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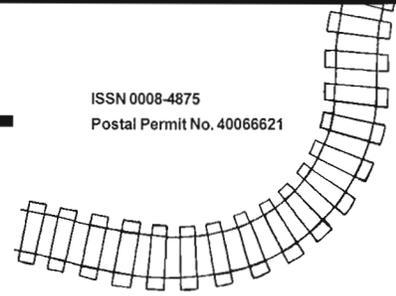
# CANADIAN RAIL

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**THE SESQUICENTENNIAL OF THE HORSE CAR ERA..... FRED F. ANGUS..... 167**

*FRONT COVER: The corner of Portage and Main in Winnipeg during the 1880s, with two horsecars of the Winnipeg Street Railway. Winnipeg was the westernmost Canadian city to have horsecars, and the first routes were inaugurated in 1882. About this time, the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway set off a land boom, and it was logical that a street railway would be started in the rapidly-developing city. Compare this view with the two photographs on page 203 that show the same location. For a time in the early 1890s there were four tracks on Main street, as the new electric line coexisted with the older horsecar route for a few years. This painting hung in one of the offices of the Winnipeg Electric Railway, and was later acquired by the uncle of the author and presented to him in 1964.*

*BELOW: A drawing of an open horse car on St. Denis street in Montreal in 1887. This drawing is based on the photograph that appears on page 197. Cars like this were very popular in the summer, and were used as trailers behind electric cars for a few years after the electrification of the Montreal system.*

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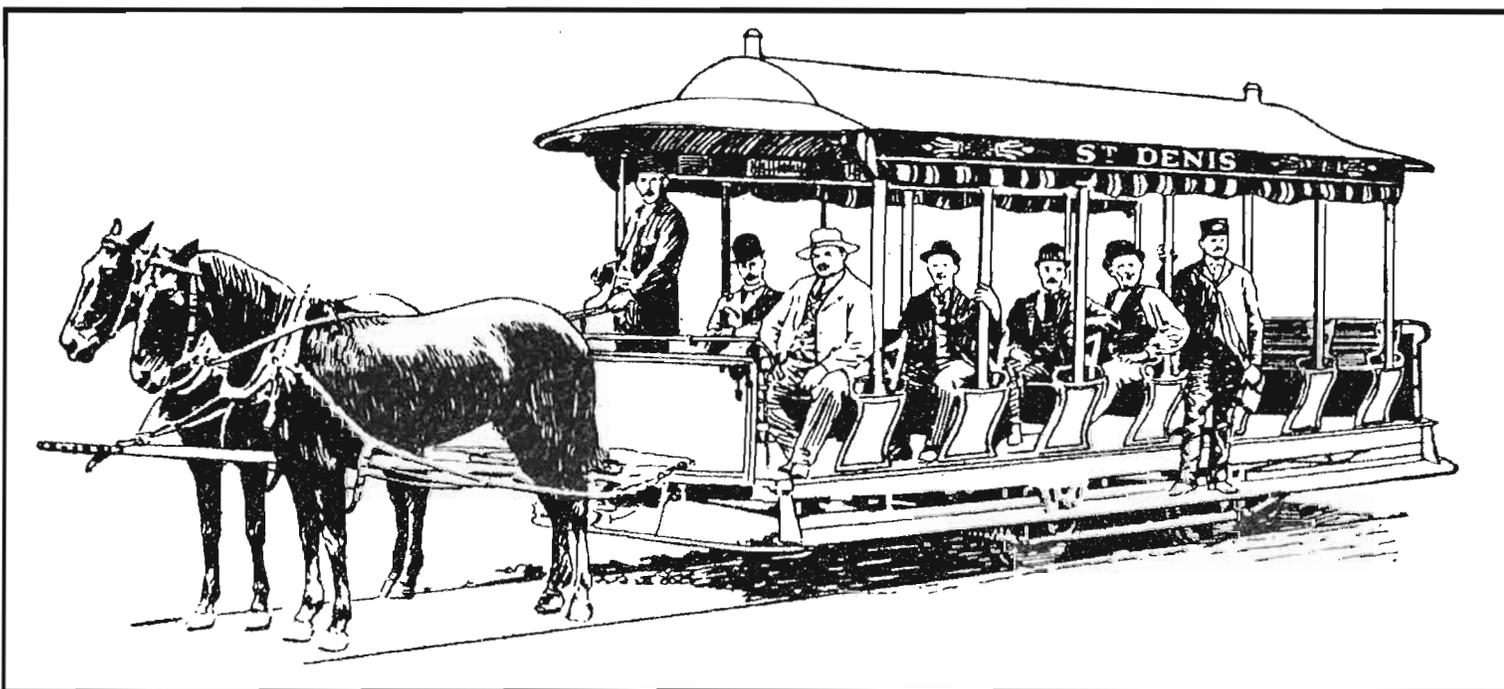
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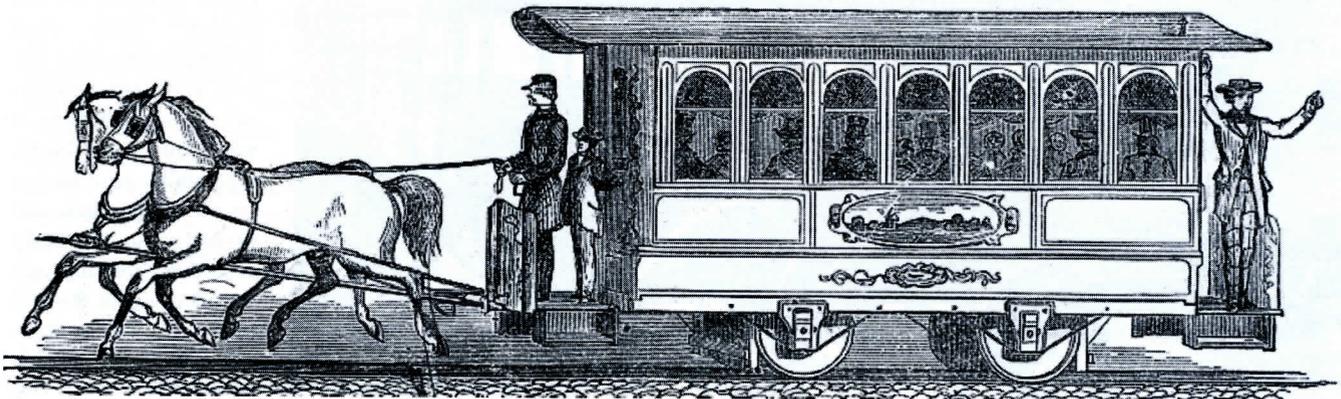
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# The Sesquicentennial of the Horsecar Era

by Fred Angus



This engraving, showing a typical horsecar of the late 1860s or early 1870s, was used on numerous stock certificates.

A century and a half ago a new means of transportation, one that would change the face of cities forever, appeared on the scene - the horse-operated street railway. It is true that railway cars had been hauled by horses through city streets at least as early as 1832, but it was not until the early 1850s that the true urban street railway was born. To commemorate this important sesquicentennial, we are devoting this entire issue of Canadian Rail to the era of the horse-drawn street car, with special emphasis on the lines that ran in Canada.

## 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE HORSECAR

Today, many people think of a horsecar as something quaint and old fashioned, a mere footnote in the history of rail transportation. While they are old fashioned by today's standards, they deserve much more than a footnote. The horsecar era in Canada lasted for almost 40 years, more than a third of the entire period of traditional street railways. During these forty years, cities grew, and took on the basic layout that they still have today. Much of this growth was influenced by the routes of the horsecar lines, a trend that continued as electric lines spread during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Many Canadian cities would be much different today if the horsecar had never existed.

To tell the story of the street railway, we must start with its predecessor and cousin, the omnibus. These were large four-wheeled vehicles with a door at the rear and two longitudinal seats facing each other. It is not known precisely when the first omnibus went into service, but it was very likely in Paris in the 1820s. Before that, mass urban transit did not exist; if one wanted to go somewhere in a city, one walked, rode a horse or hired a carriage. For inter-city travel, stage coaches had existed for more than two centuries, and the first omnibuses were modifications of stagecoaches; larger, with different seating arrangement, and decidedly more uncomfortable! Since the distances were relatively short, the comfort factor was not as important, yet a ride in an omnibus was not an overly pleasant experience as the often-overcrowded vehicle jolted its way over the rough cobblestone pavements then found in most large cities.

Despite their shortcomings, omnibuses became very popular in a short time. From Paris, they spread to London, then to New York, and on to many other cities throughout the world. One of the busiest, if not the busiest, omnibus lines in the world was that on Broadway in New York. In the 1850s

there was almost a continuous procession of omnibuses running up and down Broadway, and there was seldom a time when at least a dozen could not be seen at one time. For various legal and corporate reasons the Broadway omnibus line had a very long life, lasting until 1884, long after most other major routes had adopted street railways, but eventually even Broadway was converted to horsecars. Many were the tales, good and bad, told of omnibus rides.

The date on which the first horse-drawn streetcar running on rails began operation is not definitely known. The answer depends on the reader's interpretation of history, and also how one defines a horsecar. The date of 1832 in New York City is often cited as the time of the commencement of street railway service, but there are objections to this date. The line in question was simply a southern extension of a conventional railway, the New York and Harlem. It was horse-drawn because the city fathers would not allow steam locomotives to be used in the streets in that part of the city. Other railways had used horse power well before 1832, in fact all early railways were horse (or man) powered before the first steam locomotives were built in the early 19th century. In England, the Stockton and Darlington had run a horse-drawn passenger car as early as 1825, and in America several lines (notably the Baltimore and Ohio) used horses to haul passenger cars through city streets. Why then is the 1832 date so often quoted? Most likely it was because the first car on this line was built by John Stephenson (no relation to George Stephenson, the famous pioneer in railway engineering). In later years his firm became the largest builder of street cars in the world, and Mr. Stephenson used to proclaim that his factory built "the first street car" away back in 1831. The fact of the matter is that Mr. Stephenson built railway cars, wagons and omnibuses, and did not build his first street car until 1855, long after his company had failed, been reorganized, and had years of experience in vehicle



A typical omnibus, photographed at the John Stephenson factory about 1875. This one ran in Montreal during the horsecar era. Note the seats on the roof, and the rather precarious ladder leading to them. National Archives of Canada, Merrilees Collection, photo No. PA-166484.

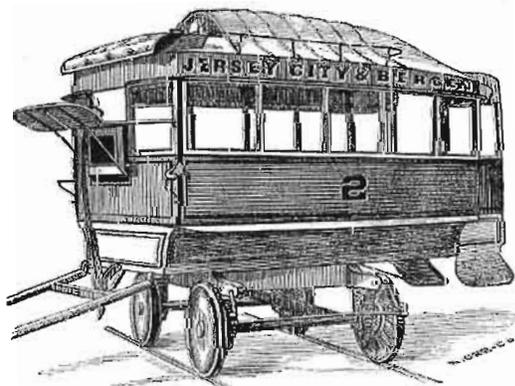
**JOHN STEPHENSON CO., Ltd.**  
NEW YORK, U. S. A.

Established 1831. Incorporated 1876.

**THE FIRST STREET CAR**  
Built by John Stephenson in 1831.

The so-called "first street car" built by John Stephenson in 1831 and placed in service in 1832.

From A John Stephenson advertisement of 1891.



John Stephenson's actual first street car was like this, and was built in 1855.

From A John Stephenson advertisement of 1891.

construction. By that time horse street railways had been in existence for more than two years, and showed much promise for the future. This first Stephenson street car was a strange vehicle, obsolescent before it was built; it was, essentially, an omnibus on a railway truck, and arranged so the body would swivel through 180 degrees at the end of the line. Amazingly, one of these cars has survived, and is probably the oldest surviving street car in the world. It is preserved by the Museum of the City of New York.

Before going any further, we should try to answer the question "what is a horsecar?" We cannot simply say that it is a railway car pulled by horses, for then we would have to include horse-drawn operation on main line railways. In this article we will consider that a horsecar is an urban transit vehicle, running on rails and hauled by horses or other draft animals (mule cars were quite common in the South). It is not necessary that it run entirely on city streets, but the line must be urban in character and offer a local service. Vehicles that do not run on rails, such as omnibuses or sleighs, are not horsecars; however we will touch on them briefly as many horsecar companies did operate them in addition to the cars on rails.

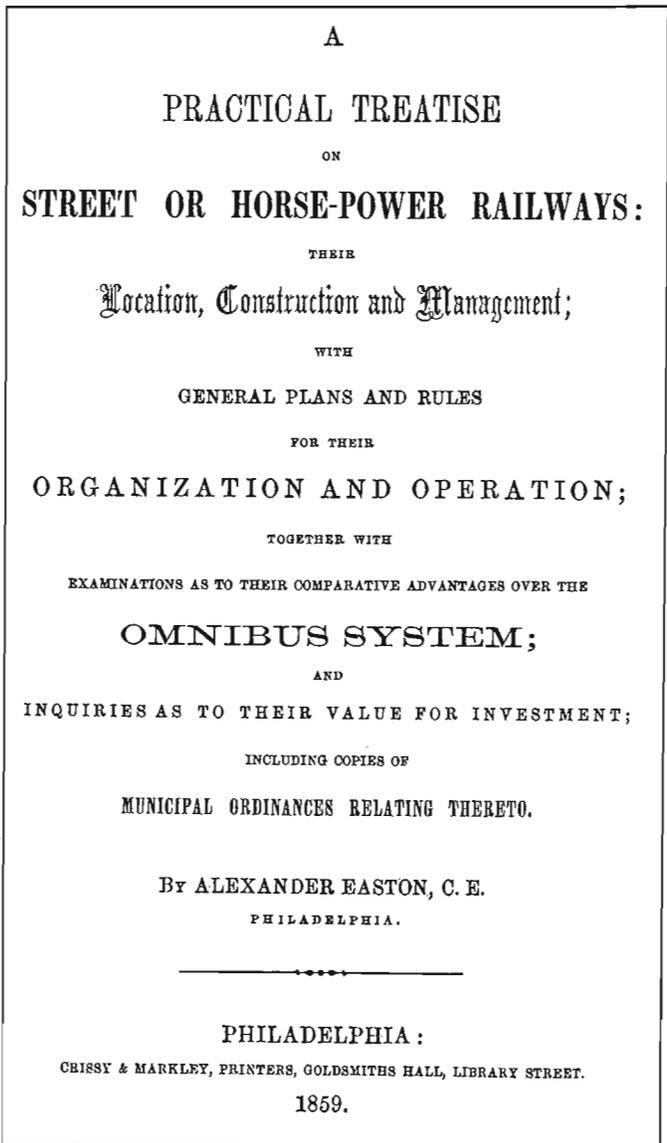
By 1850, cities had grown to the point where distances were quite long, and something better than an omnibus was required. Why not a railway? Steam was obviously out of the question, but how about building a smaller, four-wheel, version of a conventional railway car and haul it by horses along a light track through the city streets? This was quite different than the New York line of 1832; it was a strictly local line, for city use, offering much the same service as the omnibus, but using larger vehicles which were smoother, roomier and much more comfortable. So it was that about 1852 or 1853 the first true horsecar lines appeared. Both New York and Boston have a good claim for being the first, but it was not long before Philadelphia, Baltimore and other American cities had street cars. At this time street railways were strictly a North American innovation, not spreading across the Atlantic until the 1860s. Canada built its first street railway (in Toronto) in 1861, and eventually twenty Canadian cities had horsecars. Certainly by 1859 anyone could realize that the horsecar had come to stay, and urban passenger transportation would never be the same.

**2. THE PHILADELPHIA CONNECTION**

Canada's first street railways had a very strong connection with Philadelphia, and were greatly influenced by developments in that city. Accordingly, some discussion of Philadelphia horsecars, and of Alexander Easton, is in order.

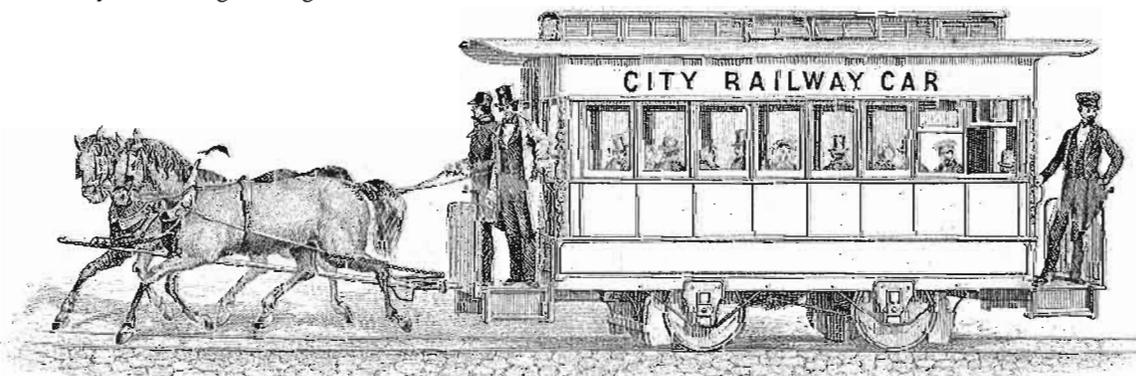
In the late 1850s the city of Philadelphia started to go into the new technology of street railways in a big way. A number of companies were chartered, each operating on only one or two streets. Because of the narrow streets, the Philadelphia cars often went one way on one street and returned on a parallel street; this continued throughout the horse and electric car era in the city of brotherly love. Many lines under different management were built, possibly more than in any other city, so the much later Philadelphia Transportation Company (predecessor of the present-day SEPTA) could point to an ancestry of no less than 65 companies! One of these early companies was that on Chestnut and Walnut streets, and one of the proponents of the system was a gentleman named Alexander Easton.

Alexander Easton, an Englishman who had moved to Philadelphia, was what we would today call an entrepreneur, a "mover and shaker", and a very strong advocate of street railways. In 1859 he published a book entitled "A Practical Treatise on Street or Horse-Power Railways: Their Location, Construction and Management". This 150-page volume, perhaps the first of its kind in the world, was basically a "how to do" manual on building and operating a street railway. It went into details of engineering, finance and, perhaps most important, politics, and it showed examples of organization, rules and regulations of existing companies in Philadelphia and elsewhere. The political consideration was of great importance since there was much opposition to laying rails in the streets, even though the result would be a faster, smoother and more comfortable ride. One master stroke of Mr. Easton's was quoting a letter signed "Omnibus", purporting to be from an omnibus advocate who was an avowed enemy of street railways. In this letter, "Omnibus" condemns the whole idea of street railways, but admits that the omnibus system could do with some improvements. He then proceeds to outline these proposed improvements, and says that adopting them will completely defeat the street railway movement. What he ends up with is no less than a full-fledged street railway, and he has effectively demolished all arguments against street railways. The identity of "Omnibus" is not given, but it does not take much imagination to detect that it is Alexander Easton himself! At any rate street railways won the battle and before long were such a part of city life that people wondered how they had ever got along without them.



ABOVE: The title page of Alexander Easton's definitive treatise on street railways, printed in 1859.

BELOW: An illustration of a horsecar of the late 1850s as depicted in Mr. Easton's book. Although the construction is typical of an 1850s horsecar, the clerestory roof is very unusual for this early date



Tab. 3 Print by W.Boell 311 Walnut St.Phil.

### THE OMNIBUS Vs. THE CITY RAILROADS.

Since the progressionists have made it fashionable to turn all our streets into railroads, and to cry down the omnibus, I wish to say a word in behalf of the latter.

It will, I hope, be a long while before the citizens of Philadelphia will be contented to endure such a nuisance as the railroad is likely to be. Look at the Third street, the Market street, the Broad street, and the Willow street railroads. Are they not unmitigated nuisances? Every body knows they are, and yet a set of speculators would make all the streets in the city just like these, to the inconvenience of the public, and to the damage of property. What is the use of experience, if we go directly counter to the lessons it teaches? Who would believe that any set of men could be found, so desperate, and so defiant of the sense of the public on this question, as to insist upon laying a railroad in two of the best streets in the city, viz.: Chestnut and Walnut streets?

Yet it is so. A charter has actually been granted to a company to perpetrate this great outrage, and it is likely to be accomplished, unless the people speak out.

I am an omnibus man, and am opposed to railroads; and while I am content to remedy any defects of the present omnibus system, I protest against their being driven out of the streets.

Let us consider what are the objections to the omnibus, and suggest the remedy. It is said, and the charge, I confess, has some weight, that, in Chestnut street particularly, they occupy the entire street, lumbering about, careless of all other vehicles, first on one side, then on the other, so that it is dangerous to attempt to drive a private carriage through the street at all. Let us learn wisdom of our enemies. It would be certainly desirable, if practicable, to compel all the omnibus drivers - a very reliable and compliant set of men - to keep their unwieldy machines exactly in the middle of the street, imitating in this respect the railroad. If this were done, then every body would know how to pass them. Fast young men and tigers could show their skill in driving their light wagons within an inch of the omnibus, on a full trot, without danger of being crushed, as now, by a lee-lurch of the great battering ram. To insure this end, I would pass an ordinance, and impose a fine upon every Jehu that did not comply with the rule.

It may be objected that the drivers could not, if they would, keep the exact middle line of the street. I am ready to meet this objection. Take two metal bars, nearly flat, and lay them at a proper distance apart, so that the wheels could travel on them; the horses would naturally keep between them. This would have the effect, also, of diminishing the terrible noise the vehicle now makes over the rough stones. To prevent the wheels running off the metal bars or slabs, a slight projection might be made on each, say about seven-eighths of an inch high, and, if you please, let the wheels have a corresponding rim on their tires. This device, as any one may see, would effectually prevent the omnibus from wabbling from curve to curve, and surging through holes, and over loose stones.

It is evident, too, that, owing to the ease with which great weights may be pulled over smooth surfaces, a desirable modification of the present 'bus may be made. The wheels can be much smaller, and the frame let down lower, so that feeble persons and children may be able to use this mode of conveyance, to which they have hitherto been almost debarred, owing to the difficulty of ascent to the back door. The omnibus could also be much enlarged, without increasing its weight - thus affording room for a greater number of passengers - a very important matter in a hot summer day, and when it is raining.

I think I discover a smile on the lips of the scorner of my proposed improvement, inasmuch as I have provided for the omnibus keeping the exact centre of the street, but not for their passing each other in opposite directions. I anticipate the sneering criticism, and have the remedy at hand. I am not ashamed to avail myself of a good idea, although it comes from the enemy. Let all the omnibuses run up Chestnut street and down Walnut, or vice versa, completing the circuit by using the cross streets at either end. The system will then be complete; and with this improvement easily brought about, I defy the opponents of the omnibus to point out a single remaining objection. Why then insist upon having railroads, when it is well known there are so many respectable people opposed to them, so that the very name is detestable. Witness the immense list of remonstrances against the Chestnut and Walnut street Company laying rails in those streets. The improved omnibus system will satisfy the entire community. Nine out of ten of these remonstrants will, if they have the opportunity, petition Councils to adopt my plan, in the place of the horrid

This delightful piece of satirical writing appeared as a letter in a Philadelphia newspaper in 1859, and was quoted in Alexander Easton's book the same year. While the author is not named, it is almost certainly Mr. Easton himself. Under the guise of an omnibus supporter, and great enemy of street railways, the author promotes "improvements" to the omnibus lines, and, in so doing, proceeds to demolish all the arguments against the introduction of Street railways! Mr. Easton built a number of street railways in the United States and, in 1861, came to Canada to construct the first lines in Toronto and Montreal.

railroad. No one will be silly enough to assert that this system will injure the property of those living on the streets where it is introduced; on the contrary, it will enhance the value of it. All complaints against the old rudderless monster - as I once heard a malicious railroad man call that highly respectable public vehicle, the omnibus - will be at an end; and it will hardly be recognized by its old admirers, in its improved shape and parts.

Again, the railroad in the hands of a company is a perfect monopoly; and, although their advocates boast that they help the income of the city treasury, and diminish the taxes, by keeping the streets in good repair at their own expense, yet the people very properly object to monopolies.

Now, there is no reason why a revenue of the same sort, and a stipulation to keep the streets in order, may not be equally well secured under my proposed new omnibus system. Charge twenty-five dollars per annum for the privilege for each omnibus, and compel the owners to keep the streets in order.

