summer operating profits would cancel out the winter period deficits.

In the context of transit operations in the 1980's, one might think that the WE&LS situation was such that periods of adversity should have been overcome. There were no less than 12 municipal owners to "share the load", and a prestigious operator with proven expertise in electric railway operation was present. The property had just been placed in excellent physical condition, with substantial operating economies now possible by comparison with the former situation. It must be remembered, however, that deficit financing of transit systems, accepted virtually universally to-day, was not part of the thinking of the operators, municipalities or the public 50 years ago. Belts were tightened everywhere in those early depression years and a municipal council which attempted to cover losses on an electric railway system by way of increased tax levies would likely have been voted out of office. Any hope of persuading electors to contribute to sustaining a losing railway was made even more remote by the proven success of the motor bus, regarded by the layman as a desirable and modern substitute in spite of its inferiority, obvious to anyone who really cared to look.

It was realized during the course of 1931 that the deficit conditions of 1930 were more deep seated than to have resulted from the operating difficulties of that year. Canadian Railway and Marine World reported that, by the fall of the year, the owner municipalities were giving up hope of the WE&LS ever being a paying proposition. At a meeting on October 26, 1931 the municipal representatives discussed the options of abandonment and of selling or leasing the line to other interests. Windsor and Kingsville were opposed to abandonment, but the smaller municipalities, by weight of numbers, ultimately won the day. The total deficit in the year ending October 31, 1931 was \$102,000. The talk for a period was of temporary abandonment until economic conditions improved, and when what proved to be the end finally came, on the date mentioned at the beginning of this article, there was no firm decision that the abandonment would be permanent. By this time the accumulated deficit was \$150,753. The Windsor, Essex and Lake Shore Railway Association had obtained bus and truck permits from the Department of

Highways and had arranged with Canadian Greyhound the latter's operation of Windsor-Leamington twice effective September 18, with the Association to receive 9% of the gross receipts. There was no interest in assumption of the freight service by the neighbouring steam roads, though Michigan Central officials had inspected the property in August. The employees, numbering 47 at the time of cessation of service, had submitted a proposal to the Association for taking over the line, but the scheme was deemed to be unrealistic.

All physical assets of the WE&LS were turned over to the Trusts and Guaranty Co. of Windsor, agent for the bondholders. This company, after scrapping the equipment which was without resale value, attempted over a succeeding period of years to dispose of the remainder, which was placed in the Windsor carhouse. So tight was the space in this facility that a wooden door could not be closed over the end of one of the steeple cabs, and a bulge was constructed in the door to box the locomotive in. The municipalities (Windsor having withdrawn from the Association by this time) approached the Provincial Government in 1934 seeking assistance in meeting the financial burden occasioned by the continuing payments on the bonds, the argument being that Hydro had sweet-talked the municipalities into the purchase of the railway. The HEPC produced memoranda as evidence to deny that allegation, and the municipalities appear to have left empty-handed.

The track and overhead were removed in the summer of 1935. Rail was sold to the American Iron and Steel Co. of Boston; aluminum and copper overhead materials were sold to a Windsor scrap dealer; the ties were sold to farmers along the line, and the roadside right-of-way was parcelled off to adjacent owners or to the Department of Highways. Finally, in 1939, the Montreal and Southern Counties Railway expressed interest in the 500 series cars, and 507 was extricated from the carhouse and sent to St. Lambert to undergo tests on the Granby interurban line. These were pronounced successful and the balance of the series was shipped to Montreal. Locomotives 9 and 10 remained in the Windsor carhouse for several more years while attempts were made to sell them by the Transit Equipment Co. of New York City. They ultimately went to the Cornwall Street Railway, Light and Power Co. in March, 1943.

The 500's, much better known to railfans as the M&SC 620 series, went on to serve on the Granby run up to 1951 and thereafter saw much reduced usage, until 1955, in local service to the south shore communities. The last phase of their history (621 excepted) commenced in September, 1955 when they were transferred to the Niagara, St. Catharines and Toronto Railway for Thorold-Port Colborne service, with couplers removed and large plow type pilots applied. The trailer, renumbered 220 on the M&SC, came to St. Catharines but was not used on the NS&T. Motors 620, 622 and 623 served until the March 30, 1959 abandonment of the Welland Subdivision ended all interurban electric railway service in Canada. Car 621 (WE&LS 501) went to the Seashore Trolley Museum in 1955 where, happily, it can be seen to this day as a reminder, even though still in C livery, of a relatively little known Ontario interurban and of a valiant but futile attempt to reverse its fortunes.

References:

- Canadian Railway and Marine World, various references.
- Hydro Electric Power Commission of Ontario Annual Reports, 1929-1931.
- Electric Railway Journal, 1908.
- Ohio Brass Traction News, November, 1930.
- Robert Dorman, A Statutory History of the Steam and Electric Railways of Canada.
- John F. Due, The Inter-City Electric Railway Industry in Canada.
- Central Electric Railfans' Association, Bulletin 9, January, 1940.

WINDSOR, ESSEX AND LAKE SHORE RAILWAY--A DESCRIPTION OF THE LINE FROM PERSONAL OBSERVATION AS IT LAY IDLE BUT INTACT IN THE MID-1930'S

By John A. Maclean

Starting point in downtown Windsor was in Pitt St. just east of Ouellette Ave., the city's main shopping thoroughfare. Terminal facilities were minimal, comprising the single track in the centre of the street, a storefront waiting room, and nothing more: no sidings, runaround or turning facilities were provided, nor did any link exist with the nearby SW&A tracks in Ouellette Ave. From this inauspicious beginning the line proceeded two blocks east in Pitt St., jogged south one short block in Windsor Ave. (now Mercator Pl.) and continued four blocks east in Arthur St. (now Chatham St. East), passing the car house on the north side of Arthur between Glengarry and Aylmer Avenues.

Turning south into Aylmer Ave., the scenery changed from shabby commercial to shabby residential, improving gradually as one progressed. A double-track SW&A line was crossed at Wyandotte St., again with no track connection between the two systems, and a couple of blocks beyond this Aylmer Ave. makes a reverse curve to merge with Glengarry Ave. to form Howard Ave. This was followed by the interurban line, which continued south on Howard until another SW&A double track was encountered at Erie St. This time track connections did exist, in the form of connecting curves permitting operation from east in Erie to south in Howard and from north in Howard to west in Erie.

Continuing south in Howard Ave., the first passing siding was reached near Tecumseh Rd., and some distance beyond this, the edge of the city coincided with level crossings over the Essex Terminal and Canadian Pacific Railways just east of the point where these cross each other, the whole triangular interchange area being known on all three railways as Lake Shore. In the process of crossing the steam roads the WE&LS forsook the centre of Howard Ave. for its west shoulder, while the street itself changed character into a two-lane paved County road. Continuing through a sparsely built-up area now known as Remington Park, several spurs diverged into small industries, while at Grand Marais Rd. the line passed near the Michigan Central Railroad's roundhouse and hump yard, a loop being provided at this point for turning

city cars. A little farther on, two race tracks faced each other across Howard Ave., Devonshire on the east side and Kenilworth on the west. Beyond this the surroundings became completely rural, flat-as-a-billiard-table prairie country.

Some few miles farther on, Highway 3 was reached, the interurban curving left to follow the north side of this to Maidstone, where it crossed to the south side and continued to Essex, passing through the town in the middle of the main street, with a short passing siding at the centre of town. From Essex to Cottam and a little beyond the line occupied the south side of Highway 3, then curved to the right on a short stretch of private right-of-way to run south along the west side of a County road leading to Kingsville. Passing Jack Miner's celebrated bird sanctuary on the right, the streets of Kingsville were soon gained; the line turned east at the four corners in the centre of town. What is now Highway 18 was followed east for approximately half the distance to Leamington, whereupon the line turned abruptly north along what is now Highway 107 to reach the village of Ruthven, and then turned east again on private right-of-way which brought it to the outskirts of Leamington. Here it turned north again in the main street, which it followed to its intersection with Highway 3, this being the heart of downtown Leamington. The WE&LS thus ended as it began in downtown Windsor as a lonesome single track petering out in the middle of the street.