This could not, perhaps, be done, without concert of action between the several owners; but to insure its being carried out, I would suggest that a number of individuals club together, and take certain streets, and that Councils recognize the club, and hold them jointly responsible. This would be a very

different concern from an incorporated company. The former consists of individual citizens; the latter is a monopoly, and have the right, by an act of the Legislature, to use a great seal.

Of course, the railroad advocates will find, or try to invent, some objections to my plan; but I appeal to every reflecting man, if it does not possess all the merits claimed for the railroad, and at the same time preserve all the good characteristics of the omnibus, with none of its disadvantages.

Gentlemen in their private carriages may then have some satisfaction in driving through Chestnut street. There will be no more noise, no blockading the street; people may converse and read newspapers in the omnibus; ladies' dresses will not be splashed with dirty water from the gutters; the street will be inviting; shopping will be pleasant pastime, and every body will be pleased with the change.

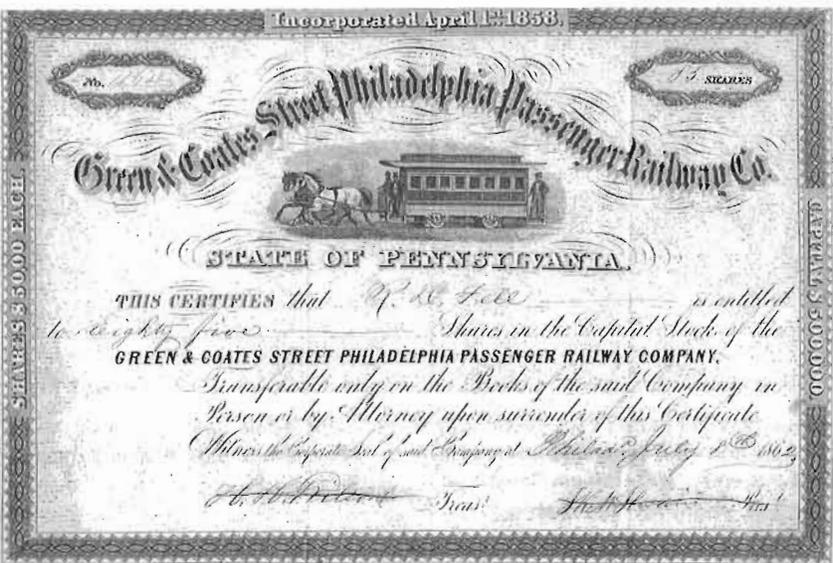
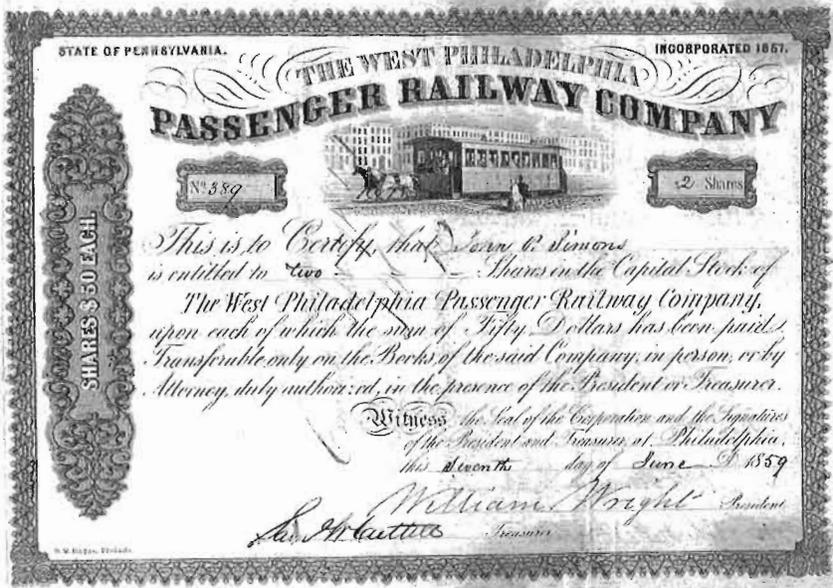
Thus, I have proved that we can do without the railroad. Some one may say, "a rose by any other name will smell as sweet"; but people will have their fancies, their notions, or, if you please, their prejudices. Let no one do unnecessary violence to them. If my improved omnibus system will answer, and satisfy both parties, why insist upon having a railroad? Let the streets be used for what they were intended for.

"OMNIBUS."



*Although taken late in the horsecar era, October 17, 1893 to be exact, this photo shows a Philadelphia horsecar of the 1860s running on the Chestnut and Walnut Streets line - the same line referred to in the 1859 letter. This car would date from, or soon after, that period; certainly contemporary with Alexander Easton.*

*National Archives of Canada, Merrilees Collection, photo No. PA-164708.*



Far to the north, in Canada, the cities of Montreal and Toronto were growing at an unprecedented rate as immigrants poured in from Europe. A rudimentary omnibus service had been started in Montreal in 1848 and Toronto in 1849, but both were small and very limited in coverage. What was needed was a street railway, and in 1859 the first definite steps were taken in this direction. Undoubtedly the authorities in both cities had seen Mr. Easton's book, and this likely influenced their decision as to how to proceed. Both cities incorporated street railway companies in 1861, and both employed the same contractor to build the lines. The name of that contractor was Alexander Easton of Philadelphia! Since Mr. Easton could not be in two places at the same time, and since Toronto had made its contract first, Toronto had the honour of having Canada's first street railway. It opened on September 10, with a very elaborate ceremony typical of the Victorian era, followed by a concert and then a ball which started at midnight and continued until an undetermined hour in the early morning of September 11. Later that day, regular service began.

One of the guests at the festivities was John Ostell of Montreal, the first president of the Montreal City Passenger Railway. In a speech he noted that, although Toronto was first with a street railway, Montreal would soon have six miles compared to Toronto's two! Sure enough, just a week later, on September 18, work began on the Montreal system. This opened on November 27, with another elaborate ceremony, so, as 1861 came to an end, both cities had street railways in operation.

A good description of the progress of the work, and of the cars, appeared in the *Toronto Globe* on August 30, 1861: "The work of laying down the track of the Street Railway is being proceeded with in a vigorous manner, and Mr. Easton is confident that the opening day will be this day week. A large number of men are employed, and already the track has been laid from Yorkville to the junction of Yonge

Some stock certificates of early street railway companies in Philadelphia. The 1858 example, shown at the top, is one of the earliest horsecar certificates known. All three show typical horsecars of the time. Note the improved design of the 1862 car on the certificate at the bottom of the page.

**KIMBALL & GORTON'S  
PHILADELPHIA CAR WORKS,  
CORNER TWENTY-FIRST & HAMILTON STS.  
PHILADELPHIA.**

The undersigned having been, for upwards of Twenty years, actively engaged in the manufacture of Cars of all descriptions, and being in possession of very extensive shops and machinery,—solicit orders for Passenger or Freight Cars, which will be built of the best materials and workmanship, at the shortest notice, and on the most reasonable terms.

**KIMBALL & GORTON.**

Particular attention paid to the construction of Passengers Cars for City Railroads. References can be made to the numerous companies of this city.

**A. WHITNEY & SONS,  
CAR WHEEL WORKS,**

**CALLOWHILL & SIXTEENTH STREETS,**

**PHILADELPHIA, PENNA,**

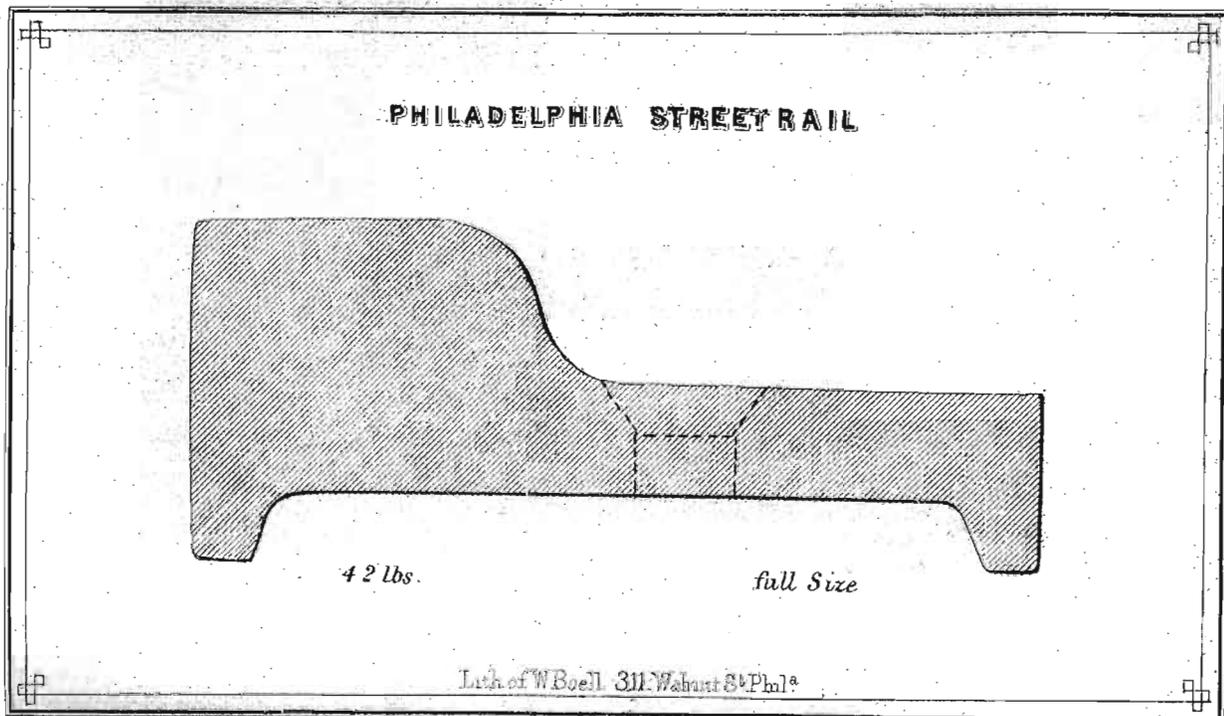
**Furnish Chilled Railroad Wheels and Tires; Rolled and Hammered Axles; Wheels and Axles fitted complete; Light Wheels for City Railways, with or without Axles.**

Two advertisements from Alexander Easton's 1859 book. These are almost certainly the firms that built Canada's first horsecars, and the wheels on which they ran.

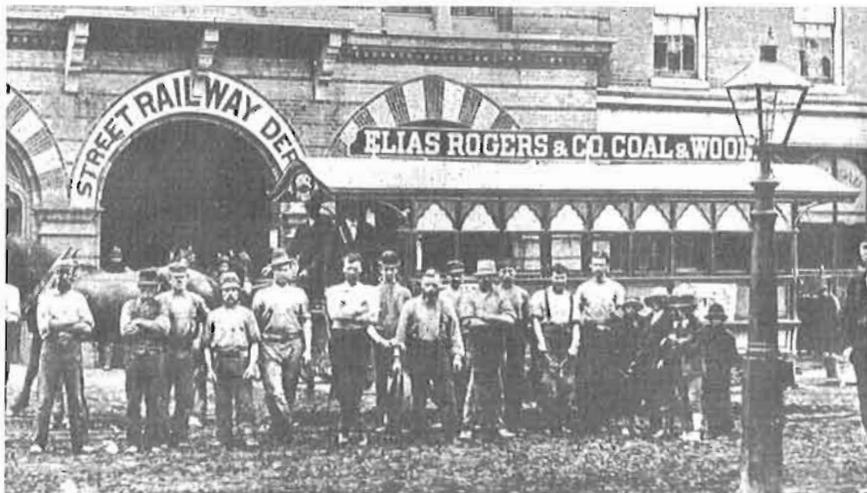
and Queen streets, and from the progress already made the men will be at work on King street early next week. The passenger cars, seven in number, arrived from Philadelphia yesterday. They have a comfortable, tasteful appearance, and on the sides are several prettily executed views of the various public buildings of the city. They are fitted up in the same style as railway passenger cars, but of course much smaller and are seated for twenty-four persons. They were conveyed last evening from the Queen's Wharf to Yorkville, on seven of Messrs. Shedden & Co.'s mammoth waggons drawn by powerful horses, and as they passed through the several streets attracted much attention. The villagers of Yorkville to the number of about three hundred had congregated in front of the Town Hall, and on the arrival of the cars a series of cheers arose from the crowd which made the welkin ring. The Street Railway promises to be a very popular institution among our citizens, and the Committee of Arrangements for the opening day are busy at work. A large number of vocalists are nightly at practice for the grand concert in the Yorkville Town Hall, and an efficient

quadrille-band will be engaged for the ball which is announced to take place at the termination of the concert."

The cars and track were identical to those used in Philadelphia; hence the Philadelphia Connection. The cars were almost certainly built by Kimball & Gorton's Philadelphia Car Works, while the rails were from Messrs. Hancock and Foley of Danville Pennsylvania. The former firm advertised in Mr. Easton's book, the only one in its line to do so. On February 1, 1862 the firm of Kimball & Gorton was succeeded by Joseph R. Bolton, at the same location, and their advertisement shows a car very like the first Toronto type, as evidenced by a photo of one of Toronto's original cars. There is no photograph known of Montreal's first horsecars, but a drawing of the 1860s (see next page) shows a car almost the same. A picture on an early Montreal street car ticket shows a similar car, as does a line drawing of an 1875 street scene. At least some of these original cars, in both cities, survived as long as thirty years, maintaining the Philadelphia connection almost to the end of the horsecar era.



Actual size cross section of Philadelphia rail identical to that used on the first horsecar lines in Canada. From Alexander Easton's 1859 book.



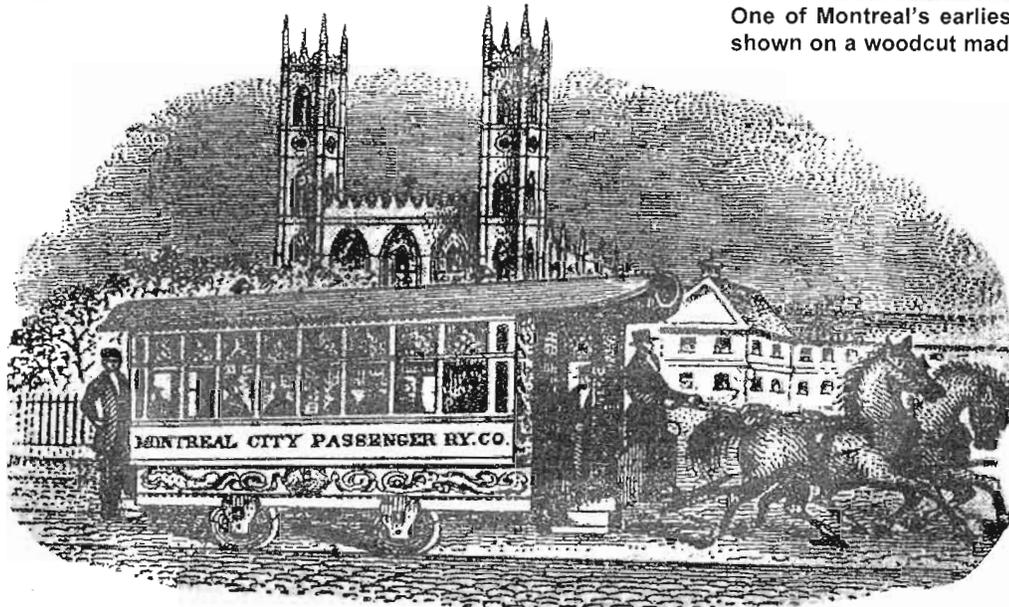
One of Toronto's (and Canada's) first horsecars, photographed outside the Yorkville Town Hall.



An early Montreal horsecar as shown on a ticket of the City Passenger Railway.



One of Montreal's earliest street cars as shown on a woodcut made in 1875.



The oldest known illustration of a Montreal street car. This engraving dates from the 1860s, and shows one of Montreal's first horsecars at Place d'Armes. Collection of Douglas Brown.

**JOSEPH R. BOLTON,**  
 (Successor to Kimball & Gorton.)  
**PHILADELPHIA CAR WORKS.**

The subscriber having purchased the entire Stock, Machinery, &c., of the late firm of KIMBALL & GORTON, and having engaged Mr. L. D. GORTON to superintend the mechanical department, is fully prepared to furnish

**PASSENGER AND FREIGHT CARS**

of every description, according to order, at the shortest notice, and of the best materials and workmanship.

**IRON CASTINGS**

of all kinds made on the most reasonable terms.  
 Orders for any kind of

**CAR WORK**

respectfully solicited.

**JOSEPH R. BOLTON,**  
 21st and Hamilton Streets, Philadelphia,  
 February 1, 1862.

Early in 1862 the firm of Kimball and Gorton became Joseph R. Bolton. The car shown on the advertisement of the new firm is almost identical to the first Toronto and Montreal cars.

# STREET RAILWAY FESTIVAL!

ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF  
THE

Toronto Street Railway,

ON

TUESDAY NEXT, THE 10th INSTANT,

A

## GRAND FESTIVAL!

WILL TAKE PLACE,

## PROGRAMME

OF

THE DAY'S PROCEEDINGS.

### THE DEJEUNER!

AT TWO O'CLOCK in the afternoon a *Grand Dejeuner* will be held at

THE ST. LAWRENCE HALL  
TORONTO

### THE CONCERT!

In the Evening a *Grand Concert* of Vocal and Instrumental Music will be given

IN THE TOWN HALL, YORKVILLE.

Under the able direction of *MR. J. P. CLARKE, MUF. B.A.C.*, on which occasion

The Band of the 30th Regiment,  
(By the kind permission of the Colonel and Officers) will be present.

### THE BALL!

The Quadrille Band will be in attendance

FOR THE BALL,

Which will immediately succeed the Concert

## THE RAILWAY

WILL BE OPENED by a Train leaving the Railway Depot at ONE O'CLOCK, P. M. The Cars will continue to run during the remainder of the day, and at intervals of ten minutes during the night.

M. P. - Members of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club, and Officers of Militia will please appear in uniform.

G. F. McKAY,  
Secretary of the Committee  
since Railway Festival.

Toronto, Sept. 4, 1861.



## STREET RAILROAD!

THE Cars will run until further notice between the  
DEPOT AT YORKVILLE

AND

## ST. LAWRENCE HALL!

At intervals of twenty minutes, from 7:20 A.M., to 10 P.M.

Tickets may be purchased of the Conductors on the Cars in stripes of 25 tickets for One Dollar.

ALEXANDER BLEAKLEY,  
Superintendent.

Toronto, Sept. 12.

3570-4t

### THE STREET RAILWAY

On Thursday, the public holiday, four thousand two hundred and fifty persons rode in the cars on the street railway between Toronto and Yorkville. Yesterday every car was crowded as it passed along the streets, and as they were running from seven in the morning till half-past ten in the evening, the number could not be far short of the previous day. Of course large numbers rode to Yorkville and back for pleasure, but there is every indication that the Railway will pay well. Upwards of forty men are employed to work the line. The conductors and drivers all belong to Toronto, and appear to be civil and obliging; but as they are new to the business some little forbearance on the part of the public may be expected. One or two persons were ill-bred enough to smoke cigars in the presence of ladies, but it is to be hoped that they will not be allowed to repeat the nuisance. Mr. Easton, the President of the road, states that in a short time he will commence laying down the track on Queen street to the Asylum, and he is confident that the line will be open by 1st November. This will prove a great boon to the citizens residing in the western part of the city.

Toronto *Globe*, September 14, 1861.

LEFT: The announcement of the festivities for the opening of the street railway. *Toronto Globe*, September 4, 1861.

TOP: The announcement that the street railway was open for business. *Toronto Globe*, September 12, 1861.

ABOVE: An account of the first two days of operation of the street railway. *Toronto Globe*, September 14, 1861.

NEXT TWO PAGES: The street railway was opened with all the ceremony and speechmaking that was typical of the Victorian era. The report of the ball ends abruptly as the reporter had to leave in order to meet the deadline for the morning paper! *Toronto Globe*, September 11, 1861.

## OPENING OF THE STREET RAILWAY

### THE DEJEUNER, CONCERT AND BALL

The Street Railway was opened yesterday, creating much interest and excitement in this city and Yorkville. The hour announced for the first car to start from the Town Hall, Yorkville, was one o'clock, and long before that time large crowds had wended their way to the village, and all were on the *qui vive* for the start. Yorkville presented a gay appearance, the greater portion of the villagers having hung out flags and banners to the breeze, and every window was filled with spectators. Seldom has the quiet village seen such a bustle and excitement, and when the first car came out of the depot and was placed on the track, a grand cheer arose from the assembled multitude. The street railway had become a fact. At two o'clock a message was brought to the Superintendent that a portion of the line would not be cleared for some time, and it was not till four o'clock that the first car started, having on board the Reeve and Council of Yorkville, and several of the Toronto City Council, and having on the roof the Artillery Band playing spirited airs. A short distance behind came the other three cars, all filled to the utmost capacity. It was intended that on the first trip only the civic dignitaries and leading citizens would occupy the vehicles, but when the cars moved a run took place, and those who got inside or on the platforms kept their places in spite of every remonstrance. The first car, with the band, had only proceeded as far as the line which divides Toronto from Yorkville, when it ran off the track and came to a sudden stop. The passengers inside alighted and assisted in placing the vehicle on the rails again, and the driver received the order "go-ahead". This occurred several times with all the cars, but the passengers treated the delay as a joke, and the crowd was always ready to give a "shove" or a "lift" to keep moving. If the opening had been delayed until Thursday everything would have been in first-rate order, but the day was announced during the absence of Mr. Easton, and yesterday morning the rails had to be cleared from Yorkville to St. Lawrence Hall, while one or two of the switches still remained unfinished. Mr. Easton, however, was determined that the public should not be disappointed; the opening day had been fixed and the Railway should be opened on that day, and opened it was. Yonge street was crowded with citizens, and when the cars passed the engine hall of No. 2 "Independent" the members of that company turned out and gave three rousing cheers and "a tiger". When they reached the front of the St. Lawrence Hall, the crowd gave three hearty cheers for the Queen, while the band performed the National Anthem. The Mayor, several of the Aldermen, Councilmen and leading citizens here joined the party, and the horses heads being turned towards the west, the cars proceeded towards Yorkville. It was intended to continue running the cars at intervals during the afternoon and night, but the rough state of the road prevented this.



This rather muddy but historic photo shows a very early view of Toronto Street Railway horsecars outside Yorkville town hall. It is thought by some to be a view of the first two cars shortly before their inaugural run on September 10, 1861. Note the musicians of the band of the artillery regiment on the roof of the car, ready to play their "spirited airs" as the parade moved south.

Now that the Railway is opened, although a good deal still requires to be done, we may be allowed a few remarks regarding it. The first communication relative to it was made to the City Council on the 1st of October 1860, when many of the members attempted to throw cold water on the project, but ultimately a committee was appointed to investigate the matter and report. The *Globe* and other newspapers, and the citizens generally, warmly supported the enterprize, and petitions in favour of street Railways poured into the Council. At length, after protracted delays and discussions the Council agreed to co-operate with Mr. Easton, in procuring a Street Railway Act. In this they were well seconded by the Councils of Montreal and Quebec, and the Act was passed during the last session of Parliament. The next thing to do was to sanction the contract with Mr. Easton, and this was done on the 19th of March last. Delays again arose from various causes, but on Thursday three weeks ago the work of laying the track and building the depots and stables was commenced. Upwards of two hundred mechanics and labourers were employed, under the superintendence of Mr. David Smith, and the works were put in such a forward state that the Yonge street line was opened yesterday. The cars have a neat and comfortable appearance, and are well lighted and ventilated. The larger ones are calculated to seat twenty-four passengers and the smaller sixteen passengers. There are seven cars in all at the depot, but it is only intended to run four of them, the others being designed for Montreal. They were built in Philadelphia, and a description of them has already appeared in the *Globe*. The rails were from the foundry of Messrs. Hancock & Foley, Danville Pennsylvania. Messrs. Hamilton & Sons, St. Lawrence Foundry, Toronto, supplied the castings, and Messrs. Smith & Burke, Toronto, the ties and timber. We have not learned the sum expended in the construction of the Yonge Street road. We presume the other parts of the line will be commenced soon. Mr. Easton is to act as President of the road; Mr. Alexander Blakeley will officiate as Superintendent, and a number of conductors and drivers have been engaged. It may be

mentioned that Mr. Williams ran his "busses" yesterday in opposition to the railway, and it is stated that he will continue the competition.