The Windsor, Essex and Lake Shore Railway comprised a single-track main line 36.12 miles long, plus a small amount of yard and siding trackage (there were other passing sidings besides the two mentioned above, but this observer has lost track of their exact locations--it was all a long time ago!), mostly on roadside reservation, with a few stretches of private right-of-way, and street running in Windsor (slightly over two miles), Essex (three quarters of a mile), Kingsville (one mile) and Leamington (three quarters of a mile). Main line overhead was of simple catenary type, supported from wooden poles by bracket arms on the roadside and private right-of-way sections, and by span wires in the streets. Catenary was rare on roadside trolley lines, and equally so over street trackage, thus giving a somewhat exotic air to what was otherwise a strictly "grass roots" operation. Industrial spurs had plain direct suspension trolley wire, and all overhead sported the special trolley ears and long pulloffs required for pantograph operation, a holdover from high-voltage days, as all operation after the 1930 voltage change was by conventional trolley poles. The three substations built during the 1929-1930 rehabilitation program, at Maidstone, Cottam and Ruthven, were yellow brick buildings housing the rotaries, adjoined by the usual transformers surrounded by chain link fences. Stations were of the storefront type, apparently the norm in Essex County, as the SW&A provided its patrons with the same kind of accommodation in Windsor and Amherstburg.

POST-ABANDONMENT OPERATION OF A PORTION OF THE WINDSOR, ESSEX AND LAKE SHORE RAILWAY BY THE SANDWICH, WINDSOR AND AMHERSTBURG ELECTRIC RAILWAY By John A. Maclean

After WE&LS operation was discontinued on 15 September 1932, passenger and freight service was provided on a small portion of the line by the Sandwich, Windsor and Amherstburg Electric Railway, using its own equipment. The portion of WE&LS track involved in this operation extended about three miles from the connection between the two systems at Erie St. and Howard Ave. to the twin race tracks, Devonshire and Kenilworth, at the edge of the suburban area.

Passenger operation took the form of SW&A's HOWARD car line, extending from one of several around-the-block loops in downtown Windsor, south in Ouellette Ave. and east in Erie St., to Howard Ave., this being SW&A double track shared with other routes, thence south on Howard to the loop at Grand Marais Rd. Service was provided every 15 minutes (every 20 minutes on Sunday) by SW&A's 201-series single-truck lightweight steel city cars, similar to Birneys. No extra fare was exacted for travel beyond the city limits: regular city fares, at that time 10 cents cash or four tickets for 25 cents, were charged, and free transfers were issued to and accepted from the other car lines.

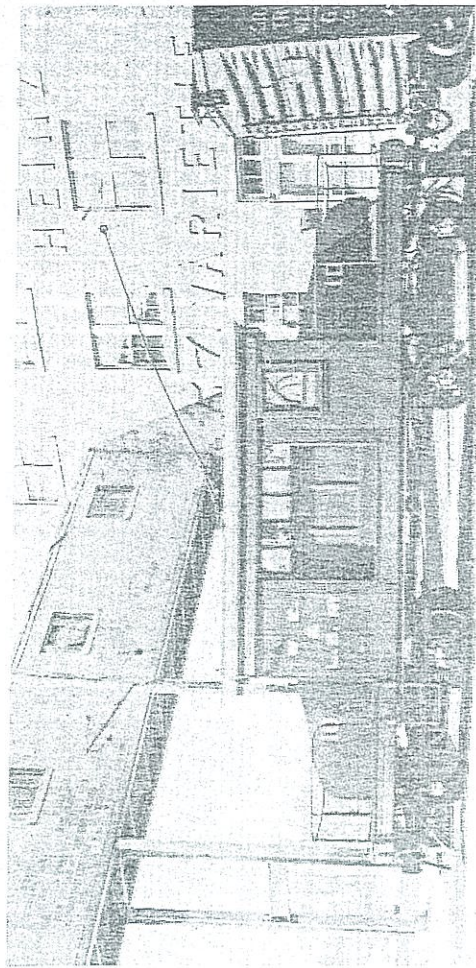
Freight service was furnished between the steam road interchanges at Lake Shore and the industries along Howard Ave. as far as the race tracks, motive power taking the form of large box motor 199, uniquely painted bright yellow with black lettering, all other SW&A equipment being in a red-and-cream livery. This monster made its home at SW&A's own car house on London St. West (now University Ave.) at Elm Ave., deadheading six mornings a week via London St. and the route of the HOWARD line to Lake Shore to pick up its interchange freight cars from the steam roads there, returning as another deadhead move when its work was done, usually around noon hour or early in the afternoon.

No use was made by the SW&A of the WE&LS track between downtown and the Erie-Howard connection, nor of the WE&LS car house on Arthur St., the latter being filled literally to overflowing with stored WE&LS equipment considered to have resale value. This comprised all five of the 1930-built interurban cars and the two home-made steeple-cab locomotives. This trackage was paved over and the overhead dismantled at the same time the rest of the WE&LS beyond the race tracks was torn up, leaving the car house and its contents devoid of any track connection with the outside world. This also left the SW&A still operating the above-described remnant for several more years after all the rest of the line had been scrapped. This was finally brought to an end when the SW&A implemented their own bus substitution and track abandonment program in the late 1930's. Final chapter in the long-drawn-out death agonies of The Windsor, Essex and Lake Shore Railway was written in 1939-1942, when the long-stored equipment in the Arthur St. car house was indeed sold to other electric railways: the luxurious interurbans to the Montreal and Southern Counties in 1939 and the steeple-cabs to the Cornwall Street Railway in 1942. Lacking rail connections, the equipment had to be dragged through the streets of Windsor on lengths of rail laid temporarily on their sides, motive power being furnished by a large truck.



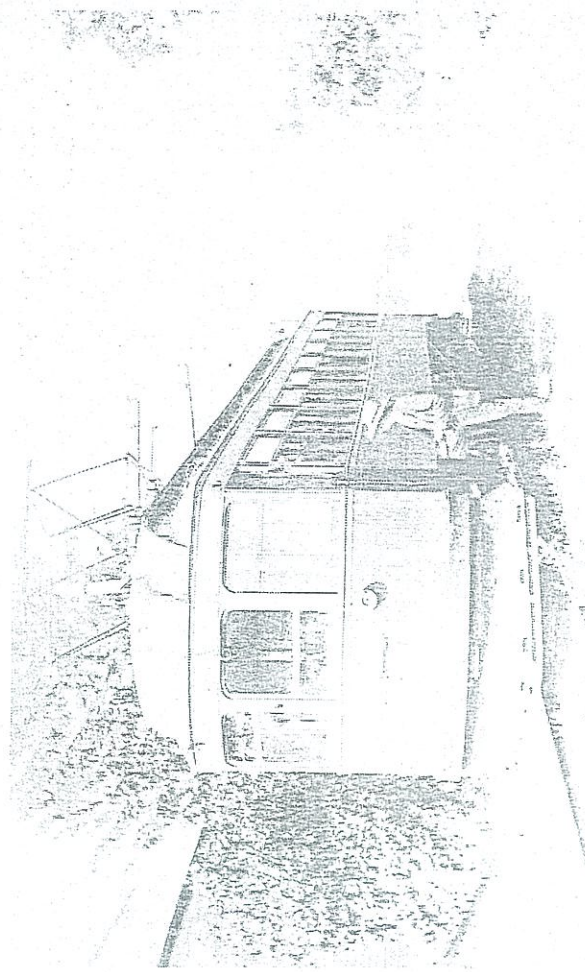
Rain has not dampened the enthusiasm of the spectators as CPR G5a Pacific 1201 eases to a halt at the CNR station at South River, Ontario. The train had just been turned on the way here in readiness for its return to North Bay. The photo was taken on Sunday, Aug. 8, 1982, the day after the train had arrived from Ottawa for the week-long "100 Years of Rail" celebrations in North Bay.

--John D. Thompson photo

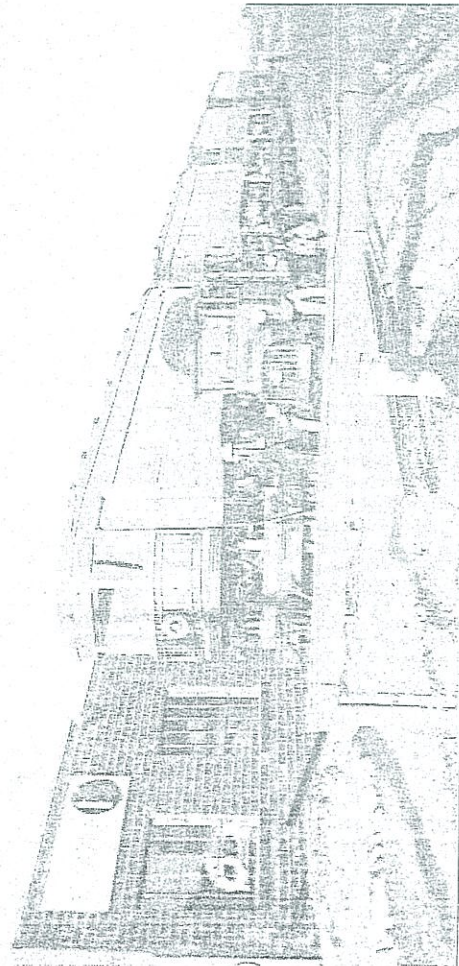


Home-built locomotive No. 10, switching the H.J. Heinz Co. plant at Leamington on April 23, 1932, just a few short months prior to the end of operations on the WE&LS.