### THE DEJEUNER

The dejeuner in honour of the opening of the Street Railway came off in the Yorkville Town Hall on the return of the cars from Toronto. At half-past five about 300 gentlemen sat down to a very elegant entertainment, which was got up in a style exceedingly creditable to the skill of Mr. Steers, who was the caterer on the occasion, and to the liberality of the Yorkville Committee, under whose superintendence it was provided. Col. W.B. Jarvis presided, having on his right J.G. Bowes Esq., Mayor of Toronto, and Mr. Easton, the builder of the railroad; and on his left John Ostell Esq., of Montreal, Rev. Dr. McCaul, and Col. R.L. Denison..... Rev. Dr. McCaul said grace and returned thanks.

After the cloth had been removed, the Chairman said..... that inasmuch as the city of Toronto and Yorkville had this day been united into one, and as the committee wished the business of the festival to proceed with railroad speed, he found in the list before him, instead of the usual toast "The Queen", the double one "The Queen and Prince Consort". He thought it was a happy union - [cheers] - and he called upon the company to drink with him in a full bumper the health of "The Queen and the Prince Consort". The toast was drunk with much loyal enthusiasm.....

Mr. Mayor Bowes said a toast had been put into his hands, of which he was very happy to be the proposer. Mr. Easton had come amongst us as a total stranger, and had made a proposition to the City of Toronto, stating that he was prepared to build street railroads if he got permission to do so. That permission was granted after a great deal of trouble.... He was happy to hear that Mr. Easton had not only constructed at his own expense, and in an incredibly short time, the railroad between Toronto and Yorkville, but had also entered into a contract with the people of Montreal to construct railways there, and he trusted the street railway enterprise would not end there, and that Mr. Easton would rest satisfied until he had built one of his railroads up the acclivities of Quebec - [cheers] - and had also extended his operations to Hamilton, London, and other places in Canada. He was glad that it was Toronto which had taken the initiative in this work, and that Yorkville too had come out and done herself credit by the manner in which she had celebrated this opening. [cheers] He had much pleasure in giving as the next toast, "Mr. Easton and the street railways of Yorkville and Toronto". [cheers]

Mr. Easton, on rising, was greeted with renewed and most enthusiastic cheering. He said he felt more gratified at this moment than he had at ever been at any previous day of his life.... He had come amongst them a stranger about 11 month ago, his desire being to build here the pioneer street railway in Canada, after having pioneered works of that kind through the United States..... He had commenced them in Canada under

very propitious circumstances. He had successfully carried through the pioneer street railway of Canada, and, if the almighty should spare him till his hair should be gray, this evening, with the kind treatment he had received, would ever have place in his memory as the brightest spots in his life....

The Chairman said he had another toast to propose - the health of the gentlemen who had come from the first commercial city of Canada [Montreal] to take a leaf out of our book in this matter of street railroads. [cheers] He was satisfied that as Mr. Easton was to be their contractor, they must succeed. [cheers] He was sure all would heartily join in drinking prosperity to their enterprise. [cheers]

Mr. Ostell, on rising to respond, was warmly cheered. He said the general public was certainly to benefit very much by these enterprises. The citizens of Montreal were following in the footsteps of Toronto in the matter of street railroads. They had got their capital, they had got their contractor, and in a few weeks he had no doubt they would be drinking to the prosperity of six miles of street railroad in Montreal, as they were now drinking to the prosperity of the two miles completed in Toronto. [cheers]

It now being half-past seven, and time to prepare for the concert, no more toasts were given, and the proceedings at the dejeuner, a pleasant entertainment, long to be remembered, were brought to a close by the singing of the National Anthem.

### THE CONCERT AND BALL

The festivities of the day were wound up by a concert and ball in the Yorkville Town Hall.... Everybody there seemed determined to be pleased. Even the rain, which fell heavily in the evening, was looked on as a sort of blessing, inasmuch as it prevented overcrowding. The concert commenced at eight o'clock and lasted until half-past eleven..... The performance as a whole was very much superior to most entertainments of this description. Mrs. J. Beverley Robinson delighted the audience with two songs "Something to love me" and "Kathleen Mavourneen", both of which she sang very beautifully and in most correct taste. Mr. Armstrong sang "How to ask and get an answer" and "Thou art so near and yet so far" in a manner which earned for him the well deserved plaudits of his hearers. Miss Davis in "Lo! Here the gentle lark" and "Oh Maritana!" gave great gratification to the audience. The band of the 30th regiment was a very great acquisition to the evening's entertainment. A selection from "Il Trovatore", with the *miserere* chorus, was especially beautiful.....

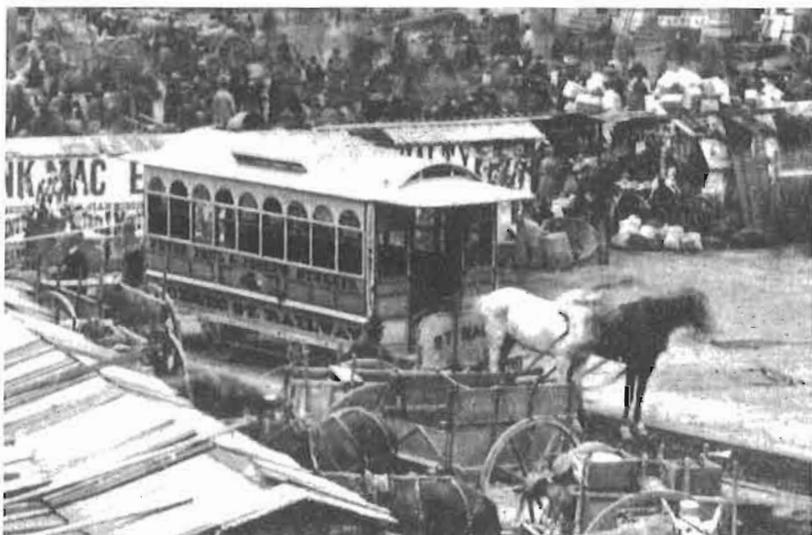
When the concert was concluded a rush was made for the supper room. Those who succeeded in getting in found the tables amply spread with refreshments by Mr. Coleman of King street. Everything was of the best quality. Dancing commenced about twelve o'clock and was kept up with vigour until the whole programme was disposed of.

Toronto *Globe*, Wednesday, September 11, 1861.

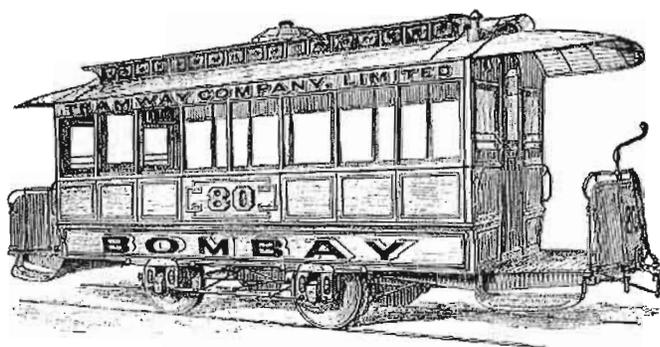
### 3. IMPROVED HORSECAR DESIGNS

The next Canadian city to adopt a street railway was Quebec City, which inaugurated its first line in 1865. Others followed in short order; Ottawa opened its first line in 1870 and in the east, Halifax and Saint John opened their lines in 1866 and 1869 respectively. During the 1870s many other cities joined the ranks of those running horsecars, and, in 1882, the horsecar came to far away Winnipeg, then in the midst of a land boom caused by the building of the CPR. As it turned out, Winnipeg remained the farthest west city in Canada to be served by horsecars.

While street railways were being inaugurated and expanded, the design of the horsecar itself was undergoing major changes. The early cars, being based on contemporary railway cars, were heavy, and very hard on the horses as well as the track. Especially in cities with steep grades, this was a very serious problem. In the late 1860s and early 1870s



A Quebec City horsecar built in 1865. In only four years car design had evolved considerably since the designs of 1861. But the car was still very heavy. National Archives of Canada, photo No. PA-103138.



The first example of the Bombay Roof.

improved designs began to appear. The new breed of horsecar no longer looked like a scaled-down railway car but was a design of its own. The horsecar of the 1860s averaged about 5700 pounds without passengers, whereas the type introduced about 1870 weighed less than 5000 pounds. The cars had curved sides that allowed them to clear more easily the hubs of the wheels of horse-drawn road vehicles. In the new design the small sash windows that raised to open were replaced by larger windows that dropped into the side walls. The so-called Bombay roof (so called because the first cars of that design were shipped to that city in India) was introduced by car builder John Stephenson and Co. which, by that time was the largest builder of street cars in the world.

This roof, with its elegantly curved roof ribs, clerestory side windows and eyebrow end windows, became the standard for horsecar design from then on. About 1873 J.G. Brill developed the full deck, or monitor, roof which was also used on numerous horsecars, but never really superseded the Bombay design. The deck roof came into its own in the electric car era and was almost universal from the early 1890s until the 1910s. Eventually the weight of a typical horsecar was reduced to about 4200 pounds, which for a closed car was about the practical limit in weight reduction, as it was considerably less than the weight of its passenger load.

It became the practice in some cities to paint the cars a distinctive colour for each route, since cars were seldom transferred from one route to another. Not until the late 1880s was a single, system-wide, paint scheme adopted, and moveable (but still colour-coded) destination signs installed.

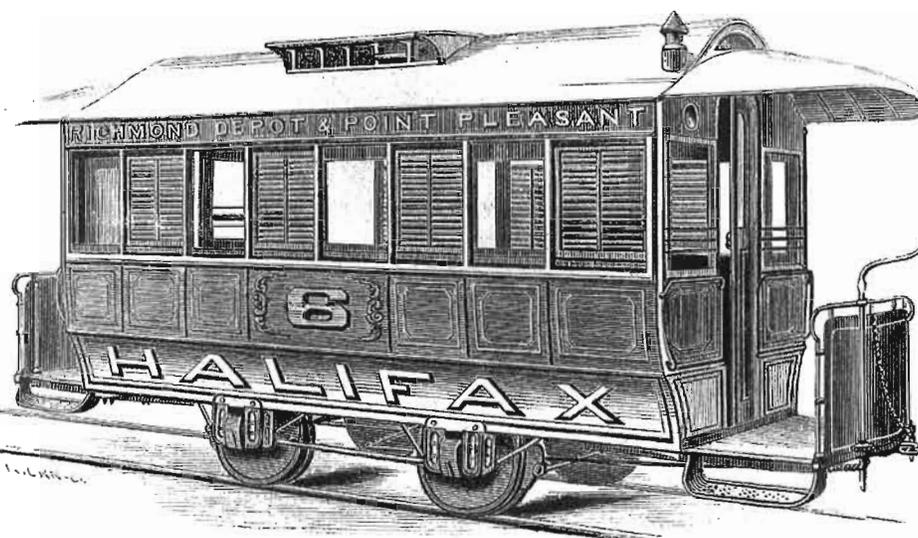
About the same time as these improvements were taking place, open cars began to be placed in service. These had cross benches and no sides, passengers boarding by means of a running board which ran the length of the car.



A Bombay roof horsecar in Montreal about 1890. National Archives of Canada, photo C-65442.

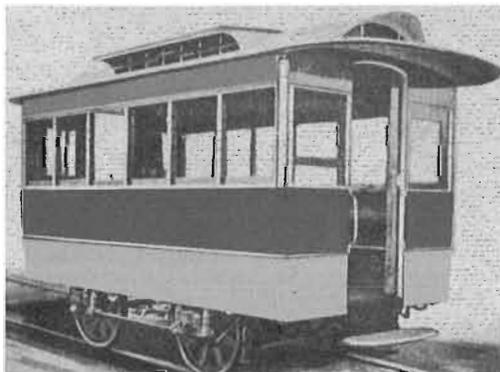
These cars were even lighter than the closed cars, and became very popular for summer operation with the public and the company alike. The open car design also carried over into the electric car era where they were used until the volume of automobile traffic made open cars too dangerous.

Yet another horsecar design appeared about 1870. This was the conductorless or "bobtail" design. This was somewhat of a retrograde step, as these were small cars with no rear platform, only a step leading to a rear entrance, rather like the old omnibus. On boarding, the passenger was expected to make his way to the front and give his fare to the driver who also acted as conductor. These cars were disliked by the public, and were very seldom used in Canada, but they did save money and were useful on lightly travelled lines that might otherwise not



A Halifax horsecar of about 1870. National Archives of Canada, photo PA-164685.

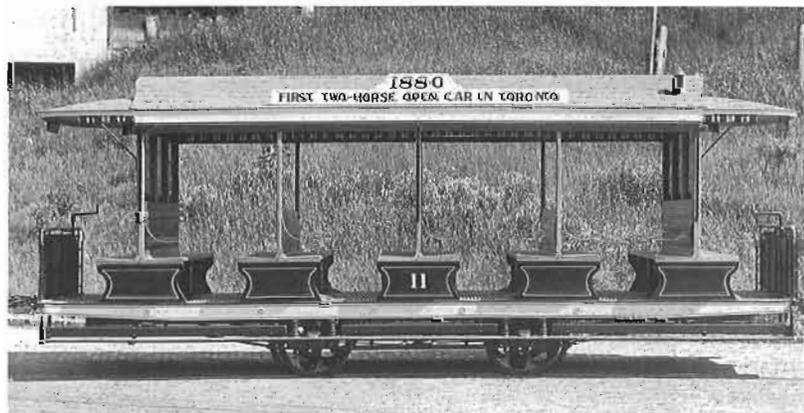
Finally, the 1870s saw the introduction of the double-decker horsecar. Here, the passenger had the option of riding in the closed lower portion, or climbing a set of curving stairs and riding on longitudinal seats on the roof. Double-deckers became popular in Europe, especially Britain, but were never widely used in America. However Montreal did have a number of double-deck horsecars in use in the 1880s.



A Bobtail car about 1870.

have had any service at all. The "bobtail" cars were single-enders, unlike most of the regular cars, and had to be turned at the end of the line. This was done by a loop or small turntable, but some cars could be rotated about a vertical axis, much like Stephenson's early cars of 1855.

Driving a horsecar was not as easy a task as one might think. Besides keeping control of a two-horse team, the driver had to operate the handbrake with great care, especially on grades and with a heavy load of passengers; a fully loaded car could weigh eight tons. In starting on an upgrade, he had to release the brake at just the right time to avoid having the car roll backwards and pulling the horses back. Descending a grade was even more tricky, as the driver had to keep enough brake on to prevent the car from rolling forward too fast and running over the horses! On lines with steep hills it was the practice to station a team of two "helper" horses at the bottom of the hill. They would assist the car to climb the hill, then walk back down. Hitching and unhitching the "helpers" could be done in a few seconds. Bells, often marked with the company's initials, were hung from the horse's collar, and gave a pleasant sounding warning to all and sundry that a horsecar was coming.



An open horsecar as built in Toronto in 1880. This one is a replica, built in 1934 at the time of Toronto's centennial. This car is now at the Shoreline Trolley Museum near New Haven, Connecticut. Toronto Transit Commission Archives, photo No. 10463.

By 1880 the horsecar had reached its final stage of development. It was a strong, lightweight and efficient vehicle that provided a very necessary service in cities all over the world. In Canada, twenty cities operated horsecars, with the total of cars reaching over 600 by 1891. Worldwide, the investment in horsecar systems amounted to many millions of dollars, and the total number of passengers carried amounted to uncounted millions. The horsecar was a vital part of urban society, and is seemed as if it would go on forever. Little could one guess that, in North America, it would be almost gone in twenty years.



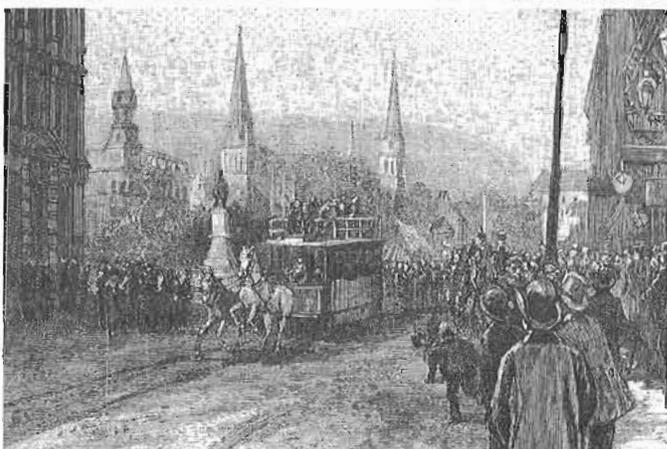
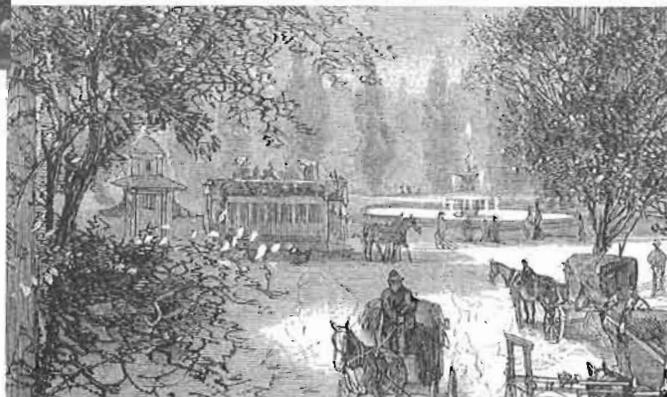
**MONTREAL'S DOUBLE-DECKERS**

Canada's only double-deck horsecars ran in Montreal in the 1870s and 1880s. The City Passenger Railway purchased twelve double-deckers new in 1874, and converted a number of others from single to double deck. This was to increase capacity without increasing the number of cars, a move made necessary by the city's refusal to permit the company to build more passing sidings. In later years, when most of the lines were double-tracked, the need for double-deckers disappeared and they were withdrawn.

**ABOVE:** The only known photograph showing a Montreal double-decker in service. It was taken from the fourth floor of a building on McGill street, looking towards Victoria Square. The horsecar is heading south on McGill street. The statue of Queen Victoria (erected in 1872) appears new, dating this photo to the late 1870's or early 1880s. Collection of Douglas Brown.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** An enlargement from the above photo showing the horsecar in more detail.

**RIGHT:** Three engravings from *Picturesque Canada*, printed in 1882. These show double-deckers at (reading from top to bottom) Notre Dame street at Place d'Armes, Notre Dame street near City Hall, McGill street at Victoria Square. The car in the bottom engraving is at almost exactly the same location as that in the photograph above.



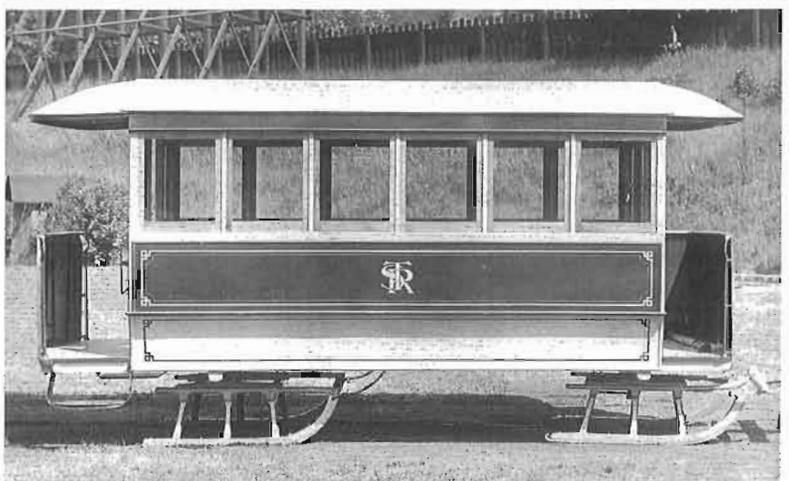
**THE CITY RAILWAY  
REFORMS NEEDED**

To the Editor of the Globe.  
Toronto, Nov. 19.

Sir, - If any member of the Local Legislature desires to immortalize his name, let him apply at the very next session for such amendments to the City Railway Act as will compel the proprietors to carry only a limited number of passengers at a time. It is really too bad, after a hard day's work, and securing a seat in the car for the ride home, to be obliged to give your seat to some fair lady, and stand the rest of the journey, and all that the proprietors of the railway may pocket another fare. But the proprietors have no consideration for the public comfort. All they seem to aim at is to get as much money as possible, and give as little return as they can. Another annoyance from this liberty to carry as many as will get on the cars is, that when the platforms are crowded fore-and-aft, the conductor comes through and insists on holding the front door open while he collects the fares from all the outside passengers, regardless all the time of the draft which is blowing the insides nearly out; and if any one expostulates with the conductor, he is sure to receive a rude answer. I was present on two recent occasions when this occurred, and each time the conductor was unnecessarily rude. Now, if we are to submit to crowded cars, we might be saved this further annoyance, by the proprietors insisting on their conductors going round outside to collect the fares from those passengers who are allowed to occupy the front platform. Indeed, I think if our Legislature will not go so far as to compel the proprietors to carry only a limited number of passengers, they may safely enact that passengers shall not be allowed to travel on the front platform; for all the sad accidents, fatal and otherwise, which have occurred on our City Street-Cars, have been incurred either in getting on or off the front platform.

Yours, GRIEVANCE.

Toronto *Globe*, November 20, 1872.



TOP: Toronto Street Railway car 16, built by Stephenson in 1874, photographed on September 11, 1946. This car has been preserved. TTC photo No. 15541.

MIDDLE: Replica of a Toronto omnibus run by the street railway on outlying lines. This replica was built in 1934, and was photographed on November 12, 1947. TTC photo No. 15953.

BOTTOM: Replica Toronto sleigh, built in 1934, photographed on June 21, 1934. TTC photo 10465.

NEXT TWO PAGES: Anyone who still thinks that a horsecar was a simple vehicle should study the diagrams and index on the next two pages. These are taken from the *Car Builder's Dictionary* of 1884, and show all the complex parts that went into a typical horsecar of the 1880s.