--R.F. Corley collection



The earlier cars of the WE&LS presented a classic interurban appearance, except for the pantographs and steel-covered pilots. Another difference...



Four WE&LS 500 series interurban cars are seen loaded on flatcars at Windsor in 1939, waiting to depart for Montreal and new careers on the Montreal and Southern Counties R.R.

ALL-TIME ROSTER, WINDSOR, ESSEX AND LAKE SHORE RAPID RAILWAY

Nos.	Type	Length	Width	Height	Trucks, Wheels	Motors	Control	Bldr. & Date	Notes
9	Double truck steeple cab locomotive, steel, 50-ton	35'	10'	11'8"	Baldwin 36" RS	4-WH 333B2, 125 HP	GE C-74	Baldwin?	A
10 (2nd)	DT steeple cab locomotive wood, 45-ton	34'9"	10'	11'10"	Baldwin 36" RS	4-WH 333-B2 125 HP	GE C-74	WE&LS, Windsor Shop Apr. 1930	B
X-12 (later 15)	DT maintenance/line/snow plow, trailer, wood	43'	8'11"	12'4"	Peckham 4'10" WB, 32"	--	--	See note	C
25	DT DE express motor, wood, monitor roof	53'6"	9'6"	13'3"	Baldwin, 42"	4-WH 567 C9	WH HL	St. Louis, 1908 (order 676)	D
26-32 (even nos.)	DT passenger trailer, wood	-	-	-	Arch bar	-	-	Wason, 1878	E
50	DT DE freight motor locomotive, wood, box body, arch roof	41'5"	8'11"	12'4"	McGuire-Cummings 70A 6'6" WB 20'3" TC Baldwin Standard 36"	4-WH 100 HP	WH	Tillsonburg, 1907	F
75	DT DE express motor, wood, monitor roof	53'4"	9'	12'4"	-	4-WH 306-A	-	Tillsonburg (Preston?) 1912-13	G
101	DT DE Express trailer, wood	60'	9'6"	13'3"	-	-	-	St. Louis, 1908 (?)	H
126-132 (even nos.)	DT gondola, wood	39'9 3/4"	-	-	Arch bar	-	-	Scrap after 1932	
202, 204	DT box car, wood	40'5 1/2"	-	-	Arch bar	-	-	"	
302-310 (even nos.)	DT DE passenger motor, wood, monitor roof	48'10"	9'	12'	Brill	-	-	Ottawa, 1907-08	J
312, 314	DT DE passenger motor wood, monitor roof	55' 1"	8'10"	12'6"	Baldwin 84-30AA 36"	4-WH 567C9	WH HL	Tillsonburg, 1913	K, L
316, 318	DT DE passenger motor wood, monitor roof	55'	8'10"	12'6"	Baldwin 84-30AA 36"	4-WH 567C9	"	See Note M	L, M
320	DT DE combination motor wood, monitor roof	55'	8'10"	12'6"	Baldwin 84-30AA 36"	4-WH 567C9	"	"	M, N
340-343	DT passenger comb. trailer	44'	8'6"	11'6"	McGuire MCB-10A	-	-	St. Louis	O
501-507 (odd nos.)	DT DE passenger motor steel	51'2"	8'3 1/8"	11'2 1/8" NSC	(Baldwin design) 33"	4-WH 548C2	WH HL 264-Till-15 B2 controller	Ottawa, 1930	P
502	DT DE pass. trailer steel	51'2"	8'3 1/8"	11'2 1/8" NSC	(Baldwin design) 33"	-	-	Ottawa, 1930	Q

For section speeders, four hand push cars, four Gotfredson's.

Abbreviations: WH - Westinghouse; GE - General Electric; WB - wheelbase; TC - Truck Centres; RS - Rolled Steel; NSC - National Steel Car Co.

Notes

- A - One report says built by Baldwin, 1914, but acquired second hand c. 1912; acquired 1930 from Niagara, St. Catharines & Toronto Ry. 12; rebuilt Kingsville Shop, April 1930, body only used; originally had GE motors and McGuire 70A trucks; 2 CP-30 compressors; sold 1942 to Cornwall St. Ry., Light & Power Co. 9, shipped March 7, 1943. Sold for scrap 1951-52, converted by A.A. Merrilees to diesel-electric and sold to Western Dominion Collieries #3070.
- B - Rebuilt from locomotive 50; 2 DH 25 compressors; sold 1942 to Cornwall St. Ry., Light & Power Co. 10, shipped March 14, 1943; scrapped for parts.
- C - Origin uncertain; may have been rebuilt from earlier work car or rebuilt from 300 series passenger motor C. 1931-2, work not complete at time abandonment; used in scrapping of line by salvage co. behind Plymouth locomotive.
- D - Acquired from Rock Island Southern Ry., C. 1915; left side cab door at each end, large centre door on each side, rung type pilot, 85,000 lbs. weight, 45,000 lbs. capacity; scrapped at Kingsville after 1932.
- E - Six cars of type acquired from New York Elevated Ry., 1907 as follows: (N.Y. El Nos. shown): 139 (May 23), 121, 221 (July 23), 174, 175, 214 (July 25); disposition of other two cars unknown; the original passenger equipment on WE&LS, hauled by locomotive 50; narrow windows, open platforms; scrapped between 1927 and 1932 except 28 and/or 32 used as line car until end of service.
- F - Nicknamed "The Mogul"; large centre door on each side for express work; 50,000 lbs. weight, originally had Taylor trucks; rebuilt as locomotive 10, 1929-30.
- G - Ordered 1911; two express doors on each side; rung type pilot; 56,000 lbs. weight, 38,000 lbs. capacity; used for parts storage, 1929-1932; scrapped at Kingsville after 1932.
- H - Acquired from Rock Island Southern Ry., 1915, on which it had been a motor car; express door on each side, 85,000 lbs. weight, 45,000 lbs. capacity; scrapped 1929.
- J - Eight double square-topped windows per side, rung type pilot; 28,260 lbs. weight; entrance on left side of each vestibule; originally had Baldwin trucks, Brill trucks by 1927; scrapped 1928 at Kingsville Shop (no record that 302, 308, 310 survived until 1928).
- K - Eight double windows per side, arch top to each pair, solid steel pilots, entrance on left side only of each vestibule; 37,000 lbs. weight.
- L - Shown as trailers on records after 1930, not believed to have been used after DC conversion; scrapped at Kingsville after 1932.
- M - Origin of cars uncertain; some records say built Tillsonburg, 1914; could be cars obtained from Richmond-Ashland Ry. Aug. 1920 (CR&MW reported 58' length).
- N - Centre express doors on each side, train door at each end, entrance on both sides of vestibule; not on roster in 1930, may have been converted to maintenance/line car 15.
- O - Acquired from N.Y. Elev. Ry., 1912, used 1912-15; scrapped at Leamington Gravel Pit, 1931.
- P - 50 pass. capy.; weight 66,500 to 68,000 lbs., DH 25 compressors, WH motors purchased second hand, pilot on trucks, sold respectively to M&SC Ry. 621, 622, 632 (Dec. 1939) and 620 (Aug. 1939); 620, 622, 623 to NS&T Ry. (Sept. 1955), 621 to Seashore Trolley Museum, (Dec. 1955); 620, 622, 623 sent to CN London Reclamation Yard for scrap, 1959.
- Q - 50 pass. capy., 3 compartments; 44,500 lb. to 46,000 lb. weight; sold to M&SC Ry. 220, 1939; to NS&T Ry., Sept. 1955, used for parts only, scrapped 1958.
- SW&A Ry. DT freight motors 197-199 leased by WE&LS as required during 1930-1932; 198 and 199 on line at time of abandonment.
- Roster information courtesy R.F. Corley (Toronto) including component information from O.P. Maus (Brantford) and S.B. Ferriss (Detroit).

ADDENDA--Note J above should include: Cars 302-310 were originally numbered 2-10 (even nos.) and were also named; Car 4 was REPUBLIC, and one other car, number unknown, was LAURIER (picture on Page 2); other names unknown. The five Baldwin trucks purchased by Hydro to equip locomotives 9 and 10 (one spare) were acquired second hand, as were the WH548C2 motors used on the 501-507 series cars.

BARGAIN

2-35 TON ELECTRIC SWITCHING LOCOMOTIVES

Text of advertisement for locomotives 9 and 10, as published in trade magazines in 1940.

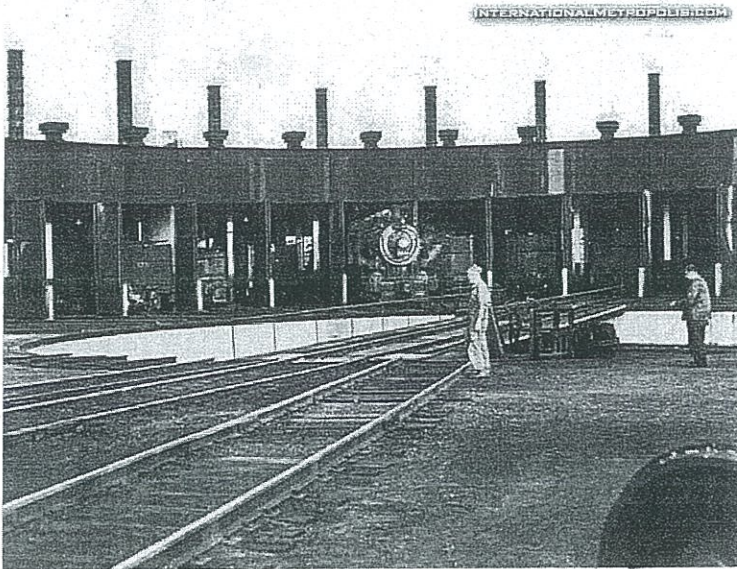
Make Baldwin
Length 36 ft. 0"
Complete with all parts just as removed from service. Westinghouse Air Brakes with 2-CF-30 Air Compressors.

Builder Baldwin
Wheels Steel
Diameter of Wheels 36"

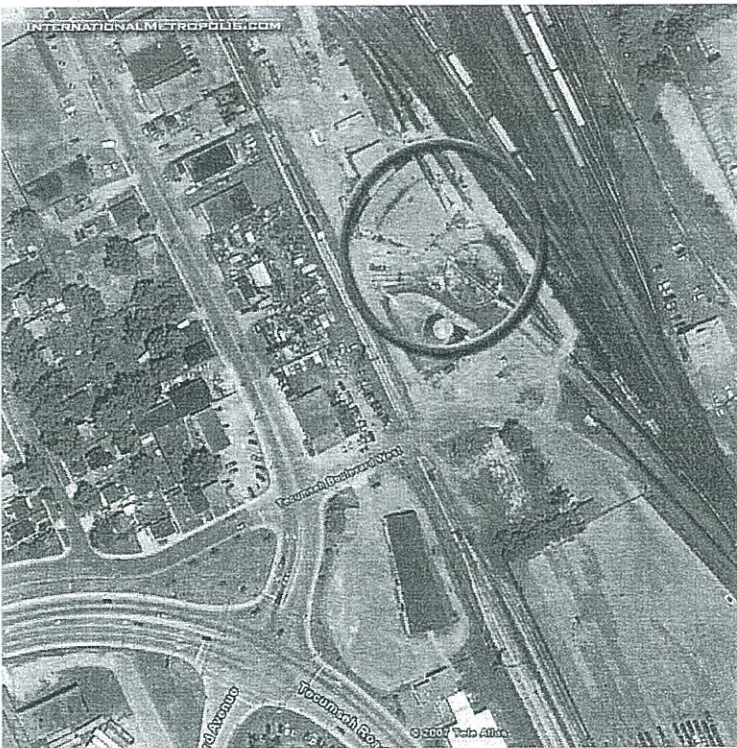
TRUCKS

ELECTRIC EQUIPMENT
Consists of 4-WH 333 (125 HP) Motors.
General Electric Multiple Unit Control.
LOCATION--These Locomotives are now stored in Ontario.
TERMS--Will sell upon the deferred payment plan. Code--"LURT".

TRANSIT EQUIPMENT COMPANY
501 Fifth Avenue
NEW YORK



This photo is also undated and a little harder to figure out. John checked with Bernie, and he says it looks like it was taken at the Crawford Roundhouse.



The roundhouse is still there (with minor alterations), and still in operation today. It is located in the red circle above.

Do any of our railfan readers have anything else they can add to the description? Doug?

11 Responses to *Golden Age Of Rail*

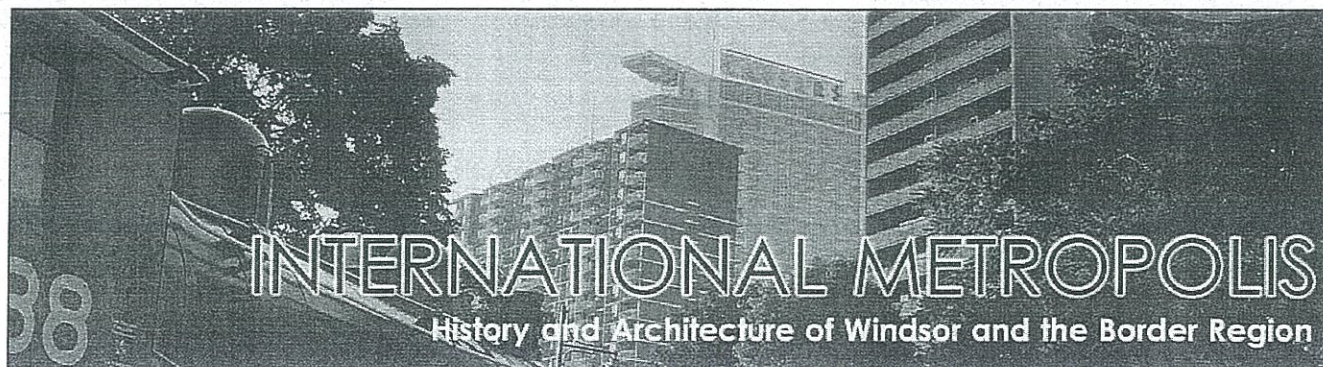


1. douglasm on December 5, 2007 at 9:21 am

Doug is reserving comment until this afternoon except to ask where the Crawford roundhouse is. My knowledge of Windsor (from a railfan's perspective) is pretty much limited to the waterfront.....



2. Fausto on December 5, 2007 at 10:24 am

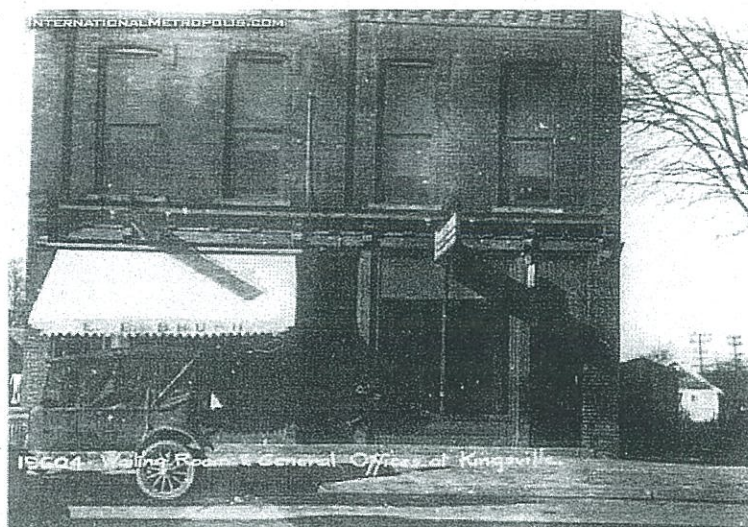


- [Home](#)
- [Bookstore / Shop](#)
- [About/Contact](#)
- [IM Archives](#)

More W.E & LS Railway

February 19, 2008

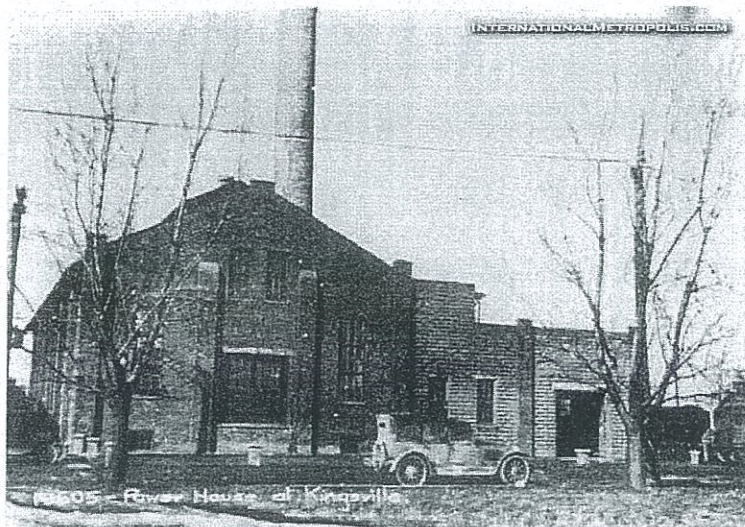
More old photos of the W.E. & LS Railway, from the Bernie Drouillard Collection, digitized by John Stefani.