## THE COMPONENT PARTS OF A HORSECAR

From the Car Builder's Dictionary, Edition of 1884

- |                                 |                                       |                                      |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Wheel.                       | 47. Plate.                            | 92. Door-latch Plate.                |
| 2. Axle.                        | 48. Eaves-moulding.                   | 92' Sliding-door Holder.             |
| 3. Pedestal.                    | 49. Window-blind Rest.                | 93. Door-sill.                       |
| 4. Journal-box.                 | 50. Window-sash Rest.                 | 94. Inside Hand-rail.                |
| 5. Jaw-bit.                     | 51. Outside Window-stop.              | 95. Inside Hand-rail Bracket.        |
| 6. Side Journal-spring .        | 52. Inside Window-stop.               | 96. Hand-straps.                     |
| 7. Spring-saddle.               | 53. Carline.                          | 97. Signal-bell.                     |
| 8. Sill.                        | 54. End carline.                      | 98. Bell-strap.                      |
| 9. End-sill.                    | 55. Roof-boards.                      | 99. Bell-strap Guide.                |
| 10. Transverse Floor-timber.    | 56. Clear-story, or Upper-deck.       | 99' Bell-strap Guide, with Roller.   |
| 11. Sill Tie-rod.               | 57. Deck Bottom-rail.                 | 100. Draw-timber.                    |
| 12. Floor.                      | 58. Deck-post.                        | 101. Platform-timber.                |
| 13. Wheel-box.                  | 59. Deck-window.                      | 102. Platform-timber Clamps.         |
| 14. Wheel-box Button.           | 60. Deck Carline.                     | 103. Platform End-timber.            |
| 15. Window-post.                | 61. Deck End-ventilator.              | 104. Platform, or Platform-floor.    |
| 16. Stud.                       | 62. End Roof-lights.                  | 105. Platform-timber Band.           |
| 17. Corner-post.                | 63. Ventilator-hood.                  | 106. Draw-hook.                      |
| 18. Door-post.                  | 64. Window.                           | 107. Helper-ring.                    |
| 19. Belt-rail.                  | 65. Window-rail.                      | 108. Platform-post.                  |
| 20. Belt-rail Band.             | 66. Window-stile.                     | 109. Base-washer, for Platform-post. |
| 21. Fender-rail.                | 67. Sash-lift.                        | 110. Platform-rail.                  |
| 22. Fender-guard.               | 68. Sash Parting-strip, or Stop-bead. | 111. Dash-guard.                     |
| 23. Inverted Body truss-rod.    | 69. Window-blind.                     | 112. Dash-guard Straps:              |
| 24. Inverted Body Queen-post.   | 70. Window-blind Stile.               | 113. Body Hand-rail.                 |
| 25. Inverted Truss-rod Plate.   | 71. Window-blind Rail.                | 114. Platform-step, or Side-step.    |
| 26. Turnbuckle.                 | 72. Window-blind Mullion.             | 115. Platform-hood.                  |
| 27. Outside-panel.              | 73. Window-blind Lift.                | 116. Platform-hood Bow.              |
| 28. Lower Outside-panel.        | 74. Lamp-case.                        | 117. Platform-hood Carline.          |
| 29. Upper End-panel.            | 75. Lamp-case Door.                   | 118. Platform-hood Knee.             |
| 30. Lower End-panel.            | 76. Lamp-case Chimney.                | 119. Platform-hood Moulding.         |
| 31. Inside Frieze-panel.        | 77. Window-guards.                    | 120. Brake-shaft Crank.              |
| 32. Panel-strip.                | 78. Door-stile.                       | 121. Brake-shaft Crank-handle.       |
| 33. Panel-furring.              | 79. Door-mullion.                     | 122. Brake-shaft.                    |
| 34. Seat-bottom, and Long Seat. | 80. Door-window Mullion.              | 123. Upper Brake-shaft Bearing.      |
| 35. Seat-leg.                   | 81. Middle, or Lock Door-rail.        | 124. Lower Brake-shaft Bearing.      |
| 36. Front Seat-rail.            | 82. Top Door-rail.                    | 125. Brake Ratchet-wheel.            |
| 37. Front Seat-bottom-rail.     | 83. Door-case Top-rail.               | 126. Brake-pawl.                     |
| 38. Back Seat-bottom-rail.      | 84. Door-case Intermediate-rail.      | 127. Brake-shaft Chain.              |
| 39. Back Seat-rail.             | 85. Door-case Top-panel.              | 128. Brake-shaft Connecting-rod.     |
| 40. Lower Seat-back-rail.       | 86. Door-case Sash.                   | 129. Centre Brake-lever.             |
| 41. Upper Seat-back-rail.       | 87. Door-case Sash-button.            | 130. Centre Brake-lever Spider .     |
| 42. Seat-back Board .           | 88. Door Guard-band.                  | 132. Secondary Brake-rod.            |
| 43. End Seat-panel.             | 89. Fare-wicket and its Door.         | 133. Brake-beam.                     |
| 44. Upper Belt-rail.            | 90. Fare-wicket Door-case.            | 134. Brake-hanger.                   |
| 45. Window-ledge.               | 91. Sliding-door Handle.              | 135. Brake-head.                     |
| 46. Letter-board.               | 91' Door-sheave.                      | 136. Rubber-tread.                   |



#### 4. THE GREAT EPIZOOTIC

*"In future years, when the children and grandchildren of the present generation are told of the strange visitation which we received in the year 1872, and the extraordinary scenes and circumstances connected therewith, they will be hardly able to imagine the queer predicament in which we are placed. No horsecars, no express wagons, no hacks, no coaches, nothing drawn by that most useful and docile animal, the horse."*

This quote from the *Boston Globe*, as reprinted in the *Toronto Globe* on October 31, 1872, described the first big crisis which faced horsecar systems throughout North America. In the fall of 1872, a mysterious disease with catarrh or flu-like symptoms broke out among the horse population and soon spread throughout North America. Called the "Epizootic" (simply a term for an epidemic among animals) it soon attained crisis proportions, as thousands of horses fell ill and many died. Of course it affected all horses, in every kind of service, but the street railways were particularly badly hit. It was said at the time that it originated in Canada, although there is no proof of this. Regardless of where it originated, its effects were felt more in the United States than in Canada, although no city in North America escaped its effects.

The spread of the Epizootic was very rapid, so much so that it was thought at the time that it must be atmospheric in action. It finally reached Atlantic Canada in November, and on November 20 the entire Halifax Street Railway was shut down except for a few cars that went to the station.

During the Epizootic, street car service in many cities was greatly reduced and in a few cases in the United States unemployed men were hired to haul the cars. However it was relatively short-lived. By late November its severity was reduced and it appeared that the disease had run its course. By the end of the year the Great Epizootic was virtually over.

#### THE HORSE EPIDEMIC

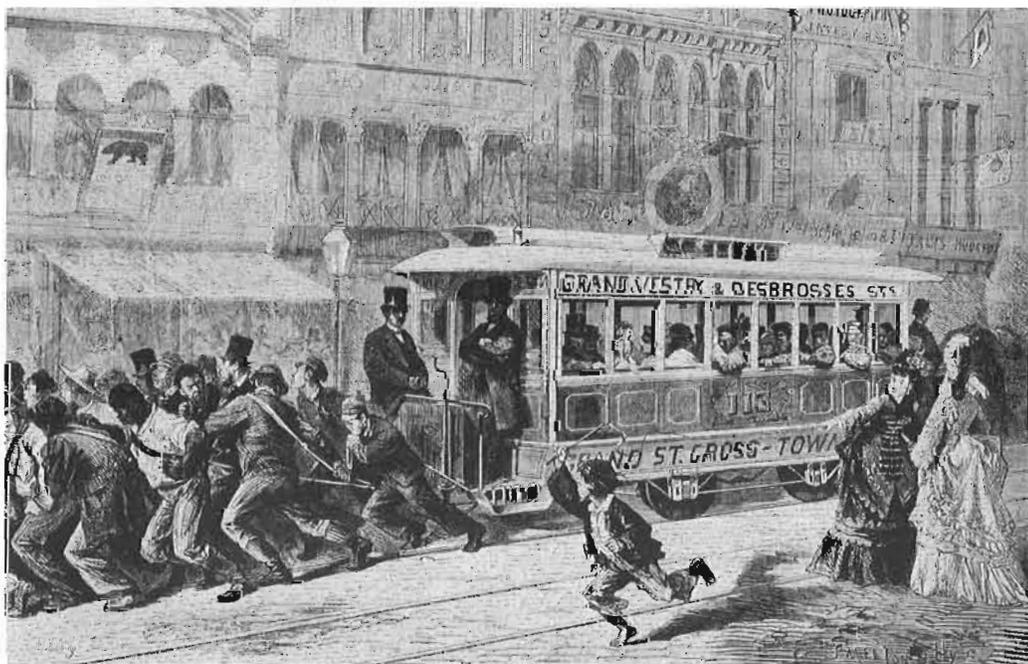
The disease that has been so widely spread among horses in this district appears to have run its course, and now shows considerable abatement. Dr. Smith informs us that this is the case in the principal stables in the city. The disease now appears to be extending eastward. There have been very few fatal cases, and of these it may be said that they were the result of want of ordinary care of the animal, or, what is less excusable, a resort to quack nostrums and practice. These are entirely useless in a disorder like the present, which must run its course, and requires simply attention and ordinary treatment during the continuance of the fever.

*Toronto Globe*, October 16, 1872.

Philadelphia, Nov. 4. - The horse disease prevails here to an alarming extent. The Second, Third, Union, Fifth and Sixth street lines of cars are not running today. The Carson, Chestnut and Walnut street lines are drawn by men to-night. The business interest is suffering considerably. Numbers of fatal cases among the horses are occurring.

*Toronto Globe*, November 6, 1872.

Although the Epizootic never again occurred with the virulence of 1872, street car executives began to think that somehow, perhaps, there would be a way of running street cars by mechanical power which would not require a horse. Not right now, but maybe in a few more years. It was one more step on the road towards the demise of the horsecar.



A view of men hauling a street car during the Great Epizootic of 1872. Actually the men would not have to strain as hard as shown in the picture, since the cars rolled quite easily. Although this is a New York scene, the picture was published in Paris France in the magazine *L'illustration*. This showed that the Epizootic was very newsworthy all over the world.

**THE PREVAILING EPIZOOTIC  
AMONGST HORSES**

For the past month the community generally have been somewhat excited and alarmed about the prevailing disease amongst horses, which has extended over the greater part of Canada, and is now fast spreading over the United States. The American papers of the past week contain very full accounts of what they call the Canada Horse Disease, and give Canada the credit of being the means of spreading the infection. As we have several times already mentioned through the columns of the *Globe*, the prevalent disease first appeared in Toronto and surrounding country about the end of September, and it gradually continued to extend in every direction, attacking all kinds of horses, old and young, in good condition or poor: almost every animal being affected to a greater or less extent.

The disease is of the nature of catarrhal fever, of an epizootic character; probably dependent upon some atmospheric influence, as is shown by its simultaneous appearance over a very large extent of country. We have no hesitation in stating that at least two-thirds of the horses in the city of Toronto became affected in the course of forty-eight hours, which goes far to show that it is the result of other influences than direct contagion.

Toronto *Globe*, October 31, 1872.

**THE EPIZOOTIC IN THE UNITED STATES**

The disgusting sight on several of the car lines yesterday of wretched, tottering brutes dragging the trebly overladen vehicles was to be witnessed from morning until night. Dummies [steam] may now be used on the lines in this city, and it is to be hoped, if the arrangement can be carried on under safe conditions, that the enfeebled horses will get a chance to recover.

New York *Herald*, October 30, 1872.

Every horse in the car stables is sick; some of them slightly ill. The managers say they will take time, and will not run a car out until their animals are beyond the reach of a relapse.

Portland *Press*, November 1, 1872.

Since the temporary suspension of travel on the car and omnibus lines occasioned by the horse distemper, the attention has been drawn to a consideration of the use of [steam] dummies on the street railroads. The common council has permitted the railroad lines to use dummies for thirty days, and residents are considering the propriety of urging the city railway companies to apply for permission to use the dummies altogether in future.

New York *Times*, November 1, 1872.

**I**MPORTANT  
to  
**OWNERS OF HORSES.**

**THE NEW  
ODORLESS AND NON-POISONOUS DEODORIZER  
AND DISINFECTANT,  
BROMO-CHLORALUM,  
PREPARED ONLY BY  
TILDEN & CO, New York**

We are receiving full supplies of this well-known article, which is highly recommended for the diseases of Horses and Cattle, and extensively used in the United States.

**FOR SPRINKLING FLOORS OF STABLES,  
To destroy all bad odours, and  
AS A WASH FOR THE NOSE AND MOUTH OF  
HORSES,  
Thereby arresting and preventing the spreading of  
disease.**

**LYMAN BROS. & CO.,**  
Toronto, Ont.

For sale by Druggists generally.

An advertisement from the Toronto *Globe* of October 16, 1872, when the Great Epizootic was at its height.

**THE EPIZOOTIC AT LAST**

While the horse disease, called the epizootic, hopporhinnorhea, hipposimus and various other equally interesting names, was ravaging the cities of Ontario, Quebec, the United States and New Brunswick, Halifax was exempted from it, much to the satisfaction of our citizens, and owners of horse flesh especially. The idea was prevalent that favored Halifax would have immunity from it. But these pleasant anticipations have been unpleasantly dispelled. The epizootic is here, and from being a laughing matter has become one of serious importance to the owners of horses and to all whose business requires the labor of horses....

The largest number of horses affected in one place was at the stables of the Halifax City Railroad Company, where 57 animals were under treatment. The first symptoms of coughing, &c., appeared in the stables on Saturday night. On Sunday the coughing was general. Monday being a fine healthy day, some of the horses were put to work as usual. Yesterday morning a cold rain storm prevailed, and the disease had become so serious that the manager of the company resolved to suspend the general operations of the road and only turn out horses enough to supply cars to connect with the railway trains.

Halifax *Morning Chronicle*, November 20, 1872.

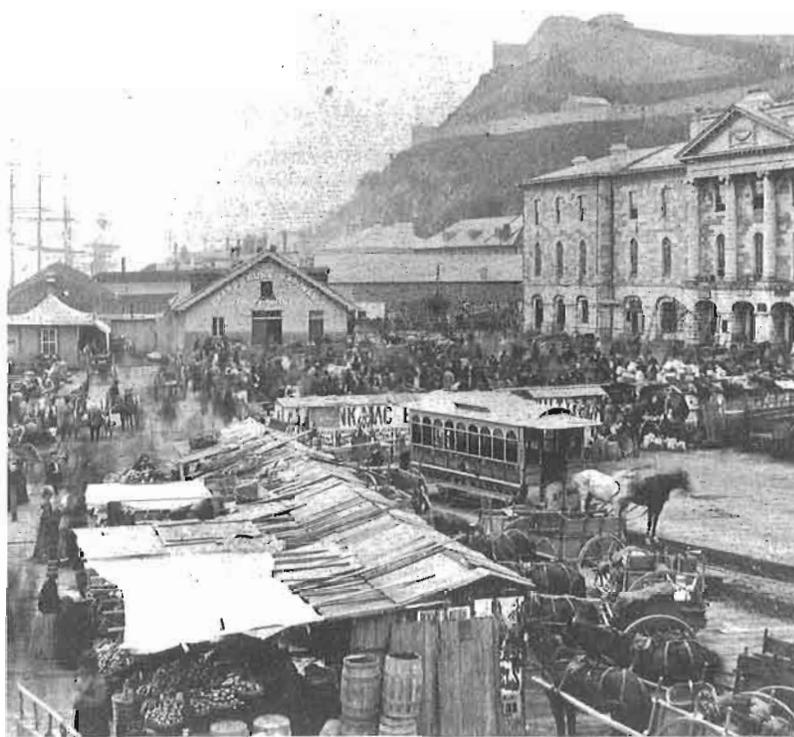
## 5. THE GREAT YEARS OF THE HORSECAR

By 1875 the horsecar was tried and true, and well established throughout the world. It was almost a quarter century since horsecars had appeared on city streets, and they were by far the dominant form of urban public transit. That is not to say that they were the only form, for others were on the scene as well. Cable cars had appeared in San Francisco in 1873, and showed promise for the future, especially in cities with steep hills. The steam dummy locomotive was also in limited use, especially in Europe, and various other mechanical devices were tried, most of them impractical. In New York City, steam-powered elevated railways were beginning to be constructed, and they seemed to be the solution for heavy traffic urban areas. The old rival, the omnibus, was still on the scene, especially on lightly-travelled routes. In fact the omnibus never fully disappeared, and its

twentieth century successor, the motor bus, eventually came back with a vengeance and all but wiped out the horsecar's successor, the electric car. Among the experimental devices for propelling street cars, was one that seemed very strange; it was actually proposed to harness that strange force known as electricity. However in 1875 most of these other means were either too impractical or too expensive for most cities and towns, and accounted for only a small proportion of urban transit. In hundreds of locations throughout the world (eventually twenty in Canada) the horsecar was king. Horsecar systems ranged in size from tiny operations with one car, half a mile of track and two or three horses, to the largest system under one management in the world, the West End Street Railway of Boston, formed in 1887, with more than two thousand cars and 8000 horses. The cars themselves came in many shapes and sizes, most had a body length (excluding platforms) of from 10 to 16 feet, but a few were smaller or larger. Virtually all had four wheels.

Even the Great Epizootic of 1872 was just a bad memory, as street railway operators believed that improved sanitation, and better living conditions for the horses would prevent a recurrence of that malady. In the late 19th century, cities were growing at unprecedented rates, and as the depression of 1873 lifted, the horsecar lines were expanded to serve the new urban areas. People could now live at a considerable distance from their work and commute on a daily basis. By the standards of earlier years, the horsecar was smooth, comfortable and convenient, and moderately fast. In cities small and large it was the best way for the average person to go.

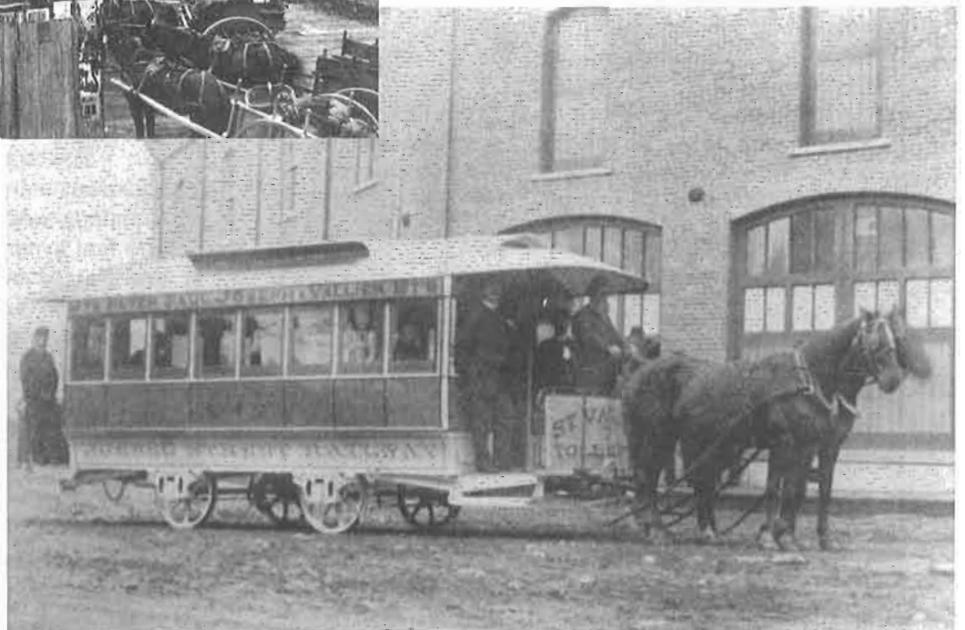
Herewith we present a photo section depicting horsecar operation in many parts of Canada during the great years of that means of transportation, from the 1870s to the early 1890s. Some systems were big, some small, but all depended on the same principle, a light four-wheel street car hauled by one or more horses.



Two views of Quebec City 16-foot horsecars, the one above being one of the first, built in 1865, the one on the right a later type of the improved lightweight design.

ABOVE: National Archives of Canada, photo PA-103138

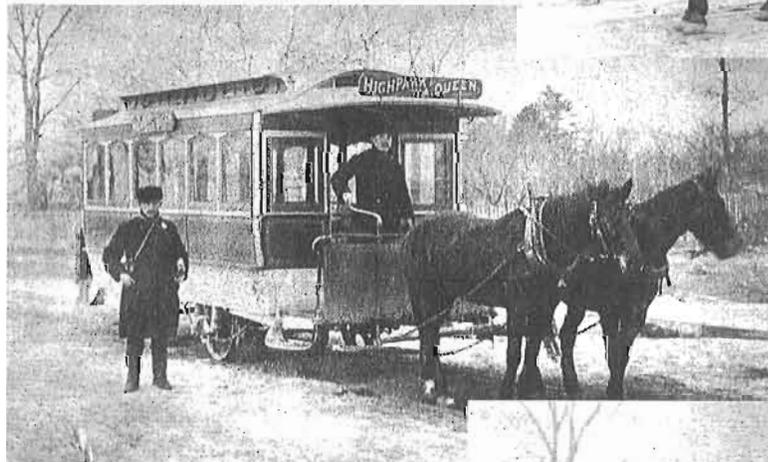
RIGHT: Archives de la ville de Québec No. 10290.



**SOME VIEWS OF TORONTO HORSECARS.**

**RIGHT:** Toronto one-horse car 42, built by Stephenson in 1876, at Seaton Village (Spadina Ave.) about 1888.

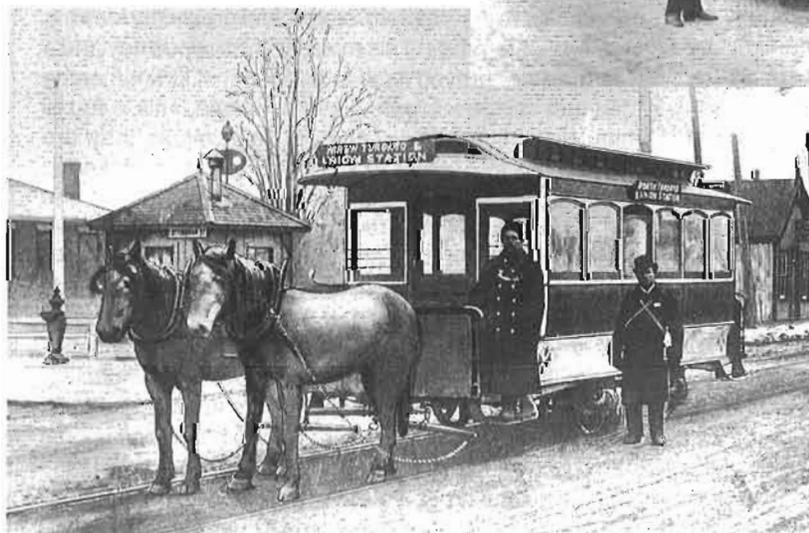
TTC photo 3363



**LEFT:** King and Queen (Sunnyside) in 1888.  
TTC photo 3375.

**RIGHT:** A larger horsecar, also at King and Queen (Sunnyside) in 1888.

TTC photo 3368.



**LEFT:** A heavily retouched photo taken on the Yonge street route at CPR North Toronto station about 1886.

TTC photo 3367.

**NEXT TWO PAGES:** An article from the Toronto *Globe* of April 15, 1880, describing the operations of the street railway. At that time Toronto street cars did not run on Sunday.

## THE STREET RAILWAY

### How Sunday Passes in the Street Car Stables

#### A DAY OF REST FOR MAN AND BEAST

#### The Work the Horses do, and how They are Cared For

#### How the men are paid — The number of men and horses employed — Some Interesting Notes Respecting Life on the Street Railroad

Sunday is generally looked forward to by all classes as a day of rest after the labours of the week. The thrifty labouring men and mechanics expect to spend the day in quiet enjoyment with their families, and after the church hour, gather the children round their knees, relate to them the well-known scripture stories, and endeavour to impress on their youthful minds the familiar legend,

"That a Sabbath well spent,  
Brings a week of content,  
And health for the toils of to-morrow".

The merchant too is anxious for the Sabbath to come, as on that day he leaves the cares of the counting-house, and devotes himself to a day spent in the bosom of his home. None of our citizens, however, look forward more anxiously for the Sabbath than the street car employees, and no creatures who, like the majority of mankind, has to do its share in carrying on the every-day life of the busy world, is more grateful at there being one weekly day of rest than the street car horse. In other large cities on this continent Sunday is deemed one of the most remunerative days for the proprietors of horse railroads to carry on their business, and it must be gratifying to the Company to know that their employees appreciate this action on their part, and that changes in their staff are comparatively few.

#### A VISIT TO THE STABLES

A *Globe* reporter a few Sundays ago paid a visit to the stables of the Toronto Street Railway Company on Yonge Street, and was shown through the premises by the Superintendent Mr. Willis. These stables supply the horses and cars for the Yonge and Queen Street routes, and certainly the horses appear to be well cared for. The stables are warm, well ventilated, and kept scrupulously clean. One hundred and forty horses are housed here, and each team is supposed to make two round trips per day, which averages a distance of twenty miles per team. This may seem a good day's work, especially when carried out from week to week, but between each trip the teams have a rest of five hours, and are meantime well fed and cared for, and there are to-day in these stables horses which have been on the road for eight years. This, however, is more than the average run of horses can stand, but when they seem to be getting the worse of the wear they are immediately disposed of, and others purchased to fill their places. At the King-street stables, which supply the running apparatus for the King,

Sherbourne, and Spadina avenue lines, one hundred and ten horses are kept; these are driven singly, the cars being much smaller and lighter than those on the other routes, and are run without a conductor. Eighteen cars are kept on the Yonge and Queen street routes, and pass a given point on the former every five minutes, and on the latter every ten minutes. Thirty-four one-horse cars are employed on the other routes, and make average time of from seven to ten minutes between the passage of each car. Thus a person desiring to go to Yorkville, if he misses a car, has only to wait five minutes for the next one, and from seven to ten minutes on the other lines. One track of the Company now reaches to Parkdale via Queen street, but operations will be at once commenced when the frost leaves the ground to extend the double track from its present terminus, at the corner of Duncan street, the whole length of the line, which the Company claim will make the trip much easier for the horses, and enable them to make the same time as is now made on Yonge street.