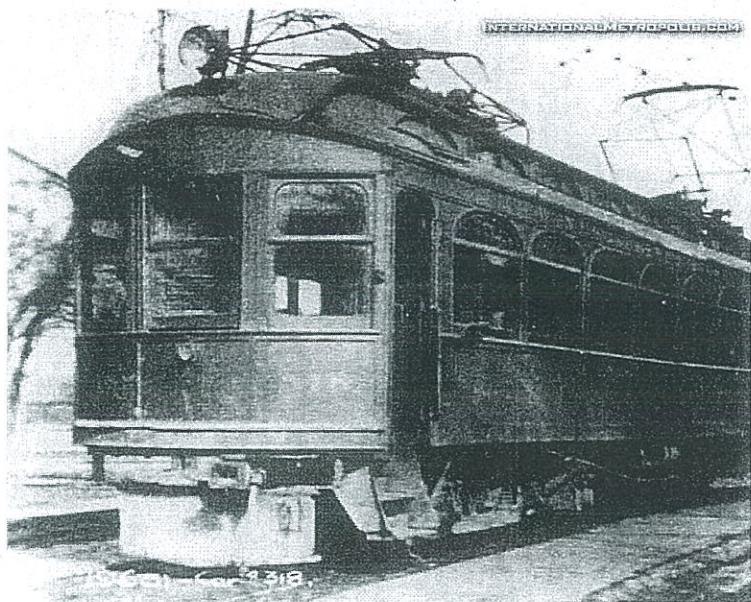
Waiting Room & General Offices at Kingsville. From the Ontario Hydro archives. c. 1921.



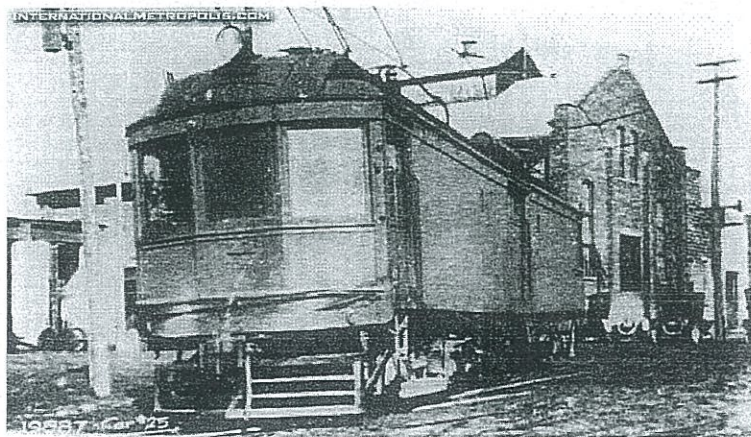
Waiting Room & Freight Shed at Essex. From the Ontario Hydro archives. c. 1921.



The Powerhouse at Kingsville. From the Ontario Hydro archives. c. 1921. The powerhouse is still standing in Kingsville. [Click here to see John's photos of the powerhouse on Flickr.](#)



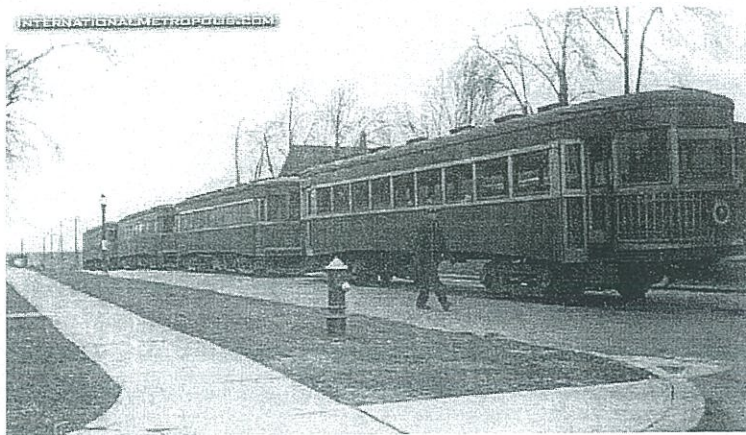
A photo of car # 318, location unknown. The back of the photo is noted "OHSC Archives Neg. No. HP 2828". From the Ontario Hydro archives, c. 1921.



Here's another shot with the Kingsville powerhouse in background. Car # 25 in the foreground. From the Ontario Hydro archives, c. 1921.



This shot was taken at the Car Barn on Chatham St. The barn is visible in the rear, to the right you can see the corner of the Eaton-Clark warehouse, that is still standing on Chatham St.

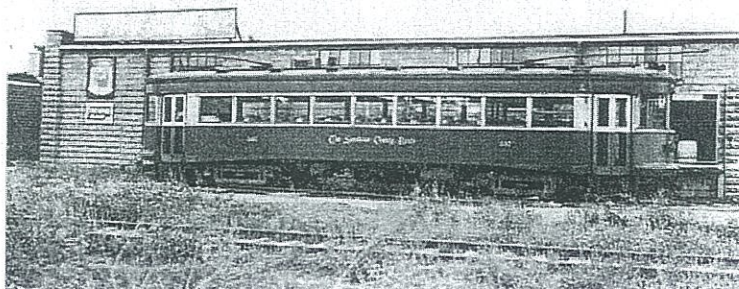


The four cars staged and ready to be moved in December, 1939. The photo must be on Aylmer St. downtown, around the corner from the car barn. The only section of rails left in the road stretched from Chatham & Aylmer to Howard & Erie. All four cars are on rails, so this was somewhere in this stretch.



Moir Cartage, was hired to tug the cars along the rails. As there was no longer any power lines above the tracks, the cars were not able to move under their own power. Note the children playing in the street, near some streetcars being pulled by a truck. I'm certain that there wasn't any safer place for those children to be. ☹️

INTERNATIONALMETROPOLIS.COM



On the back of this photo written in pencil, it says: "'#507 at Cock Bros. Feeds & Grains Whse". There is also a National Archives of Canada stamp on the back, Neg. No. PA152224. In September 2006, I [did a post on the Cock Brothers](#), but I have no idea if this was the same building or where their warehouse was.

INTERNATIONALMETROPOLIS.COM



Car # 507 as seen above at Cock Brothers. This photo is dated 1931, somewhere along the route.

11 Responses to *More W.E & LS Railway*



1. [Chris Holt](#) on February 19, 2008 at 7:47 am

You guys continually amaze me with the things you unearth. Is our municipal archives/museum doing any of this work or is it up to the Bernie Drouillard/John Stefani dynamic duo to safeguard Windsor's history for us?



2. [Andrew](#) on February 19, 2008 at 8:22 am

Maybe if our museum & archives weren't treated as afterthoughts, but as cultural resources by our City Government and actually given funding, and the proper facilities, they would be able to tell Windsor's story a little better.

As it is, I am certain that all matters of Heritage are viewed more as an irritant, than as something to protect.

If it wasn't for this site, and all the private collections that I feature, most of these stories would remain in the dark.



3. [Chris Holt](#) on February 19, 2008 at 8:31 am

Which is why we need you. Don't go anywhere, Andrew, OK?



4. [James Coulter](#) on February 19, 2008 at 1:27 pm

Maybe we could find an empty storefront downtown like Christian Aldo did to display your work and others like you. Probably could get a government grant to hire a student or two for the summer.

Keep up the GREAT work Andrew.



5. Rich on February 19, 2008 at 3:50 pm

Does anybody know where some of those rail cars ended up? Didn't some go to Toronto and then eventually to the States...

It would be nice to get one of them back and displayed somehow.



6. Rich on February 19, 2008 at 10:23 pm

Does any one know, where some of the rail cars are today? Didn't some go to Toronto and then to the States. It would be nice to get one of them back.



7. Aaron on March 23, 2009 at 6:43 pm

Andrew – old post i know, but in the second last picture you said you don't know if this is the same building or where the warehouse was for the cock bros. if you never resolved this question, i'm ALMOST positive the building behind the streetcar is at the corner of hanna east and howard. it would be hidden now by a repair shop for cabs or something. if i'm right, the tracks in the foreground are for the ERT. also, again if i'm right, my first job was in that building making effing lead fishing lures!



8. Aaron on March 23, 2009 at 6:53 pm

sorry.....ETR (Essex Terminal Railway)



9. JBM on March 25, 2009 at 11:30 am

It's too bad Windsor and Essex County have not done more to preserve its railway history. Looking at the waterfront today, one would never know how busy it was with rail transportation. All that remains is CNR 5588 (The Spirit of Windsor) and some hardware used by docking rail ferries (with nothing to indicate to the public what these really are). Then there are the 'cuts' which permitted CPR and Michigan Central access to the riverfront... one of which is soon to be converted to a canal.



10. Ken Andrews on March 25, 2009 at 11:54 am

Lived in Windsor 1950-1960 and recall tracks partially buried north side of Riverside Dr. with a 'turnout' southward into the Carling Brewery building on south side on Riverside. Would these be the route of SW&A to LaSalle (and Amherstburg??)-or Windsor, Essex and Lakeshore, or just an industrial spur to serve the brewery? I recall observing electric locomotives at Michigan Central/CPR passenger station near Pelletier/Tecumseh and an underground passageway from the station itself to the tracks opposite on the east side. I stumbled on tracks peeking out from under the asphalt, turning from eastbound on Park St. to south on Ouellette; possibly the last remnant of Windsor's transportation history. p.s.: ex-pats of Windsor here in The Big Smoke all share and enjoy this great blog...



11. Aaron on March 25, 2009 at 3:43 pm

i hear ya JBM. i seen a picture of the ferry docks on Flickr and this dude was going on and on about how they were machines used to form the breakwalls and straighten out the riverfront!

Ken, great to have you guys with us! that's interesting about the spur to the brewery, and i don't see why not. the car in picture number 5 looks like a freight car and they did advertise freight service. it would probly be the SW&A since the tracks headed down riverside, and followed 18 to amherstburg. (i'm no expert, but i think i'm right).

i beleive to get to essex by interurban, you'd take the WE&LS up howard to where the mall is, then the tracks follow talbot road to essex, ruthven, kingsville and leamington.

all those tracks you spoke of are gone as far as i know, and the only tracks left in the road are at sandwich and mill.

Leave a Reply

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked *

Name *

Email *

Website

SEARCH THE ARCHIVES

FUTURE TOPIC SUGGESTIONS?

Got something you want
to see covered on IM?
[Click Here to suggest a
future post topic.](#)



Recent Comments

- [joe](#): I had friends of mine who lived in that house back in late 7...
- [mike wannick](#): I was recently driving in the downtown Hamtramck area just o...
- [Dave](#): Nice building! Too bad this met the fate of the wrecking ba...
- [Joe](#): I think it was originally a pharmacy

called
Gubb's and
then ...

- Jim Reid: I believe the original traffic plan called for a "square" at...
- merle thompson: Emily Cundari was in my class all thru St. Mary's grade scho...
- merle thompson: Down in the lower left corner are the WWII Quonset huts that...
- Dave: There is also a house on Drouillard Rd with yellow brick. I...
- merle thompson: I attended Assumption College 1950-53. That white bldg next...
- Shane: Thanks for all the positive feedback folks! Scotty, you r...

Calendar

February 2008

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

Stuff

- Ontario Office Space
- new york city real estate
- Retirement Community Florida
- Current

8/24/2012 4:36 PM

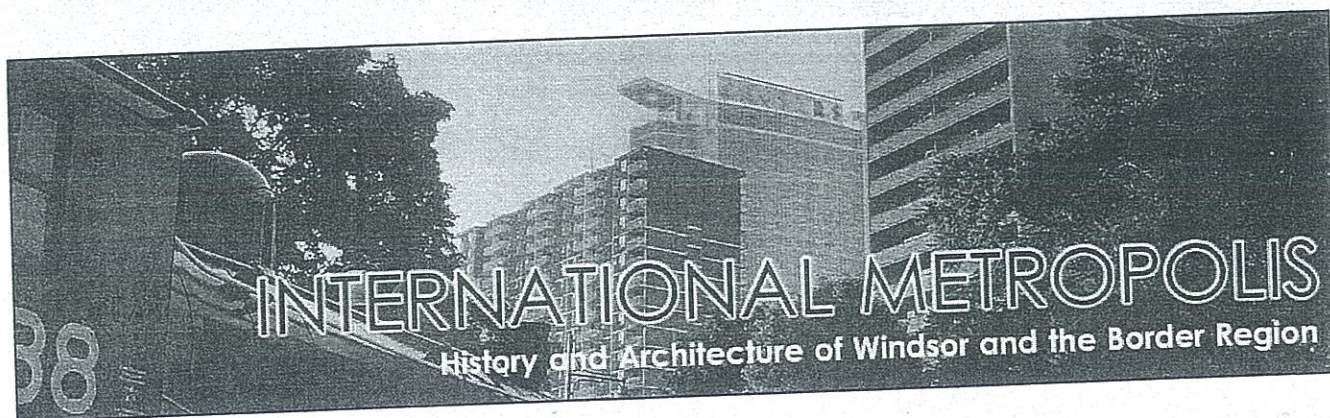
- [Mortgage Rates](#)
- [buy life insurance](#)
 - [Linkedin Ryan-Homes](#)
 - [Online Casino In UK](#)
 - [Traveler Plus Bluegreen](#)

You are
Visitor



Links

- [Alan Halberstadt .com](#)
- [Architectural Sculpture](#)
- [Architectural Sculpture Book](#)
- [Architecture News & Forums](#)
- [Arts Council Windsor & Region Arts Notes](#)
- [bakaitis.com](#)
- [Bless You Boys – Tigers News](#)
- [Chicago Textures](#)
- [Detroit Blog](#)
- [dETROITfUNK](#)
- [Detroityes.com](#)
- [Digging Pitt](#)
- [Essex Wine Report](#)
- [Forgotten Detroit](#)
- [Friched.net](#)
- [JB's Warehouse & Curio Emporium](#)
- [Leddy Library Reference Desk Blog](#)
- [Lost New York City](#)
- [Mike Beauchamp](#)
- [My Local Food Blog](#)
- [Scaledown Windsor](#)
- [Shorpy.com](#)
- [Spacing.ca](#)
- [Unexpected & Neglected Architecture](#)
- [utterlyboring.com](#)
- [Vanishing St. Louis](#)
- [Windsor Detroit Film Blog](#)
- [Windsor Eats](#)
- [Windsor Essex Speak](#)
- [Windsor Ontario News.com](#)
- [Windsor Shadow](#)
- [Windsorite.ca](#)



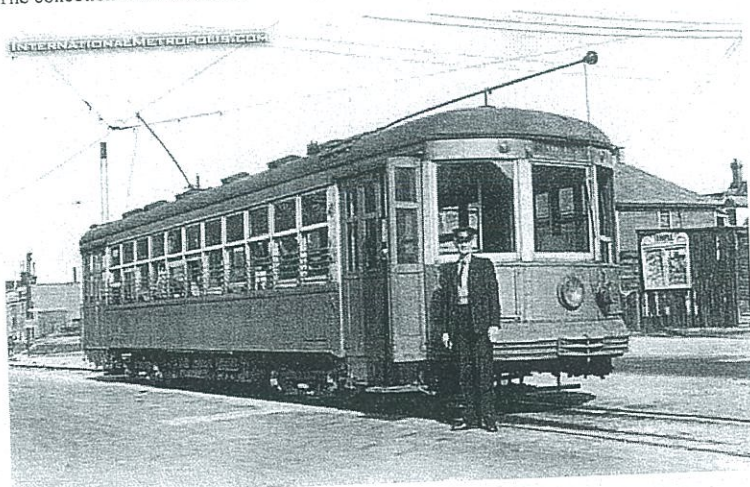
- [Home](#)
- [Bookstore / Shop](#)
- [About/Contact](#)
- [IM Archives](#)