In the building, the cars of the company are housed nightly, and the sleighs and busses used in winter are also stored. Here also hang the timetables for the running of cars, and from here they all start on their first trip.

A book record is kept of every horse purchased by the Company, and each horse is known by a number. For instance, when a horse is brought in he is known by the succeeding number to the one last entered. Then in separate columns opposite his number is his description, age, when purchased, where purchased, and his cost. The horses used in the street car service here cost on an average \$150, and their usefulness in the service extended from six to eight years, although there are good horses now in the stables who have been on duty no less than 10 or 12 years. Street car horses, to be serviceable, should weigh about 1200 pounds, and the weight should certainly not exceed 1250.

#### THE BEST FOOD FOR A CAR HORSE

The horses of the Company are fed on corn imported from the Western States, and ground by Messrs. Gooderham & Worts. This mixed with chopped hay and a little bran has proved itself to be the most strengthening food that can possibly be given to horses. This is fed to them three times daily, and between meals they are allowed no hay or other food. Horses which are not good "feeders" are generally looked upon with distrust, and there are men in the stables specially detailed to see whether or not a horse has eaten his supply. If he has, and wants more, he is supplied with it, and afterwards his allowance is increased. If, however, he has not, his feed is decreased for the time, until he regains his appetite. Dr. Smith, of the Ontario, Veterinary College, is specially engaged to look after the health of the horses, and such things as sore necks or feet are rarely known, each horse having its own colour and harness, the Company doing their own shoeing and blacksmithing. A regular stock of medicine is kept in the stable, and a supply of hot water is always on hand in case of accident or a sudden attack of

illness. One stable-man has to look after twelve horses; that is, clean, bed and water them. The bedding is made up of a mixture of straw and sawdust, and seems to be highly satisfactory to the horses, as at the time of the reporter's visit many were enjoying the luxury of a lay down. Some idea of the large quantity of food consumed by the Company's horses may be learned from the fact that two tons of hay are daily chopped up for mixture with the corn and bran. The horses at present are not in very good condition, but this, the Superintendent explained, is caused by the heavy roads, and he said that when the roads hardened the horses would present a much better appearance. The hardest part of a street car horse's work is getting the car started after a stop to take on or let off a passenger, and in case of delays from running off the track, or from other causes, the horses are often driven hard in order to make time at switches. This latter feature will, however, soon be remedied when double tracks will extend all over the Company's lines. When a car runs off the track the horses are often taxed to their utmost to get it on again. There are very stringent rules, however, laid down by the Company as to how to proceed in these cases, but the drivers do not always carry them out, preferring to drive the horses and the cumbersome cars two or three hundred feet over the rough roads to save them the trouble of unhitching and fastening the team to the other end of the car. The method of pulling the car back on the track has proved to be a much easier way of getting it on again than driving ahead, which often lands the car in the ditch, there generally being a decline in the street from the car track to the gutter. Taken in all, however, perhaps the car horses in Toronto have just as easy a time of it as the equines employed in other branches of business, and certainly as a general thing they are much better fed and cared for.

#### THE COMPANY'S MEN

The pay roll of the Company contains the names of over 100 employees, some twenty of whom are conductors, the balance being drivers and men employed around the stables. The time on duty of a conductor or driver averages 14 hours per day, one hour being allowed them for dinner; supper is either eaten on the car while in motion, or in the interval at the end of a trip when fresh horses are being hitched on. These hours seem long, but the duty is not unpleasant, and Mr. Willis assured the reporter that when a man got the position of conductor he rarely gave it up of his own accord. The hours of the stablemen are from 5 o'clock a.m. to 7 p.m., they being allowed an hour each for breakfast and dinner. The horses coming in late are cared for by the night watchman, of whom there are several at each stable. The wages of stablemen and drivers is \$7 per week, while conductors receive \$7.50. Any person applying for a conductorship must first serve two weeks as a driver without pay, and give the Company a guarantee that any damage done to the car or horses during that time through his negligence will be refunded them. The experience thus gained gives

the applicant a general knowledge of the route, and enables him, should anything happen to a driver during a trip, to take hold of "the ribbons". After serving this term the drivers' names and references are placed in a book, and in their turn, as vacancies occur, they get appointed. These vacancies so seldom occur, however, that unless a person has a special longing for this mode of life his attention would perhaps be better directed to some other pursuit. The conductor has evidently the cream of his riding, as the driver in front has often to face bitter winds or fierce rain storms which the conductor usually avoids by being in the rear. The man who acts as driver and conductor on the the one-horse cars has perhaps the hardest time of all. He makes change, stops his car when called on, and has, besides, to keep a sharp look out at all cross streets for passengers.

#### THOSE WHO USE THE STREET CARS

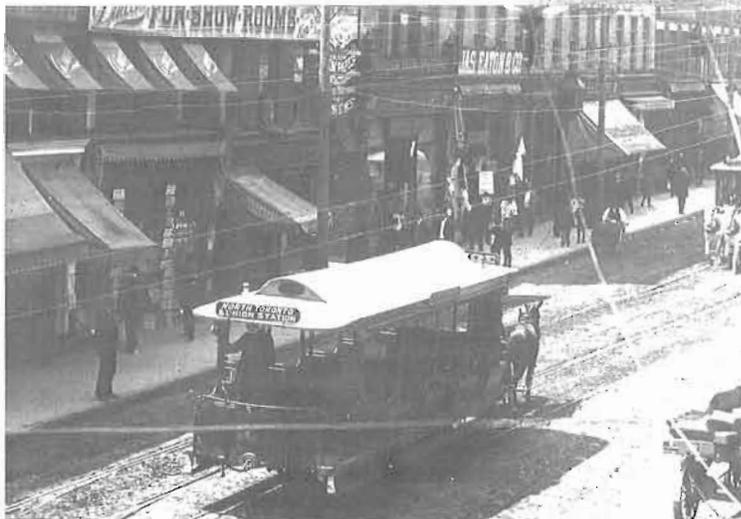
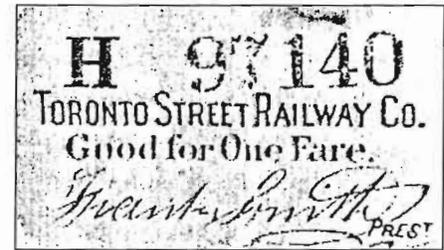
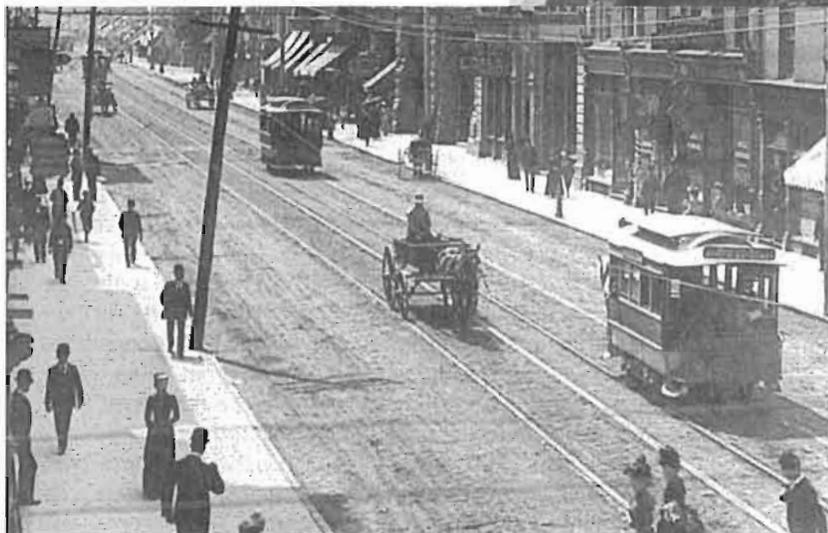
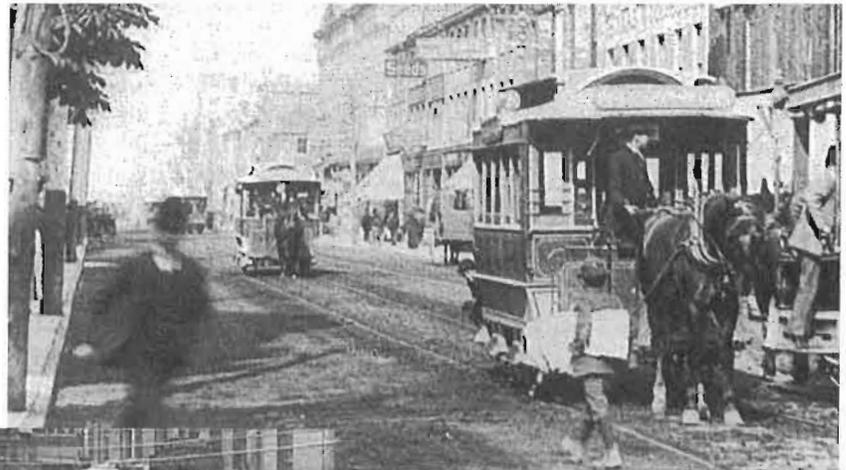
Queer stories are told by street car men of the various kinds of people whom they meet. Some are self-possessed, and make it a part of their every-day life to ride down town in the morning and home again at night. Others, especially old people who rarely use a car, are nervous and fidgetty, fearing they will be carried past their destination, and are continually bothering the conductor as to whether they have arrived there or not. Then, when their street is called, they can hardly be restrained from getting off before the car is fully stopped. Accidents very often occur in this way, especially on the one-horse cars, where the driver, being in front, has not the means of forcibly restraining the passengers. The irrepressible "dead beat" often gets aboard too, and resorts to some amusing methods of getting free rides. Getting on a Yonge street car at the market, he rides away up past Queen, and, when the conductor comes around, blandly asks him if this is a Queen street car. On being answered in the negative, he seems greatly put about at the loss of time in having to retrace his steps to Queen street. When the car is out of sight, however, he quietly resumes his way up Yonge street, chuckling at his little bit of deception. The one-horse cars suffer most from this, as when the "D.B." sees a number going in together he slides in with them. The driver finds out in a few moments that he is one fare short, but does not know whom to blame, and consequently the Company loses five cents. As a rule, however, Toronto is, comparatively speaking, free of this scourge, but in cities on the other side, where no conductors are employed, the car companies lose large sums annually in this way.

#### THE COMPANY AND THE STREETS

The Toronto Street Railway Company, it may be said in concluding this article, are in favour of the "local improvement" or any other system of taxation that will make good roads, and promise that the citizens will have no cause to complain of their part of the roadway not being kept in the best possible shape.

Source: The Toronto *Globe*, April 15, 1880.

RIGHT AND BELOW: Two views on busy King street, Toronto, between about 1887 and 1890. The view on the right looks east, while that below looks west.



ABOVE: Open horsecar 174, built by the Toronto Street Railway in 1885, at the corner of Yonge and Queen about 1886. This car became trailer 99, and was scrapped in 1925.

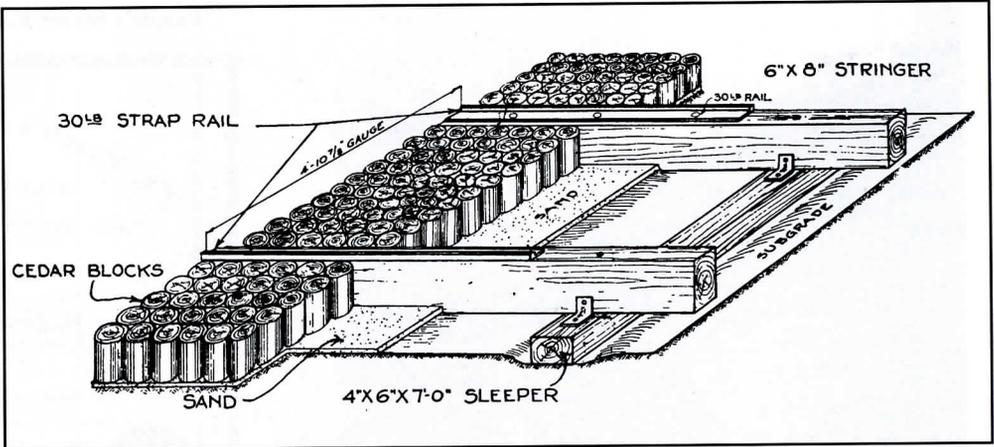
National Archives of Canada, Merrilees Collection, photo No. PA-166917.

LEFT: Open car 142 on Toronto's Yonge street in the 1880s. This car was built by the Toronto Street Railway in 1881 and placed in service in 1882. It later became electric trailer 191, and was scrapped in 1925. TTC photo No. 61013.

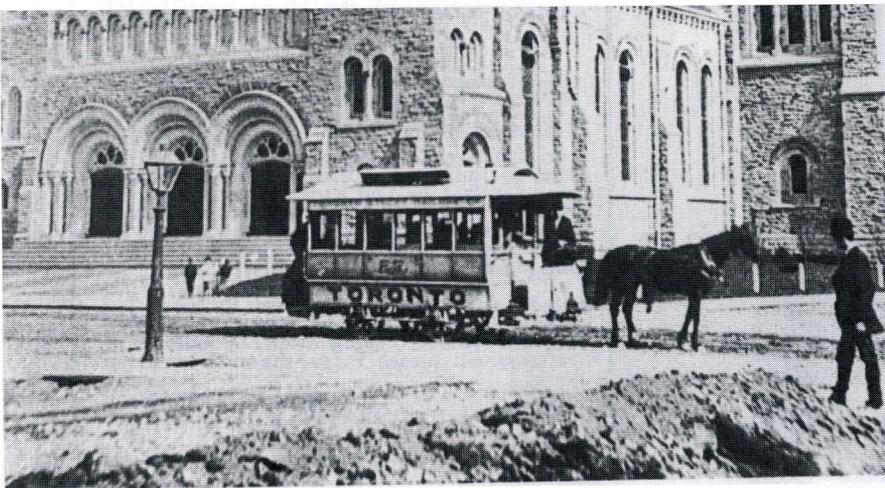
**BELOW LEFT:** Toronto car 23, built in 1874, passing St. Andrew's Presbyterian church on King street about 1885. Note the name of the city in large letters, a practice of several cities at that time. St. Andrew's church still stands, but car 23 is long gone.

**BELOW RIGHT:** A "Sherbourne" car on Front street outside the Queen's Hotel, also about 1885. This is where the Royal York Hotel stands today.

**OPPOSITE:** Two tickets from horsecar days. The upper one is from the 1880s, while the lower one (showing a picture of a horsecar) is from 1891, during the short period of municipal ownership.



A drawing of the horsecar track as used in Toronto. Note the wood blocks used to provide a tough but yielding surface for road traffic. TTC photo No. 9878.



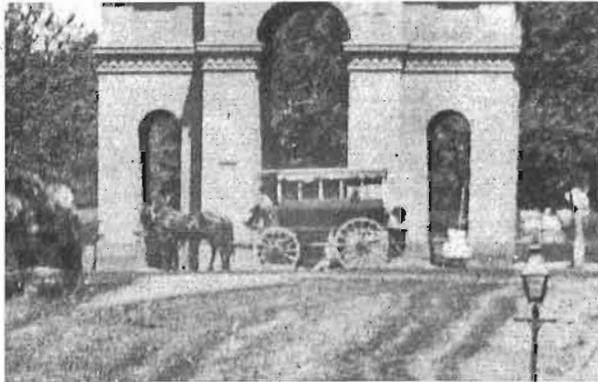
**LEFT:** Toronto horsecars at Front and Yonge streets in 1888. The building in the background was the Board of Trade building, later the headquarters of the TTC. TTC photo.



Replica Toronto open horsecar No. 11, built in 1934, photographed on September 11, 1946. This car was donated to the Branford (now Shore Line) trolley Museum in 1953. TTC photo 15538.



ABOVE: The only known photo of a car of the People's Street Railway in Saint John. Prince William street, 1870. Dr. W.W. White papers.

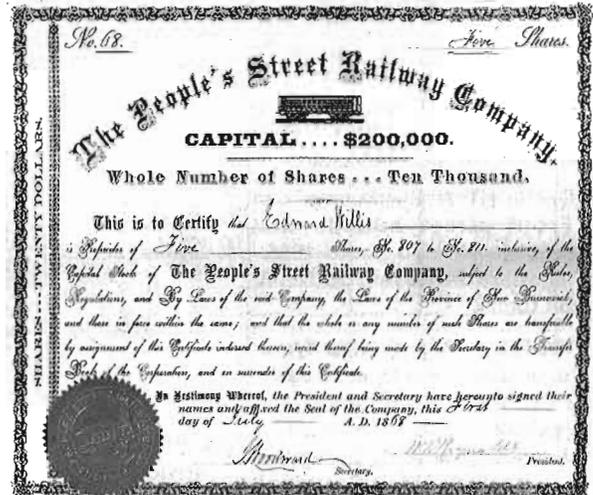


ABOVE: An "Army Worm" omnibus at the bell tower in Saint John N.B. before 1877.

BELOW: An 1888 schedule of the Saint John City Railway. Both items from New Brunswick Museum

TRAINS LEAVE INDIANTOWN FOR ST. JOHN.		TRAINS LEAVE MARKET SQUARE FOR GERMANTOWN ST.		TRAINS LEAVE MARKET SQUARE FOR INDIANTOWN.		TRAINS LEAVE GERMANTOWN ST. FOR INDIANTOWN.		TRAINS LEAVE FOOT PORTLAND FOR HAYMARKET SQ.		TRAINS LEAVE HAYMARKET SQUARE					
A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.				
6.57	11.39	4.39	6.13	12.07	5.13	6.34	12.04	*5.10	6.27	12.03	*5.15	6.27	4.39	6.39	4.48
6.09	11.51	*4.45	6.25	12.19	5.19	6.46	12.16	5.16	6.39	6.21	6.57	4.57	7.15	4.57	
6.24	P. M.	4.51	6.43	12.31	5.25	7.04	12.16	*5.22	6.57	12.21	5.27	7.27	6.15	7.39	5.18
*6.45	12.03	4.57	7.01	12.43	5.31	*7.22	12.28	6.28	*7.15	12.33	*6.33	7.57	6.27	8.09	5.27
7.03	*12.15	*6.03	7.19	12.55	5.37	7.40	12.40	6.34	7.33	*12.45	6.39	8.09	6.45	8.27	5.45
*7.15	12.27	6.09	7.31	1.01	5.43	7.52	*12.52	*6.40	7.45	12.57	*6.45	8.27	6.57	8.39	5.57
7.27	12.39	*6.15	7.43	1.07	5.49	*8.04	1.04	5.46	*7.57	1.09	6.51	8.39	6.09	8.57	6.16
7.39	*12.45	*6.21	7.55	1.18	5.55	8.16	1.16	*5.52	8.09	*1.15	6.57	8.57	6.27	9.12	6.27
7.51	12.61	6.27	8.07	1.19	6.07	8.28	*1.22	5.68	8.21	1.21	6.03	9.12	6.39	9.27	6.45
*7.57	12.67	*6.33	8.13	1.31	6.19	*8.34	1.28	*6.04	*8.27	1.27	6.09	9.27	6.67	9.45	6.67
8.03	1.03	6.39	8.19	1.43	6.31	8.40	1.34	6.10	8.33	*1.33	6.21	9.39	7.15	9.57	7.15
.....	*1.16	6.51	.....	1.55	6.43	8.46	*1.40	6.16	8.39	*1.45	6.33	9.57	7.27	10.15	7.27
8.09	1.27	6.03	8.25	2.07	6.58	*8.62	*1.52	6.28	*8.45	*1.57	6.45	10.27	7.39	10.45	7.45
*8.16	1.39	*6.15	8.31	2.19	7.07	8.68	*2.04	6.40	8.51	2.09	6.57	10.57	7.57	11.15	7.57
8.21	1.51	*6.27	8.37	2.25	7.19	9.04	2.16	*6.52	8.57	2.21	7.09	11.27	8.09	11.45	8.15
8.27	2.03	6.39	8.43	2.31	7.31	9.10	2.28	7.04	9.03	*2.33	7.21	11.57	8.27	P. M.	8.27
8.33	2.09	6.51	8.49	2.37	7.37	9.16	*2.40	7.16	9.09	2.39	7.33	P. M.	8.39	12.15	8.45
8.39	*2.15	*7.03	8.55	2.43	7.43	*9.22	2.46	7.28	*9.15	*2.45	7.45	12.27	8.57	12.39	8.57
*8.45	2.21	*7.15	9.01	2.49	7.49	9.28	*2.52	7.40	9.21	2.51	7.51	12.39	9.27	12.67	9.15
*8.51	2.27	*7.27	9.07	2.55	7.55	*9.34	2.58	*7.52	*9.27	*2.57	*7.57	12.57	9.57	1.12	9.45
8.57	*2.33	*7.27	9.13	3.01	8.01	9.40	*3.04	7.58	9.33	3.03	8.03	1.12	10.27	1.27	10.15
9.03	2.39	7.33	9.19	3.07	8.13	9.46	3.10	*8.04	9.39	3.09	8.09	1.27	.....	1.45	10.39
9.09	*2.45	7.39	9.25	3.18	8.19	*9.52	3.16	8.10	*9.45	3.16	*8.15	1.45	.....	1.57	.....
*9.16	2.51	*7.45	9.31	3.19	8.31	9.58	3.22	8.16	9.51	3.21	8.27	1.57	.....	2.15	.....
9.21	2.57	*7.57	9.37	3.25	8.43	10.04	3.28	*8.22	9.57	3.27	8.33	2.09	.....	2.27	.....
*9.27	3.03	8.03	9.43	3.31	8.55	10.10	3.34	8.34	10.03	3.33	*8.45	2.27	.....	2.45	.....
9.33	3.09	*8.15	9.49	3.37	9.07	10.16	3.40	8.40	10.09	3.39	8.47	2.45	.....	2.67	.....
9.39	*3.15	.....	9.53	3.43	9.19	*10.22	3.46	*8.62	*10.15	*3.45	9.09	2.57	.....	3.15	.....

People's Street Railway, Saint John, 1869-1876



People's Street Railway Company.



THE above Company are desirous of Leasing the working of their Line of Railway, now in operation, (from Reed's Point, in the City of Saint John, to Indiantown, in the Parish of Portland, County of St. John,) for a term of years.

Tenders will be received at the Company's Office, Indiantown, up to WEDNESDAY, the 15th day of March, ensuing, from parties willing to lease the working of said Railway. All Tenders to be addressed to the President and Directors "People's Street Railway Company," Indiantown, St. John, New Brunswick. All parties having accounts against the Company will please render the same to the Secretary.

W. K. REYNOLDS,  
Indiantown, N. B., 21st Feb., 1871. President.  
feb22 d till 15 mar

THE STREET RAILWAY

runs from Reed's Point to Indian Town. Its rate of travel is seven miles an hour.



ABOVE: An 1870 item relating to the People's Street Railway in Saint John.

BELOW: A car of the Saint John City Railway on Prince William street about 1888.



Saint John City Railway, 1887-1892

**St. John City Railway Co'y,**  
**October 15th, 1887.**

**NOTICE.**

**ON AND AFTER TUESDAY, OCT. 18th,** Cars will run between **INDIANTOWN LANDING, Portland, and Cor. ST. JAMES AND CARMARTHEN STREETS, St. John,** as follows:

Leaving Indiantown at 6.10, 6.30 a. m., and every 15 minutes until 3.00 a. m.; then every 10 minutes until 8.00 p. m.; after that every 15 minutes until 10.30 p. m.

Returning from Cor. St. James and Carmarthen Streets. 6.35, 6.55 a. m., and every 15 minutes until 8.25; then every 10 minutes until 8.25 p. m.; after that every 15 minutes until 10.55 p. m.

The Last Car will leave Market Square at 11.02 p. m.

The Fare will be **FIVE CENTS** for one continuous ride.

Children under four years will be allowed to ride free. If occupying seats they will be charged full fare.

Change to the amount of \$2.00 will be furnished by the driver, who will return the full amount.

Under no circumstances will the driver be allowed to receive or deposit a fare.

**B. W. ELLIS, JR.,**  
 Superintendent.

SUMMER

**TIME TABLE**

OF THE

SAINT JOHN

**City Railway Co.**



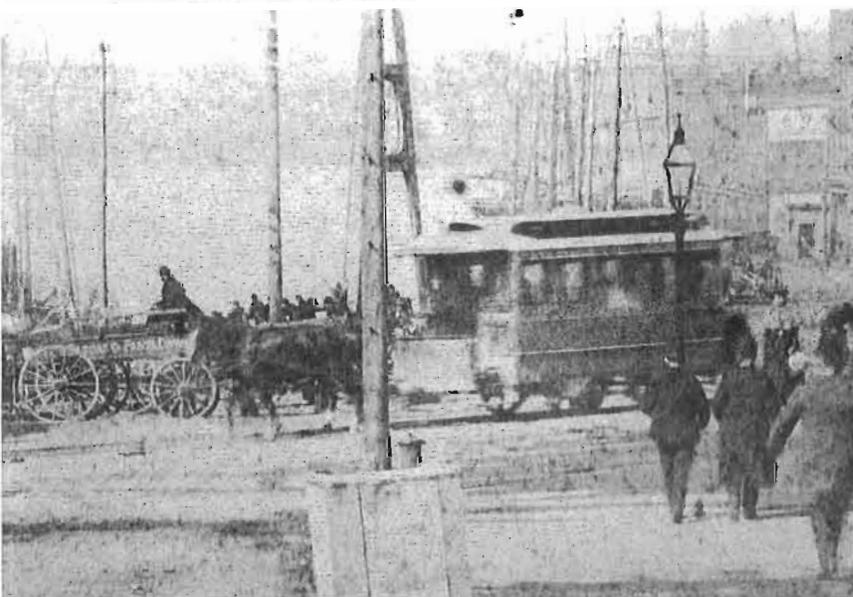
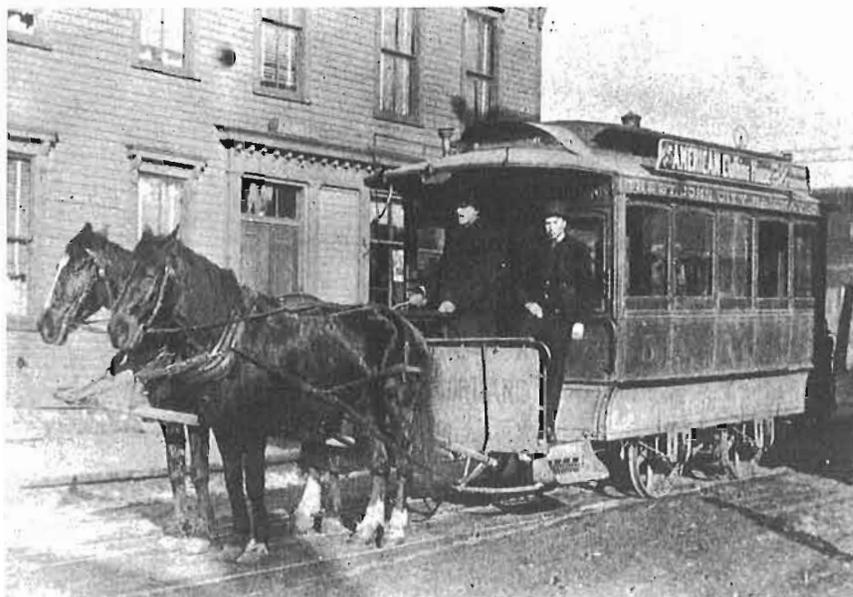
TRAINS ARE RUN ON TIME AS FURNISHED BY

**Page, Smalley & Ferguson,**

**JEWELLERS,**

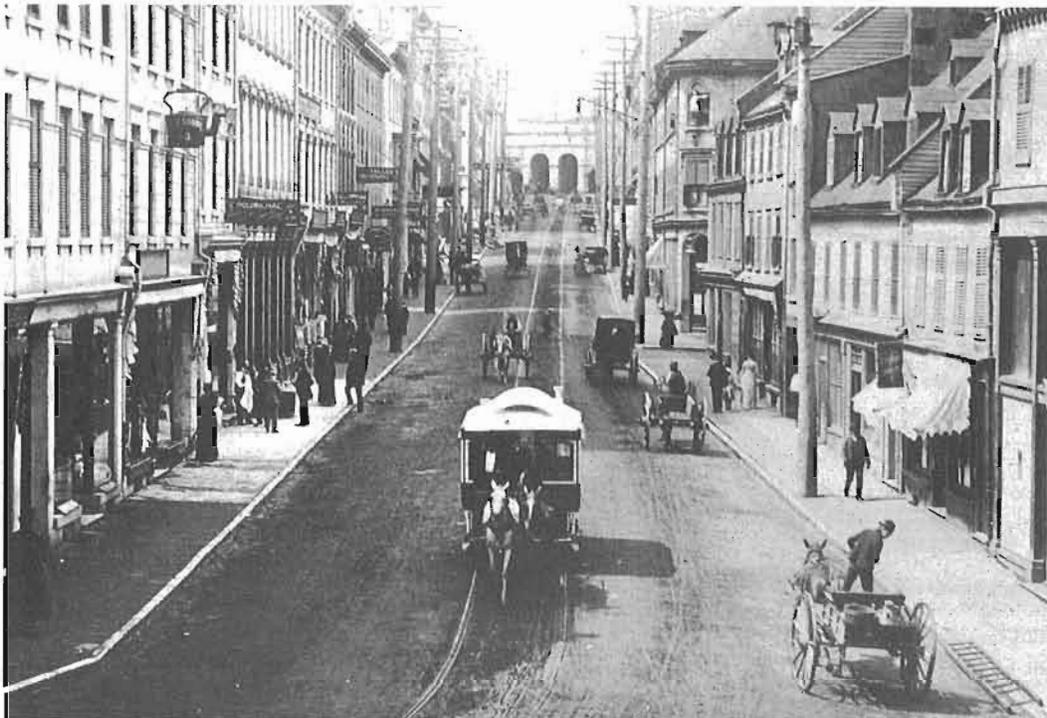
43 King Street,

**ST. JOHN, N. B.**



Three views of cars of the Saint John City Railway about 1888. Most of the buildings in the bottom photo are still standing.

All illustrations on this page are from the New Brunswick Museum.



LEFT AND BELOW: Two photos of horsecars on the St. John Street Railway in Quebec City. This company operated cars on St. John street, and had no connection with a street railway in Saint John N.B. with a very similar name. CRHA Archives.



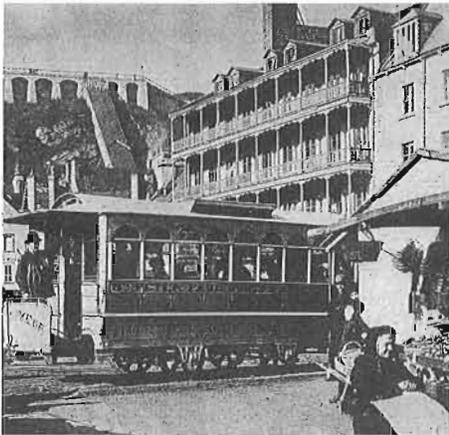
A horsecar fare register made by the Passenger Fare Enumerator and Classifier Company, a complex machine containing levers, bells and indicator wheels. These were used, starting about 1863, in an attempt to keep conductors honest by recording all fares collected. Depressing the plungers, or pulling the knob, registered the fare and rang the bells with a distinctive tone for each kind of fare. This example, made about 1877, is from Philadelphia, but similar devices were used on several street railways in Canada. Collection of Fred Angus.



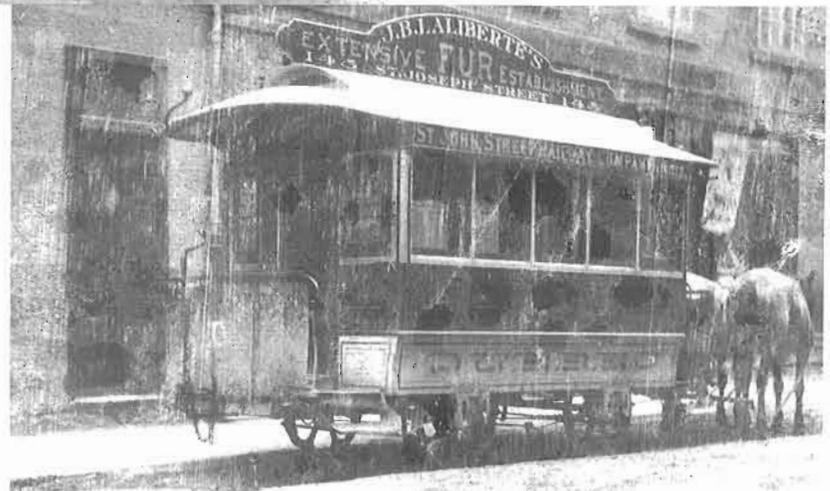
A horsecar ticket from the Quebec Street Railway.

**RIGHT:** A Quebec City sleigh in this wintry scene in 1882.  
*Picturesque Canada.*

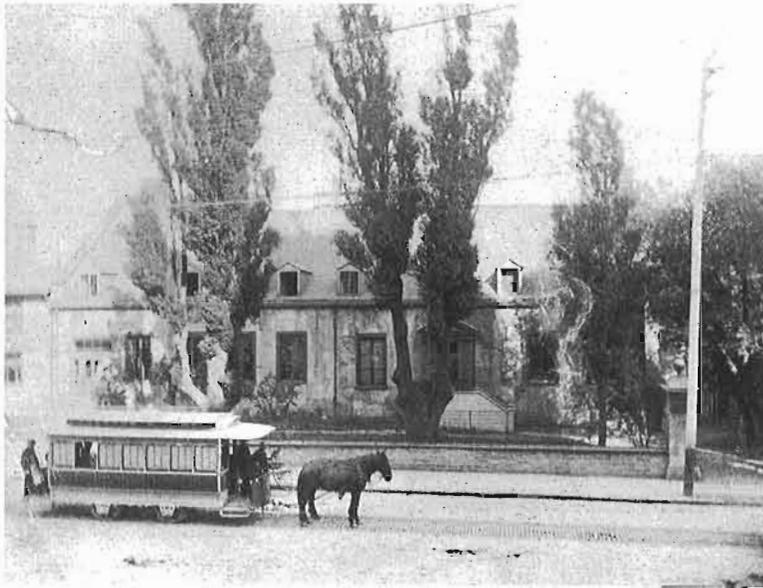
**BELOW:** A small photo of a horsecar at Champlain Market, Quebec City. Note the elevator.



**LEFT AND BELOW:** The Quebec City street car lines were not electrified until 1897, well into the era of the Kodak, so horsecar photos, taken by tourists in the 1890s, are sometimes found. Although showing older cars of the St. John Street Railway, these photos were taken as late as 1894. The "fur" sign is on the roof of the car. In those days, several horsecar companies put the name of the city in large letters on the side of the car.  
National Archives of Canada, Merrilees Collection, photos PA-164365 (left) and PA-164707 (below).



Although tickets were sold at reduced prices, the standard cash fare on a horsecar was usually five cents. In Canada, from 1858 to 1921, this was a small silver coin half the size of a 10 cent piece. The five cent nickel was an American coin; Canada did not adopt nickels until 1922. This photo is double actual size.  
Collection of John Loye.



ABOVE: A proof of a Montreal Street Railway ticket of about 1886.

LEFT: A one-horse closed car outside the Chateau de Ramezay in Montreal about 1890.

National Archives of Canada, photo No. C-65442.

**OUR STREET RAILWAY**

**Double track Improvements - Sixteen New Cars Ordered from Troy, N.Y.**

The double track on the Montreal Street Railway is now used as far east as Guy street. The company yesterday ordered sixteen new cars from J.M. Jones & Son, of Troy N.Y., which will arrive here about the beginning of October. In order that there shall be no confusion at night, particularly on the new Craig street circuit, by which the switches between Victoria square and St. Lawrence Main street have been done away with, the following colors and lights have been decided upon for the different routes:- St. Denis street, green cars and blue lights; Craig and St. Antoine streets, maroon cars and red lights; St. Lawrence, Bleury and St. Catherine street west, vermilion cars and green lights; St. Catherine street east, blue cars; Notre Dame street, vermilion cars.

Montreal Gazette, July 9, 1886.



St. James street in Montreal in the 1880s. Both horsecar and omnibus are visible.

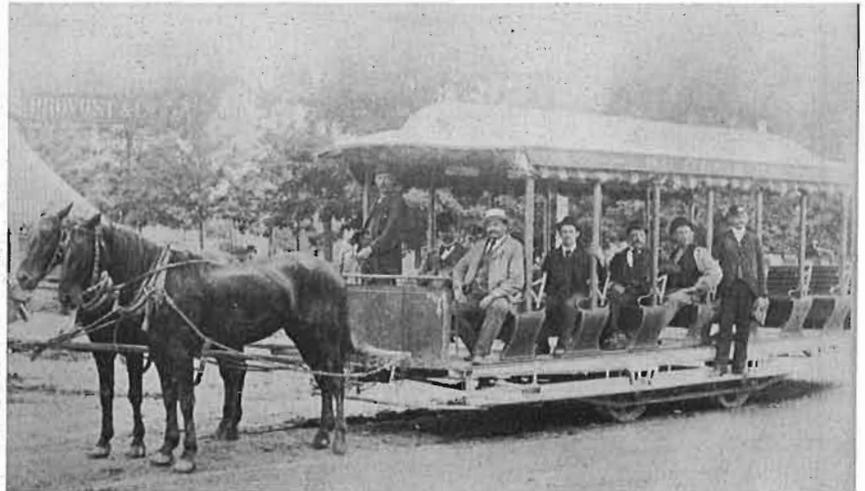
National Archives of Canada, photo No. C-70921.



One of the much maligned "between-the-seasons" omnibusses used by the Montreal City Passenger Railway, and later the Montreal Street Railway. They were used when the streets were in such a condition that neither sleighs nor horsecars could be used, but were not popular.



St. Catherine street in Montreal about 1891, with a horsecar visible. The large building is where the Eaton's store was later built. On Sunday, September 17 1899, the southeast corner of the building fell into the street, fortunately with no injuries. National Archives of Canada, photo No. C-7889.



An open horsecar on St. Denis street in Montreal in 1887. Some cars like this were later converted to trailers hauled by electric cars.  
CRHA Archives.



LEFT TOP AND LEFT BOTTOM: Two cartoons of 1871 showing the interiors of Montreal horsecars.

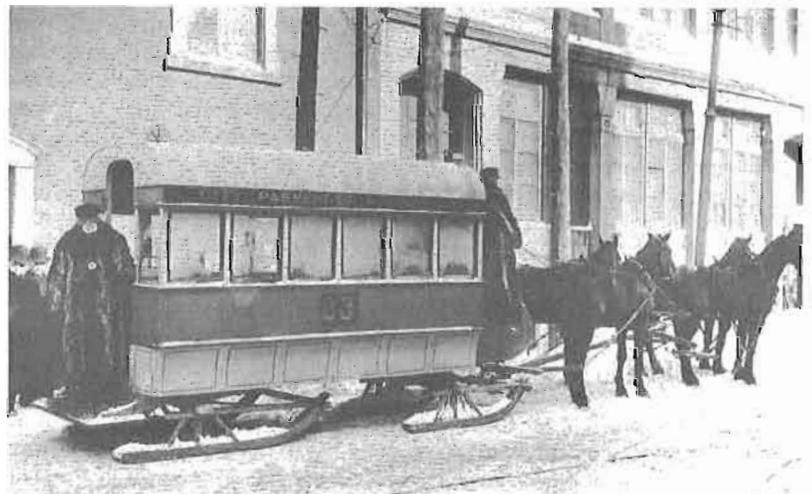
*Canadian Illustrated News*, February 25 and May 27, 1871.

LEFT: Craig street near the drill hall in Montreal about 1890.

National Archives of Canada, photo No. C-70927.

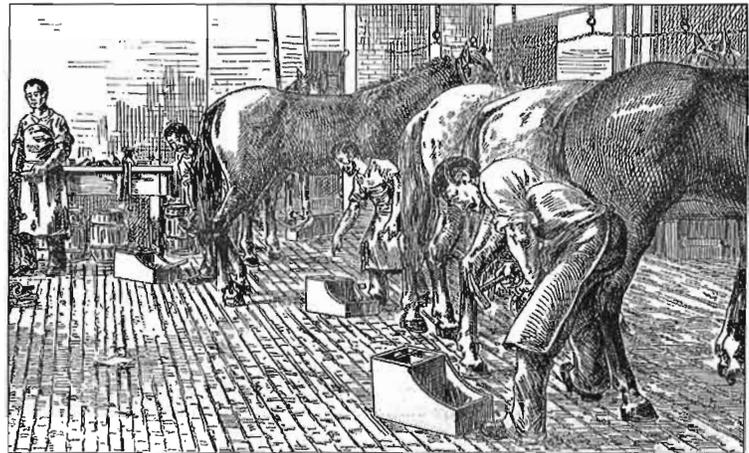
BELOW: A sleigh used in Montreal in the winter when the tracks were not plowed.

Collection of Donald F. Angus.

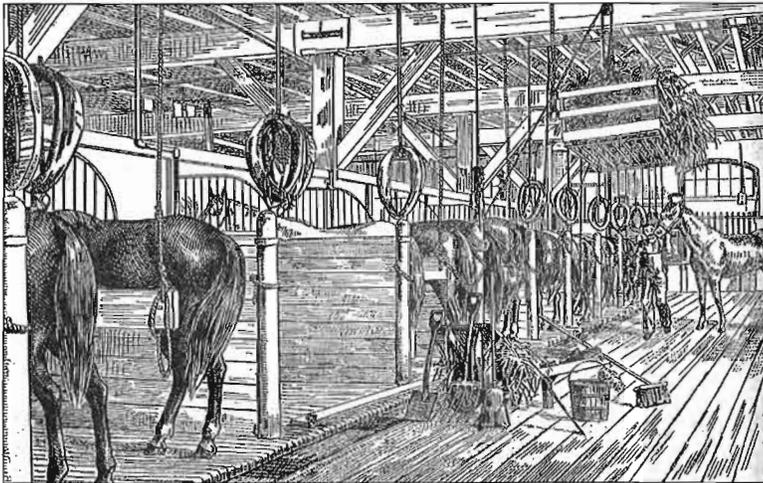




The illustrations on this page show some of the facilities available at stables during the horsecar era. They are from a book entitled *Street Railways, their Construction and Maintenance*, published in 1892.



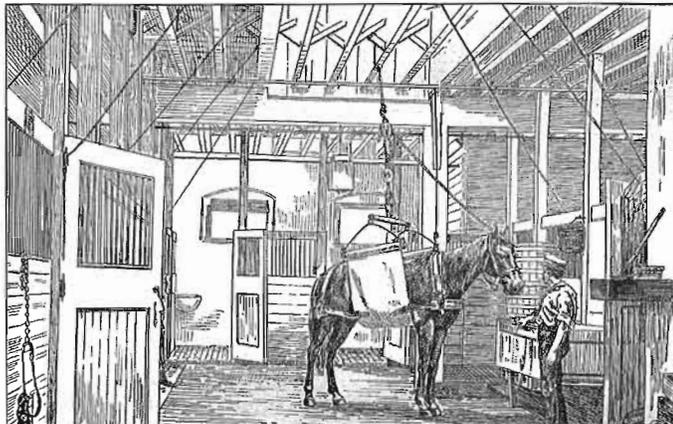
Interior of Blacksmith shop.



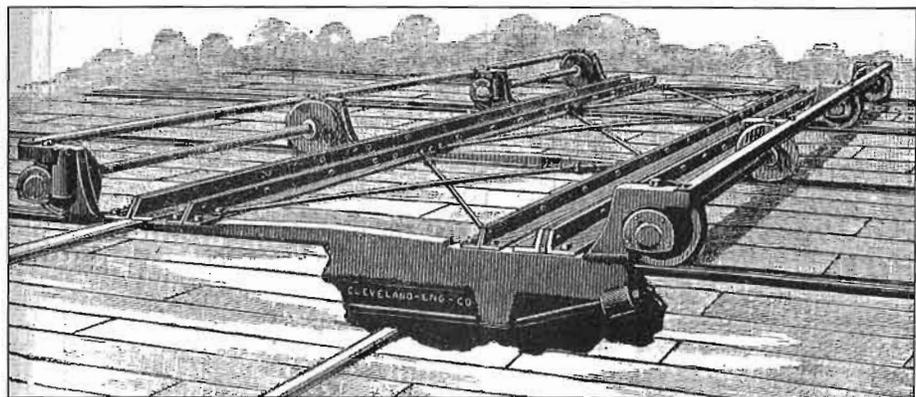
LEFT: Stalls, drying rack and tools.

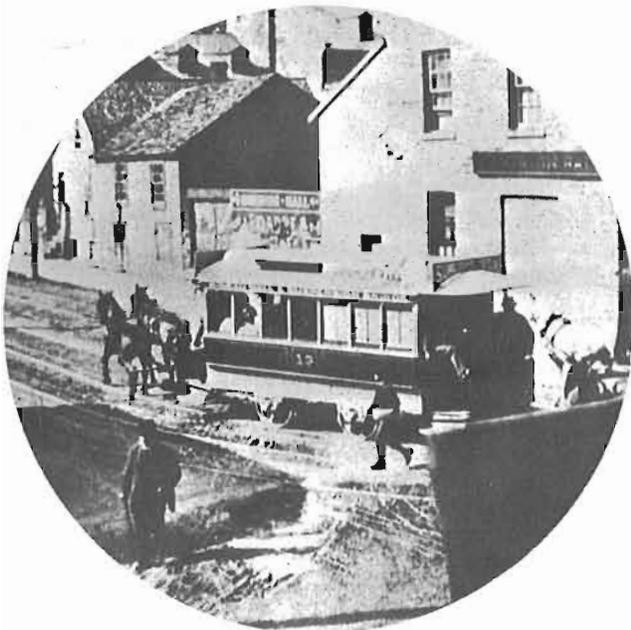
BELOW LEFT: Hospital, stalls and sling for disabled horse.

BELOW RIGHT: Cross Gangway, showing watering trough and filter.



RIGHT: Transfer table for moving cars from one track to another.





An early Kodak photo of an Ottawa horsecar about 1890, showing the poor condition of the streets, and hence the big advantage of horsecars over omnibuses. National Archives of Canada, photo No. C-17828.

**CITY PASSENGER RAILWAY COMPANY.**  
**WINTER ARRANGEMENT.**

The **FIRST & LAST** Sleighs leave each Terminus as follows :  
(ROADS AND WEATHER PERMITTING.)

	Interval Mins.			SUNDAYS.	
		FIRST.	LAST.		
Notre Dame Street Line .....	10	Hochelaga Depot, 6.00 a.m.	0.50 p.m.	9.00 a.m.	0.50 p.m.
		St. Henri, 6.00 "	0.50 "	9.00 "	0.50 "
St. Lawrence and St. Catherine Sts. Line .....	12½	Mile End, 6.15 "	0.25 "	8.45 "	0.00 "
		West End, St. Cath. St. 6.58 "	10.08 "	0.28 "	0.45 "
St. Catherine Street East Line .....	12½	Hochelaga, 6.52 "	0.25 "	9.22 "	0.00 "
		Bleury Street, 7.17 "	0.50 "	9.47 "	0.25 "
Craig & St. Antoine Street Line .....	10	Papineau Square, 7.00 "	0.35 "	9.00 "	0.00 "
		Dominion Street, 7.00 "	0.30 "	9.00 "	0.00 "
(Last Sleigh Leaves Dominion Street and Papineau Square for Cote Street only, 10 p.m.)					
St. Denis Street Line .....	20	Craig St. Waiting-room, 7.05 "	0.25 "	0.05 "	0.05 "
		Upper St. Denis St. 7.35 "	0.55 "	0.35 "	0.35 "
Point St. Charles Line .....	30	Post Office, 8.30 "	0.00 "	0.00 "	0.00 "
		G. T. Crossing, 7.00 "	0.30 "	9.30 "	0.30 "

\* 20 minutes after 8.25 p.m.  
† 15 " " 7.30 "

E. LUSHER, Manager.

MONTREAL, 20th DEC., 1884.

Public transportation in winter in Montreal was provided by sleighs (see photo on page 197). The service provided was distinctly inferior to that provided by the horsecars. This timetable covers the winter of 1884 - 1885. Leach Collection.