Streetcar Friday

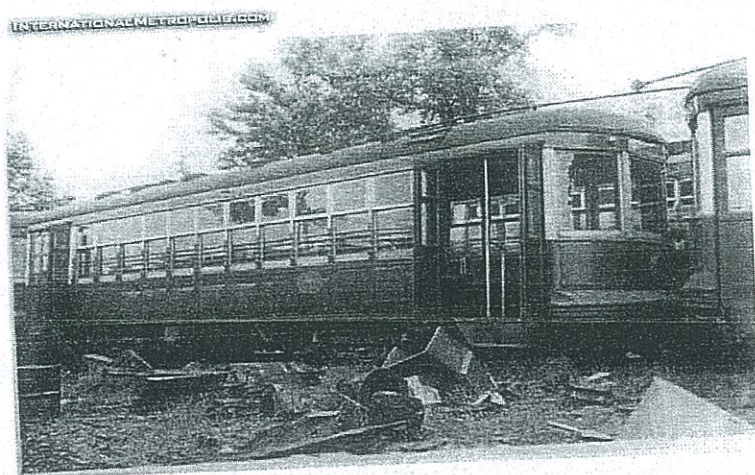
May 2, 2008

As I have said before, Bernie recently came into a very large collection of photographs... ☺

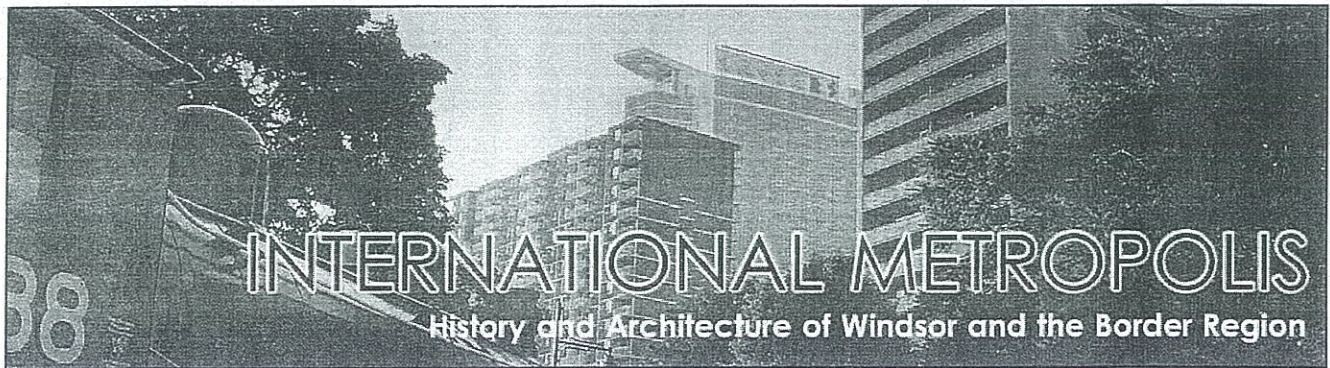
The collection continues today:



Car Number 401, c. 1938



Car # 407 at the London Street Yard.



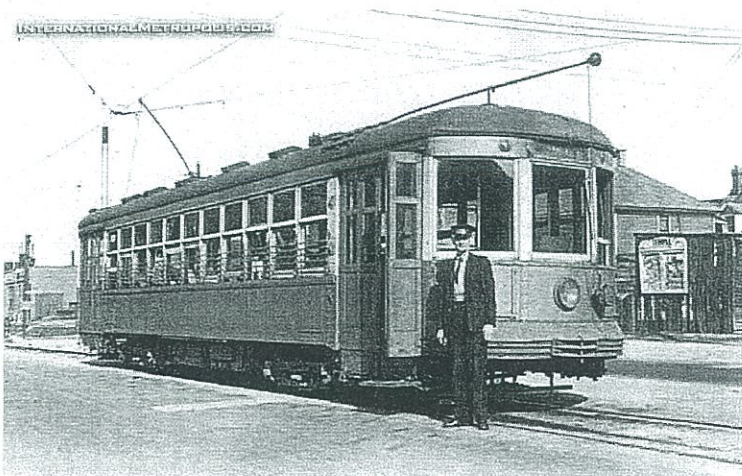
- [Home](#)
- [Bookstore / Shop](#)
- [About/Contact](#)
- [IM Archives](#)

Streetcar Friday

May 2, 2008

As I have said before, Bernie recently came into a very large collection of photographs... ☺

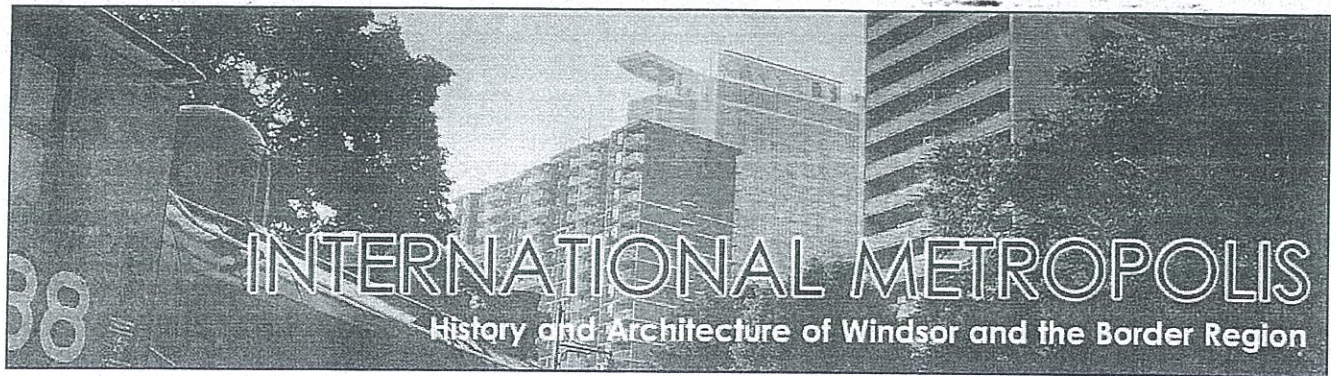
The collection continues today:



Car Number 401, c. 1938



Car # 407 at the London Street Yard.

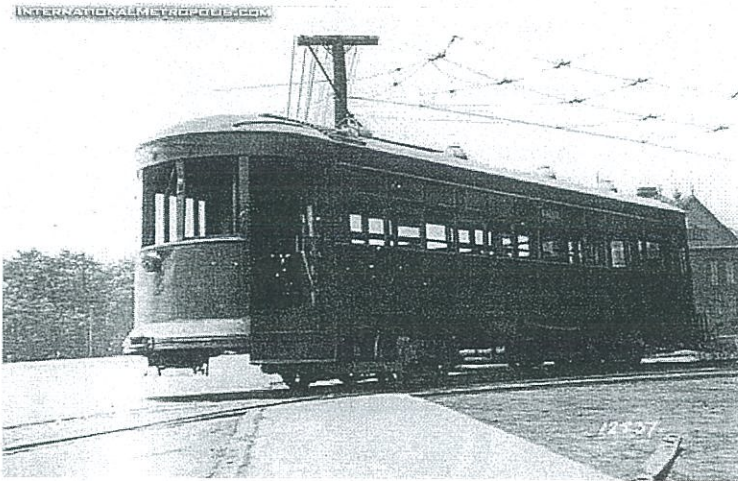


- [Home](#)
- [Bookstore / Shop](#)
- [About/Contact](#)
- [IM Archives](#)