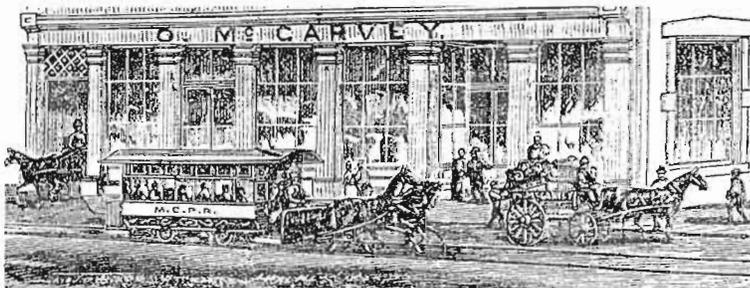
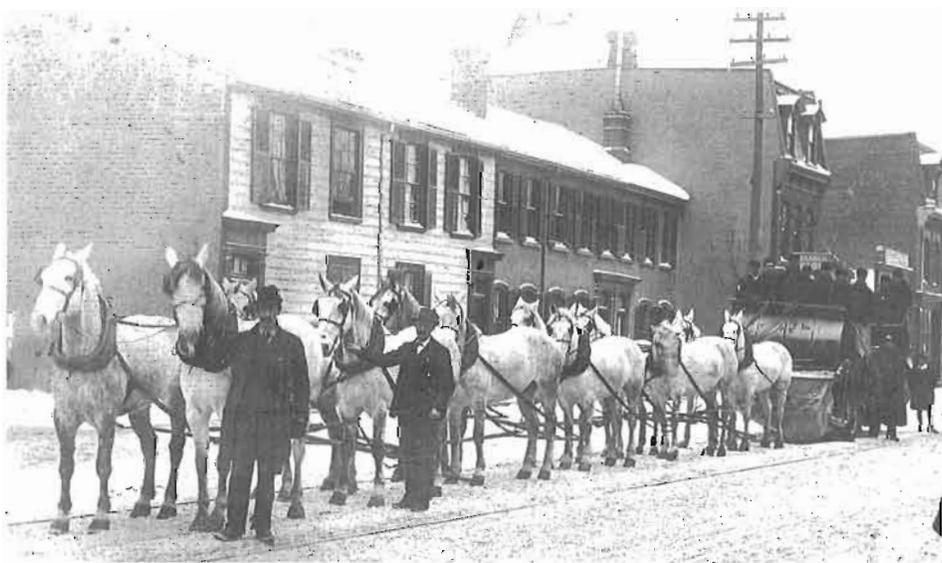


Illustration from an 1872 Montreal directory.



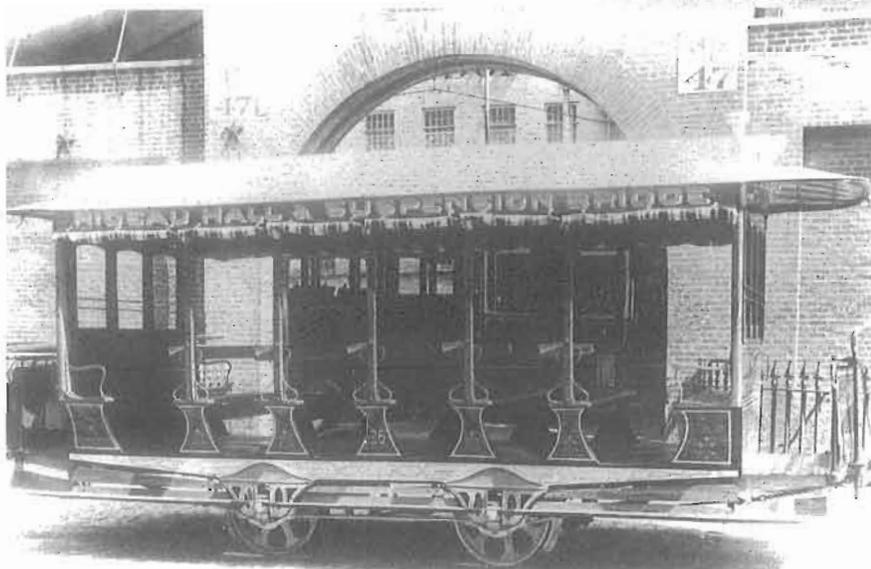
A brass token of about 1888, good for one fare on the Ottawa City Passenger Railway.



A 12-horse team hauling a snow plough in Toronto in the winter of 1891-92. TTC Photo.



**ABOVE:** Ottawa City Passenger Railway No. 13, shown brand new at the John Stephenson factory in New York in 1889. This is the same car that appears in the photo at the top of the opposite page. National Archives of Canada, photo No. PA-136689.

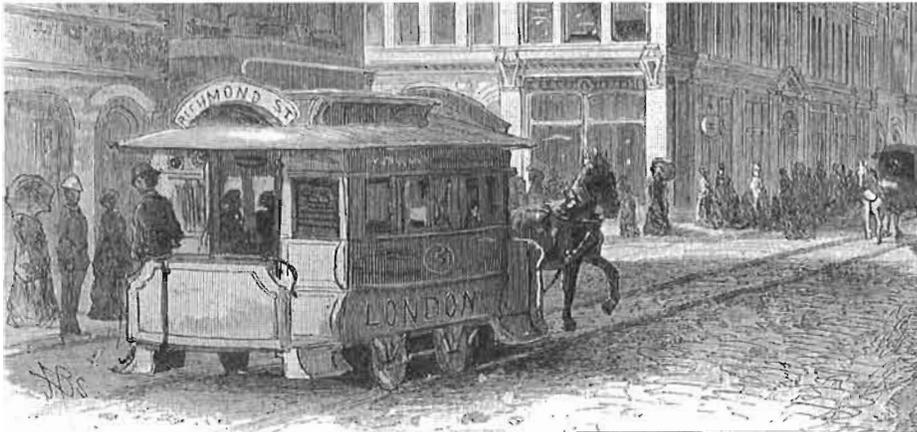


**LEFT:** Ottawa City Passenger Railway open car No. 26, also at the John Stephenson factory; this time in 1891. National Archives of Canada, photo No. PA-136682.

**RIGHT:** Ottawa City Passenger Railway car No. 4 which has been preserved as a relic. Note that its running gear has been removed.

National Archives of Canada, photo No. C-2458.





LEFT: An engraving of a horsecar on Richmond street in London, Ontario in 1882. *Picturesque Canada*.

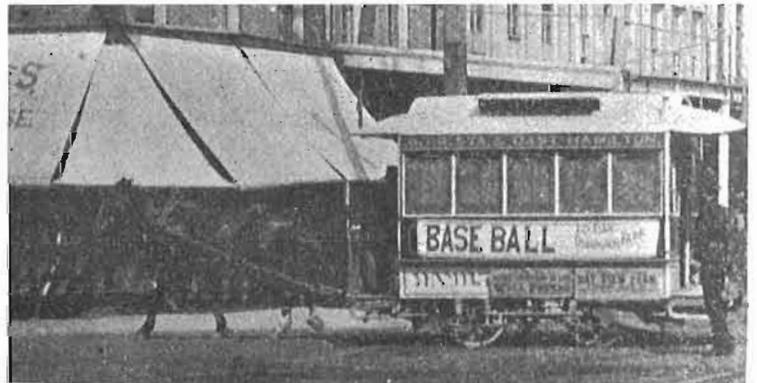
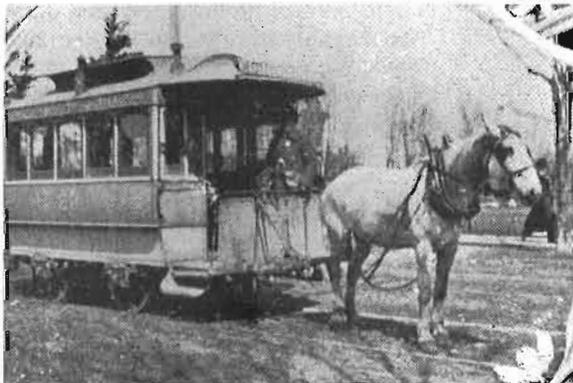
BELOW: A detail from an oil painting of the corner of Portage and Main in Winnipeg during the 1880s.

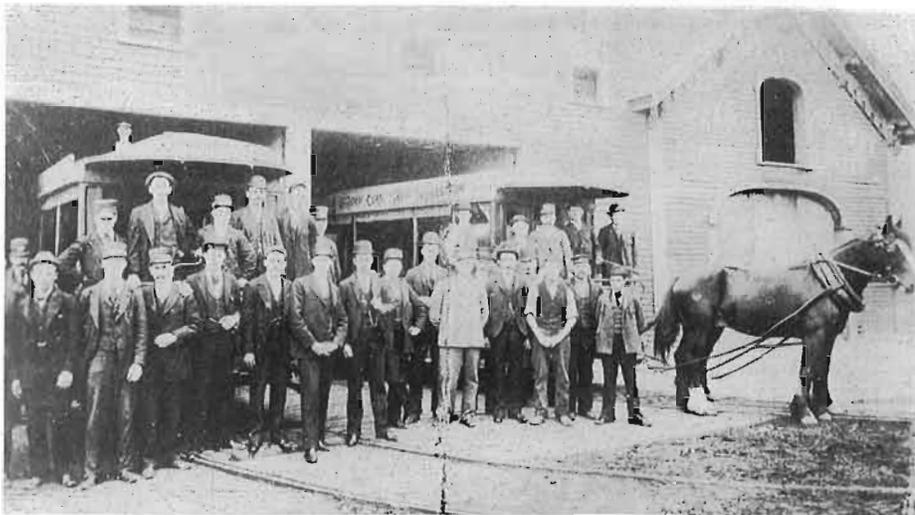
BELOW: Two views of horsecars in Hamilton during the 1880s.

National Archives of Canada, Merrilees Collection, photos PA-166488 (left) and PA-166487 (right).

BOTTOM: Two photos, a horsecar and a sleigh, taken in Winnipeg in the 1880s. The circular format was a feature of the early Kodak cameras.

National Archives of Canada, Merrilees Collection, photos PA-118141 (left) and PA-118140 (right).





ABOVE: The car barn and stable of the Halifax Street Railway at Barrington and Hanover streets in 1894.

RIGHT: A Halifax open horsecar on Barrington street near the corner of Blowers street about 1890.

Both photos from Collection of Douglas Brown.

**THE TWO EXTREMES**

On this page we see photos of the most easterly and most westerly horsecar systems in Canada, Halifax and Winnipeg.



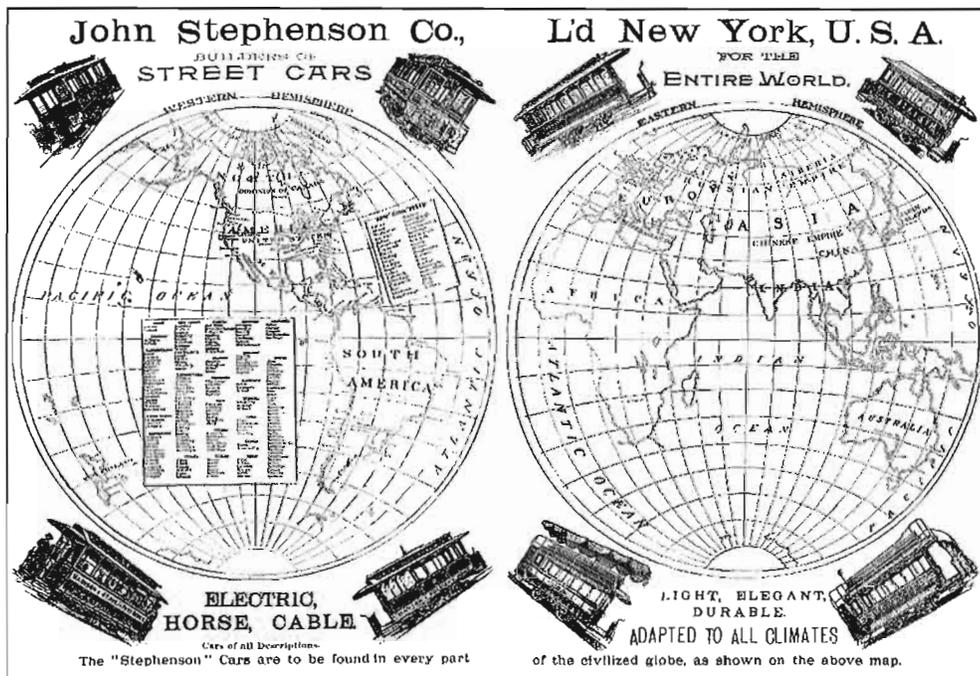
ABOVE: The corner of Portage and Main in Winnipeg in 1882, the year the Winnipeg Street Railway opened.

Photo by Professor Buell.

RIGHT: A few years later the street scene was much more crowded and some early buildings had been replaced by larger ones. However the same horsecars were running back and forth, and it would be about four years before electric car tracks would begin to share the street with the horsecar line.

Photo by Hall and Lowe.





An 1891 advertisement from the John Stephenson Company in New York. Though the horsecar still dominated, within a year or two this changed drastically, and by 1893, the year of John Stephenson's death, electric cars were in the great majority.

DATES OF OPERATION OF HORSECAR SERVICE IN CANADIAN CITIES			
CITY	COMPANY	HORSE OPERATION	
Halifax	Halifax Street Railway	Jun 11, 1866	May 17-1876
	Nova Scotia Power	Oct 21, 1886	May 31 1896
Saint John	People's Street Railway	Aug 24, 1869	March, 1876
	Saint John City Railway	Oct 17, 1887	Jan 18, 1890
	Consolidated Electric Co.	Jan 18, 1890	May, 1893
Quebec City	Quebec Street Railway	Aug 17, 1865	1897
	St. John Street Railway	c. 1870	1897
Montreal	Montreal City Passenger Railway	Nov 27, 1861	1886
	Montreal Street Railway	1886	Oct 1894
Ottawa	Ottawa City Passenger Railway	Jul 21, 1870	1893
Cornwall	Cornwall Street Railway	18??	18??
Kingston	Kingston Street Railway	May 9, 1877	Nov 8, 1894
Belleville	Belleville Street Railway	May 23, 1876	Nov 26, 1891
Toronto	Toronto Street Railway	Sep 10, 1861	Aug 31, 1891
	Toronto Railway Co.	Sep 1, 1891	Aug 31, 1894
Hamilton	Hamilton Street Railway	May 15, 1874	1893
St. Catharines	St. Catharines Street Railway	Nov 1, 1879	1887
Niagara Falls	Niagara Falls Wesley Park & Clifton	Dec 6, 1886	1900
Brantford	Brantford Street Railway	Sep 4, 1886	1893
Berlin and Waterloo	Berlin & Waterloo Street Railway	Jun 13, 1889	1895
London	London Street Railway	May 24, 1875	May, 1896
St. Thomas	St. Thomas Street Railway	1879	1898
Chatham	Chatham Street Railway	c. Oct, 1885	1890
Sarnia	Sarnia Street Railway	1875	1901
Windsor	Windsor Street Railway	Jul 20, 1874	c. 1893
	Sandwich Windsor & Amherstburg	18??	1891
	Windsor Electric Street Railway	c. 1889	1891
Winnipeg	Winnipeg Street Railway	Oct 20, 1882	Jun, 1894

In addition, the Canadian Pacific Railway is reported to have had one horsecar in the 1880s, and the predecessors of the Toronto & York Radial Railways had some horsecar operation.

**CANADIAN CITIES WITH HORSECARS. STATISTICS FOR 1888 AND 1891**

CITY	COMPANY NAME	1888			1891		
		MILES	CARS	HORSES	MILES	CARS	HORSES
Halifax	Halifax Street Railway	7	15	65	7	25	100
	Nova Scotia Power						
Saint John	Saint John City Railway	7	15	65	7	15	65
Quebec	Quebec Street Railway	3	9	46	3	11	52
	St. John Street Railway	1.5	4	20	1.5	4	24
Montreal	Montreal Street Railway	30	80 cars 80 sleighs 40 omnibuses	700	35	119 cars 104 sleighs 75 omnibuses	1150
Ottawa	Ottawa City Psgr. Railway	5	23	45	?	14 cars 15 other	52
Cornwall	Cornwall Street Railway	3	4 2 steam motors	?	3	4 2 steam motors	?
Kingston	Kingston Street Railway	7	10	36	8	11	35
Belleville	Belleville Street Railway	2	5	14	2	5	12
Toronto	Toronto Street Railway	60	180	850	60	252	1300
Hamilton	Hamilton Street Railway				12	46 cars 10 sleighs	170
S Catharines	St. Catharines Street Ry.	6	14 some electric	?	8	10 electric	none
Niagara Falls	Niagara Falls, Wesley Park and Clifton	4	10	40	4	10	40
Brantford	Brantford Street Railway	4	6	20	5	7	22
Berlin	Berlin & Waterloo Street Ry				3	8	16
London	London Street Railway	6	12	40	10	30	82
St. Thomas	St. Thomas Street Railway	2	5	9	2	4	8
Chatham	Chatham Street Railway				2	4	9
Sarnia	Sarnia Street Railway	2.5	3	9	2.5	5	11
Windsor	Windsor Street Railway				4.5	6	26
	Windsor, Sand. & A'burg	4.5	6	26	6.5	16 electric	none
	Windsor Electric St. Ry.	1.5	1 elec motor 2 trailers		1.5	4 horse 1 electric	9
Winnipeg	Winnipeg Street Railway	5	15 cars 15 sleighs	100	9	20 horse 15 sleighs 4 electric	100

NOTE: Cities that had electric operation only during this period (eg. Vancouver and Victoria) are not included.  
Some data appear to be inconsistent

### SOME HORSECAR ITEMS FROM THE MONTREAL GAZETTE

The City Passenger Railway expect to have cars running by tomorrow evening between Hochelaga and Chaboillez Square. Since 1877 the "earliest car" was March 15th 1878, and the latest, April 17th 1879. The busses which replace the sleighs in the spring, will soon be put up for the year.  
April 18, 1885.

Two handsome new street cars were running yesterday on the City Passenger Railway. They were built by Mr. N.C. Lariviere of St. Antoine street, at a cost of \$750 each.  
June 2, 1886.

The new street railway track on St. Catherine west to Guy street will be finished today, when the old track will be lifted and a second new one laid. Two new closed cars from J.M. Jones and Sons of Troy, N.Y., will be put on the road this week, one on St. Catherine east and the other on Craig. The City Passenger Railway carried 23,000 passengers on Sunday.  
June 23, 1886.

The Montreal Street Railway Company's service on Craig and St. Antoine streets seems to be going from bad to worse. Car 38, which left the end of St. Antoine street before 7:30 last evening, had to wait 12 minutes at the switch near Versailles street, and in endeavoring to make up for lost time went off the track twice between Mountain and Cathedral streets, the second time running into a cab which was on the right side of the street, breaking its spring and frightening its lady occupants.  
September 7, 1886.

The new car stables of the Street Railway Company which are being erected at the corner of Chenneville and St. Vitre streets and which will accommodate 400 horses, are to be occupied by the horses working the St. Lawrence, St. Catherine west, Craig, St. Antoine, St. Denis, Point St. Charles and the new Ontario street routes. The very latest improvements as regards lighting and ventilation, facilities for feeding etc., are being adopted for the horses' comfort. When these stables are finished, the company will have three depots - one at Hochelaga, one at St. Henri, and the one above described. It is the intention to dispense with the present stables at Mile End.  
January 6, 1887.

The Street Railway Company now has its cars running on Bleury and St. Catherine routes, and buses from the waiting rooms on Craig street up St. Lawrence street. Cars are also running on St. Denis street and the track on St. Catherine east will probably be cleared of the winter's debris by the end of the week. All the sleighs have been put away for the summer.  
April 28, 1887.

It was a sight to make one stand and stare: cars with actual wheels running yesterday on the Notre Dame street route. The track is still heavy, and four horses are necessary to furnish motive power. The other lines are being rapidly opened up, and if the weather continues favorable a rapid extension of traffic is looked for.

March 28, 1889.

Traffic on Craig street will probably be open for the street cars this evening, although there is only part of one side cleared, and efforts are also being made to open the St. Catherine street line, which will most likely be clear by the end of the week.  
April 1, 1889.

The Montreal Street Railway has at last begun to accommodate the public in an original and characteristic way. Yesterday afternoon a blue car on St. Catherine street actually stopped at the corner of Drummond street while a lady passenger alighted, made her purchase at a grocery store and returned to the car. Meanwhile some twenty-five passengers were kept waiting.

October 25, 1889.

The Montreal Street Railway Company has decided to pay under protest the city's claim for a tax on its horses, amounting to about \$8000 for the last two years. Mr. Lusher, the manager, said that the company had difficulties not encountered in other cities. It had three equipments - cars, sleighs and buses. It had to keep a sufficient supply of buses, although it only used them for a few days in the spring when it was too late for the sleighs and too early for the cars, the latter of which were used only about seven months in the year. So, much dead stock had to be carried in the three seasons. It was taxed \$20 on each car and \$2.50 on each horse, although up to two years ago it had only to pay \$25 for the car. It takes two horses to each car when running, but each car required from eight to ten horses throughout the day.

March 15, 1890.

The street cars made their spring appearance on Saturday on the paved portion of Craig street, the tracks on which have been cleared of snow and ice. They were spick and span and painted and looked beautiful, clean and comfortable. People gathered around to admire them and the horses. Some persons ventured to descend from those high and awkward between-season buses to enter the smooth-going cars, their faces showing pleasure with the experiment.

March 16, 1890.

Note: The Montreal City Passenger Railway changed its name to Montreal Street Railway in 1886.



“Before and after” photos of the conversion, by the St. Catharines Meritton & Thorold, of horsecars to electric cars in 1887.

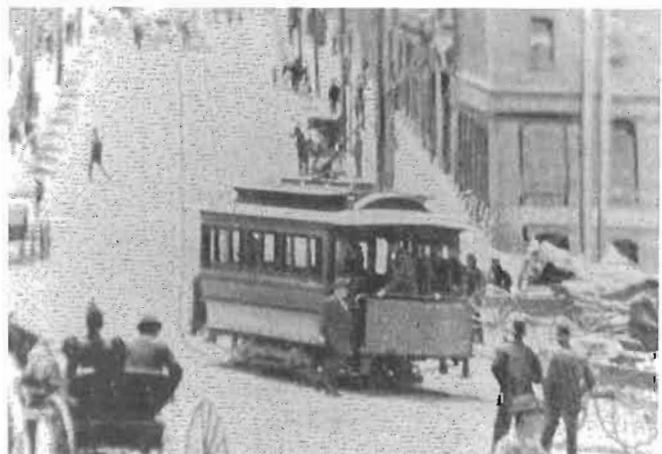
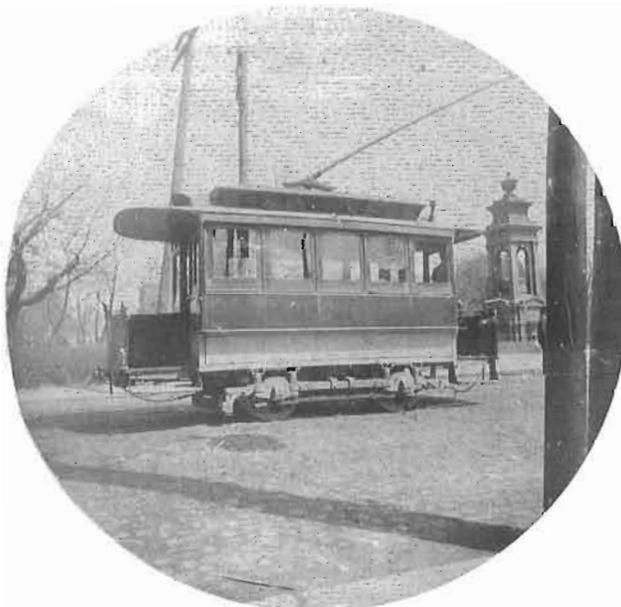
### 6. THE DECLINE OF THE HORSECAR

By 1890 horsecars were in service in most major cities of the world but, for the first time, there was some doubt as to whether this situation would last much longer. For all their benefits, horsecars did have their disadvantages. They were slow, had a limited range, and required several times as many horses as cars. The latter point was the most serious; caring for all those horses was expensive, not to mention the problem of disposing of tons of manure over the course of a year (some street railways actually made money selling manure as fertilizer). In fact, in many cases the investment in horses was greater than the value of the cars themselves. Ever since the Great Epizootic of 1872, street railway officials had been wondering if there was a better way to run street railways, and articles on the subject appeared with increasing frequency as the years went on.