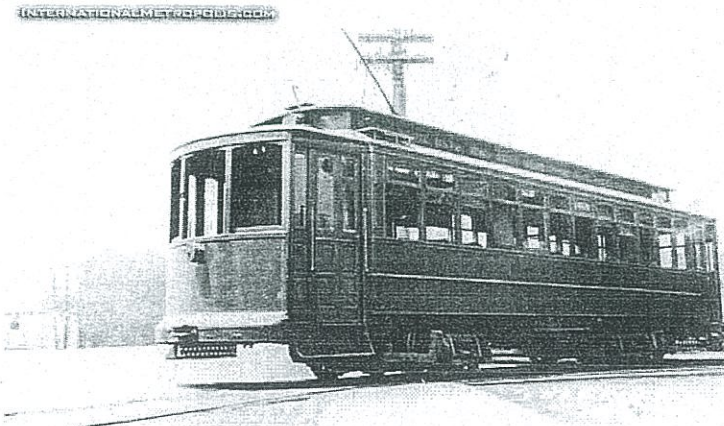
S.W. & A. Streetcars

April 29, 2008

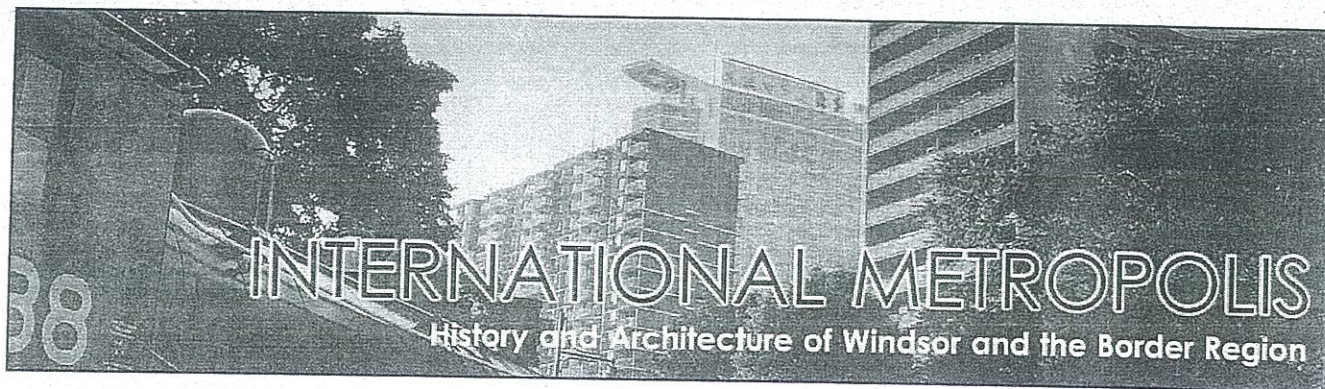
As usual, thanks to Bernie and John, for digitizing the newest additions to Bernie's collection.



Car 109 or 110 according to Bernie.



This car is from the 112 to 122 series.

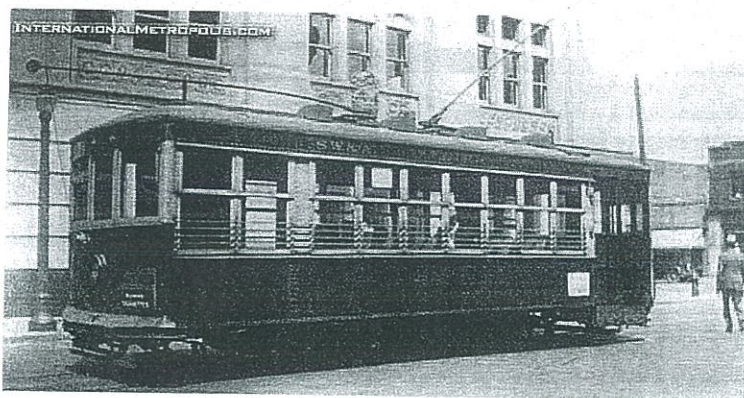


- [Home](#)
- [Bookstore / Shop](#)
- [About/Contact](#)
- [IM Archives](#)

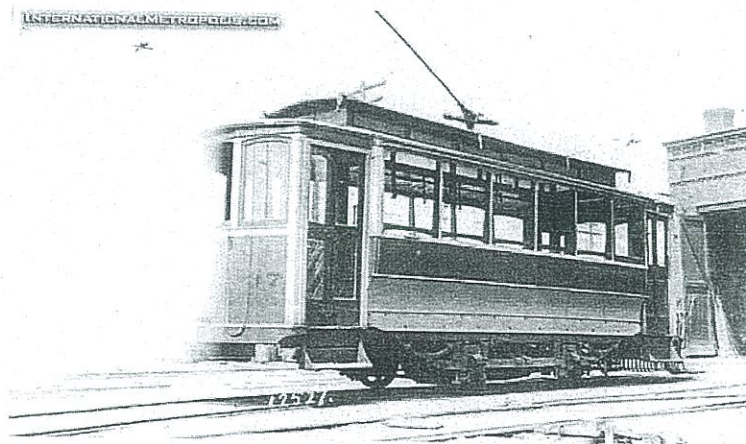
More Streetcars

April 30, 2008

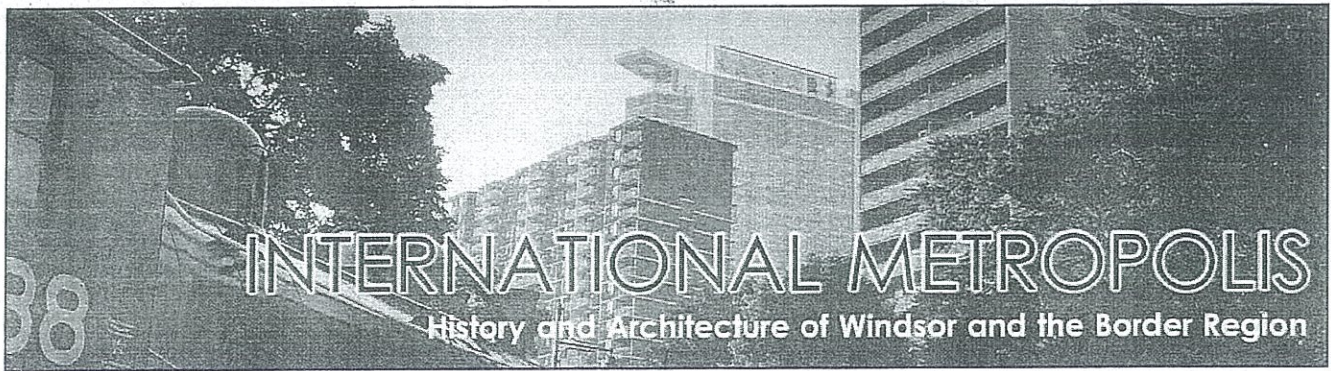
More from Bernie's treasure chest....



Car 212 on Chatham St., just west of Ouellette. c. 1938.



A shot of car # 37 at the Car Barns on London St. (now University Ave.).



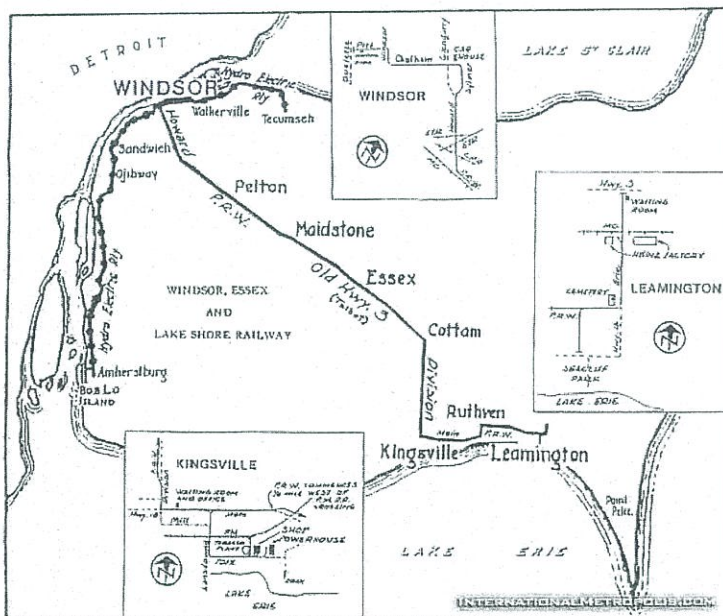
- [Home](#)
- [Bookstore / Shop](#)
- [About/Contact](#)
- [IM Archives](#)

W.E. & LS Railway

February 18, 2008

Back in the old days, travel between the city and the county, wasn't always easy. Around 1906, The Hydro-Electric System (forerunners of Ontario Hydro) created several lines of interurban electric railroads. The Windsor, Essex and Lakeshore Rapid Railway operated until September, 1932.

A brief history of the line can be found by [clicking here](#).



A route map of the line, from the Bernie Drouillard Collection. The line ran from Windsor through Essex and on to Kingsville and Leamington.