In the preceding twenty years, as we have already seen, other means of urban public transport had arisen. Some were already in operation. On August 1, 1873 the world’s first cable car line opened in San Francisco. This was the creation

of Andrew Hallidie, a manufacturer of wire ropes. It is said that he was inspired by seeing a terrible horsecar accident in which the horses were dragged backwards down a steep hill by an out-of-control horsecar full of passengers. In the next twenty years cable operation spread to a number of large cities and offered faster and more convenient service than horsecars. In some cities steam-operated elevated railways were in use, and there was even talk of a subway system. Steam was also used, to a limited extent, on street lines, as cars were hauled by small “dummy” steam locomotives which were disguised as street cars to avoid frightening horses. All of these methods had disadvantages; cable cars and elevated lines were very expensive to build, and so only suitable for larger cities; steam dummies presented the problem of smoke and sparks, besides which there was a long-standing aversion to running any kind of steam locomotive in city streets. As long as these methods were the only serious alternative, the horsecar would reign supreme.

Two examples of electrified horsecars in Saint John N.B. in 1894. The small car, No. 21, had been a Saint John horsecar, while the larger car below was a former Boston horsecar electrified in Boston before being shipped to Saint John in 1893. Both cars are equipped with trucks and wooden trolley poles, unlike the St. Catharines car illustrated at the top of this page. Both photos from New Brunswick Museum.



There was, however, another method of moving street cars that was beginning to be developed - electricity. Talk of electric propulsion of railways had been around for a long time, at least as early as the 1840s. However it was not until Siemens built his first successful electric locomotive in Berlin Germany in 1879 that the idea became even remotely practical. The first public electric railway began operation in 1881, and that was quickly followed by numerous small lines, often highly experimental, in other places. Canada's first electric railway was at the Toronto Exhibition in 1884, and a regular electric car operation began in Windsor Ontario in 1886; in the latter case breakdowns caused the horses to come back and continue to haul the cars for a few years longer.

In 1888, Frank Sprague's successful electrification of the system in Richmond Virginia showed that electric street cars were practical, and then followed a widespread program of conversion of horsecar lines to electric power. However by 1890 the horsecar was still very much in the majority, and there was every reason to believe that some horsecar lines would continue for many years to come. Even as late as 1892, the prestigious *Street Railway Journal*, the standard for the industry, could write: "*It is by no means a foregone conclusion, as is often stated, that mechanical power will eventually supersede animal power on all street railways. It will continue to increase, no doubt, till a majority of roads are operated under some form of mechanical power, but the living motor is in the field, new men are constantly coming into this branch of the street railway business, and the veterans sometimes need to be reminded of things that they already know*". However, in this case the *Street Railway Journal* was wrong; the conversion to electric power proceeded at a great rate, and the decline of the horse car was much faster than anyone could have imagined.



**This strange vehicle is obviously a horsecar converted to electric operation, while still retaining its pedestals. Amazingly it was photographed as recently as November 21 1943 in Kitchener Ontario. It was probably a passenger car of the Berlin & Waterloo Street Railway, later used as a work car. Its final disposition is unknown.**

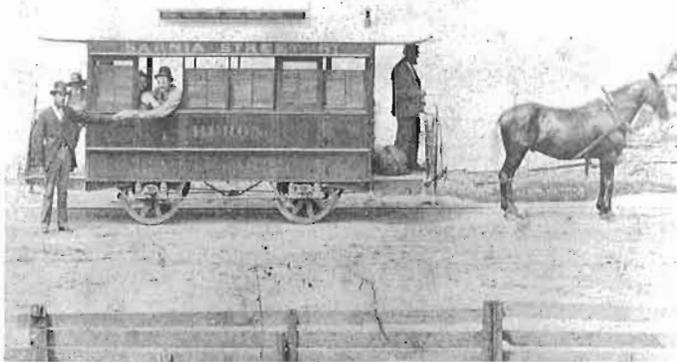
**National Archives of Canada, Merrilees Collection, photo No. PA-166504.**

The first efforts at electrification in Canada were not all that impressive. The very first was an intramural electric railway at the Toronto exhibition that ran only during the two weeks each year that the exhibition was open. The pioneer electric line between Windsor and Walkerville was plagued with troubles, both technical and political, and the horses came back on duty. By 1890 many believed that electric street cars were in the same category as other mechanical propulsion methods that had been tried and discarded. But 1890 was the turning point. In that year the directors of the new street car systems in Vancouver and Victoria B.C. decided to give up the planned horse operation, for which stables had already been constructed, and power the street car lines with electricity from the very start. It is rumoured that, even there, on occasions such as power failures, some horses were called out to haul the electric cars. Also in 1890, Winnipeg began an electric line (which on Main street paralleled the horsecar line), and in Ottawa Messrs. Ahearn and Soper won the



**Two old Quebec City horsecars mounted on trucks and used as work cars, one of them a snowplough. These photos date from the 1920s.**

**National Archives of Canada, Merrilees Collection, photos Nos. PA-166560 (left) and PA-166561 (right).**



**A Sarnia horsecar about 1880. National Archives of Canada, Merrilees Collection, photo No. PA-166522.**

contract to build an electric Railway in Canada's capital. The largest systems of all, Montreal and Toronto, were not fully convinced of the practicability of electric traction, especially in heavy snow, and hung back, watching to see how successful Ottawa's effort would be. By the spring of 1892 it was evident to all that electric traction was a complete success, and it is then that full scale conversion from horse to trolley began.

The actual peak of the horsecar systems in Canada occurred in 1891. Despite the forecasts of coming electrification, horsecar lines had been expanding at unprecedented rates. Car builders such as Stephenson were working at full capacity supplying new cars for street railways all over the world. In the three years since 1888, the number of horsecars in service in Canada had risen from just over 400 to well over 600. The number of horses had shown an even greater increase, having doubled from about 2000 to over 4000. The mileage had gone from 161 to 201, and the frequency of service was also greatly increased. The ultimate frequency was achieved in Montreal during the provincial exhibition of 1892. At this time, on September 19 1892, there was one car per minute on St. Lawrence Boulevard, a frequency of service seldom matched in the electric era, and almost never reached today. By that time, however, the peak had been passed and conversions to electricity were proceeding. The horsecar had begun its decline and the end was near.

By late 1892 the program of electrification in most Canadian cities was well under way. Both Montreal and Toronto started to electrify that year, and both of these large systems took more than two years to complete the job. The watershed year was 1893, for during that year the number of electric cars in Canada surpassed the number of horsecars.

In Toronto, the franchise agreement with the new Toronto Railway Company required the electrification to be complete by August 31, 1894. When that date arrived, one line (McCaul) had not been converted. Rather than seek a time extension, the company simply shut down

**Motors on the Horse Car**

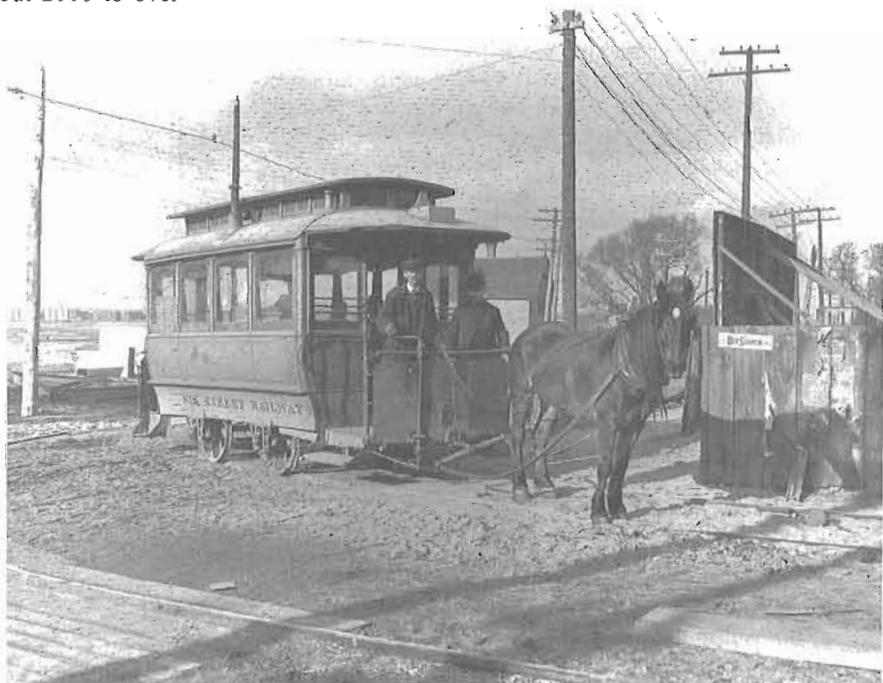
The electric railway are fixing up some of the old horse cars by putting vestibules on and placing the cars on motors. Car No. 7 is now running on the New Edinburgh route. The company have returned to their old time of running the New Edinburgh cars down St. Patrick street.

*Ottawa Evening Journal* October 12, 1893.

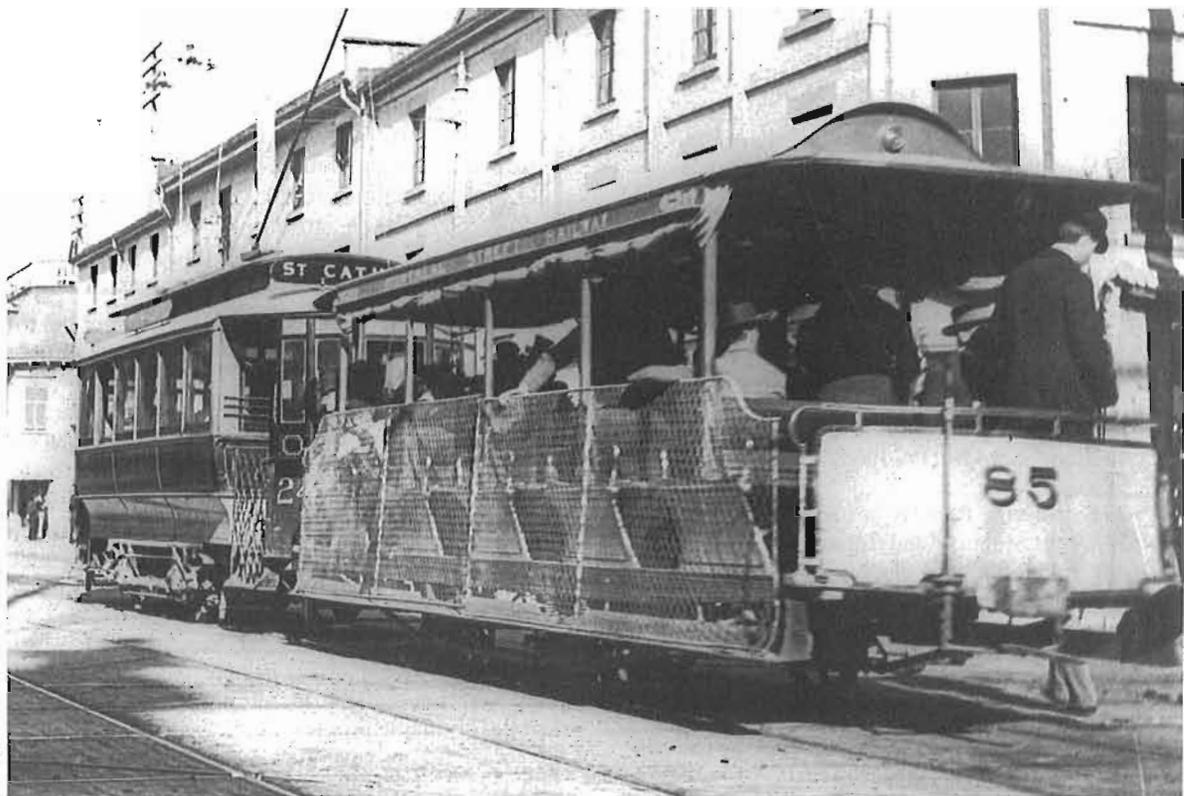
**An interesting item; especially as it is one of the few cases where the digit "7" was used on an Ottawa street car.**

the line until it was electrified a few weeks later. Montreal's schedule was not so rigid, but its last horsecar ran some time in late October of 1894.

Conversion to electric power was more complicated than originally thought. It had been expected that much of the existing track could be used, after being electrically bonded. Also it was thought that many existing horsecars could be fitted with motors and run as electric cars. Neither of these plans was successful; the horsecar track was too light to carry the weight of the heavier electric cars, and the old cars were not suitable for the higher speed of the electric lines. The major problem with the cars was simple. Most horsecars did not have trucks; the journal boxes were simply bolted to the car body. Unless the car was fitted with a truck (which was sometimes done, but was expensive) the vibration would shake the car to pieces in short order. The most use obtained from old horsecars was as trailers behind electric cars, but even this use died out in a few years. In the end, the street railways were rebuilt with new roadbed, new track and new cars.



**The last known photo of a horsecar in service in Canada; Sarnia Street Railway car No. 10 in 1901. A tattered poster on the fence advertises an event that took place on "Thurs. June 20, 1901". Since the trees are bare, it suggests that the photo was taken in the late autumn of that year. Note the trolley wire over the line in the background. National Archives of Canada, photo No. PA-60649.**



A view of Montreal open horsecar No. 85 being hauled by new electric car No. 244 on St. Catherine street about 1895.

By 1895 the horsecar was almost gone from Canada. The only large cities using this means of transportation were Halifax and Quebec City. Halifax converted in 1896, and Quebec City in 1897. The very last horsecar system of all Canada was at Sarnia, Ontario. Because of arguments between the street railway and the city, electrification of the Sarnia system did not get under way until 1900. Finally, however, the re-laying of the track began, and on January 17 1901 Sarnia's first electric cars made their trial trips. Then at 3:00 P.M. on January 28 1901, just six days after the end of the Victorian era, the electric line to the St. Clair tunnel station was opened, permanently replacing horsecars on that line. Part of one line was still horse operated for a few more months, but by the fall of 1901 it too was converted. It was forty years since Alexander Easton had built the first Toronto Street Railway, but now it was the end of the line for horsecars in Canada.

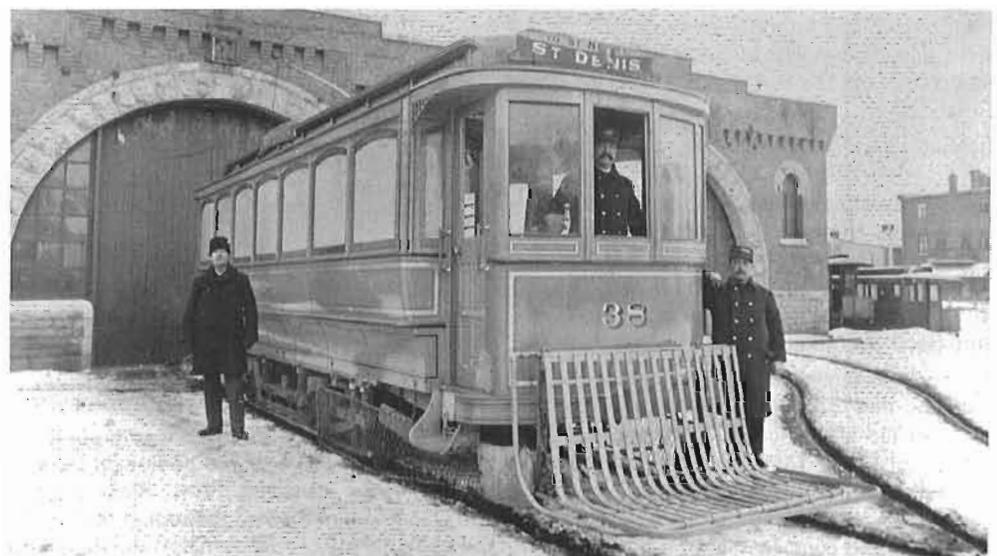
**RIGHT:** In 1900 the Montreal Street Railway photographed one of its newest electric cars, No. 38 (which used the number of a recently scrapped horsecar) at the old car barn on St. Denis near what is now Laurier. In the background, at the right of the photo, are the bodies of two closed horsecars, probably used as trailers after 1892, but retired by 1900.

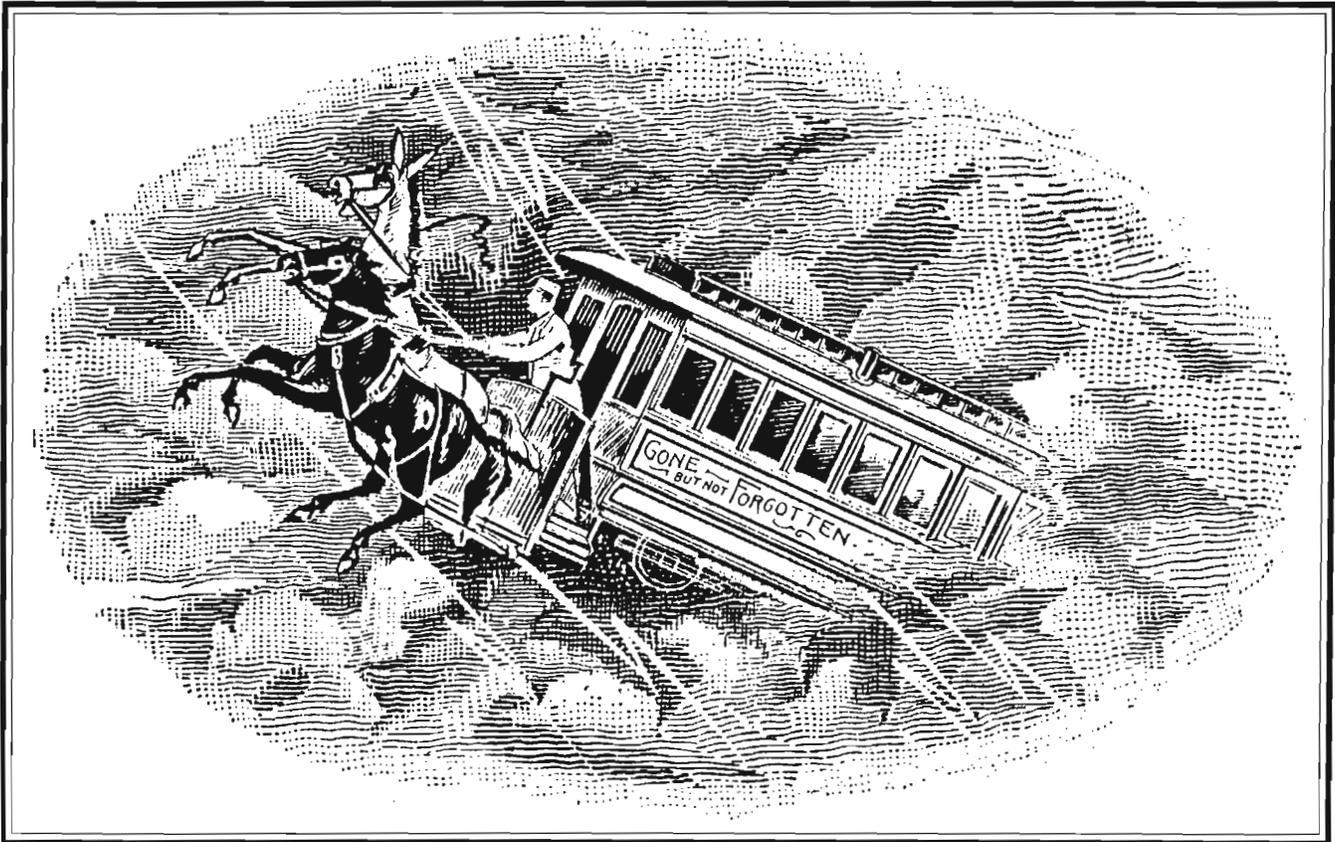
Collection of Fred Angus.

Advertisement: Three hundred horses, blankets, harness, collars, halters, rope traces and double whiffletrees to be auctioned. The subscribers have received instructions from the Montreal Street Railway Company to sell these at the stables, Hochelaga, on Monday, the 26th of March, and the following days until the whole is disposed of. - Benning and Barsalou, auctioneers, March 24, 1894.

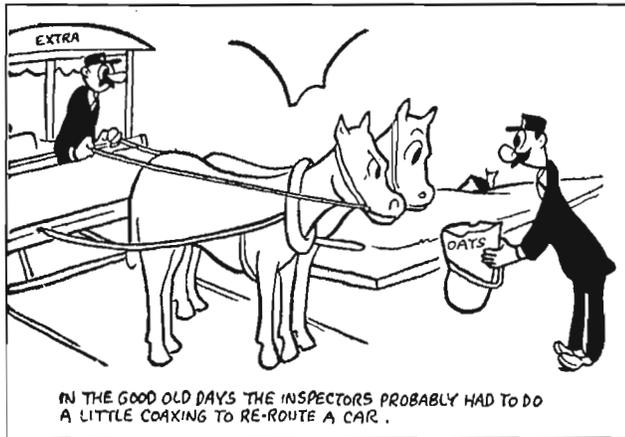
#### BYE-BYE HORSEIE!

An advertisement that needs no explanation. It was the end of an era. Soon the system would be 100% electric.



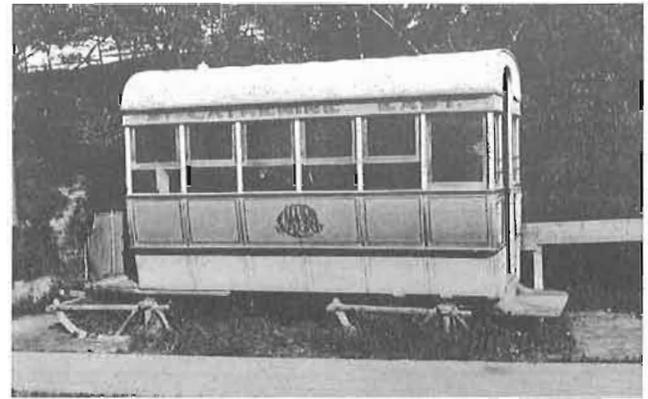
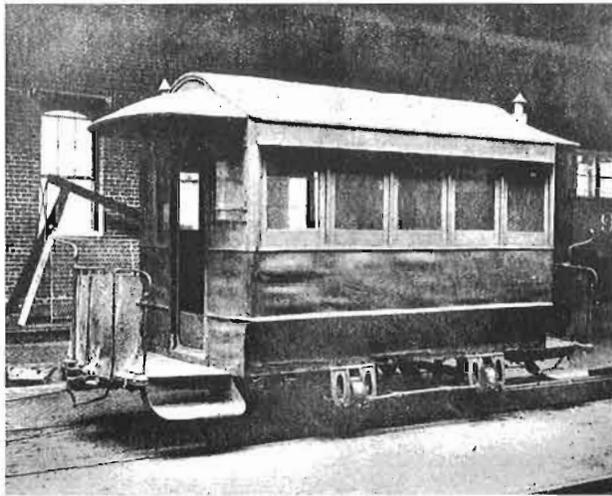


"Well Done, Good And Faithful Servant, Gone But Not Forgotten". A cartoon from *Electrical World*, October 31 1891. A horsecar (complete with horses, driver and passengers) is carried up to heaven by bolts of electricity, the force that made it obsolete.



In the 1940s and 1950s a series of cartoons called "Around Our Town", drawn by Gordie Moore, appeared regularly in the *Montreal Gazette*. Frequently the subject of his wit was the street car system and its problems. There was a series called "Tramway Improvement Suggestions", some of which we have previously reprinted in *Canadian Rail*, that offered hilarious ideas for improving the service.

These three cartoons appeared on March 4, 1950 as part of an article on the early days of street cars in Montreal, including the horsecars. It showed that the problems of 1950 were not much different than those of 1862.



ABOVE (Left and Right): A Montreal horsecar and sleigh that were saved at the time of conversion to electric power. The horsecar was destroyed in the 1920s, but the sleigh, No. 20, has survived and is at the Canadian Railway Museum. STCUM Archives.

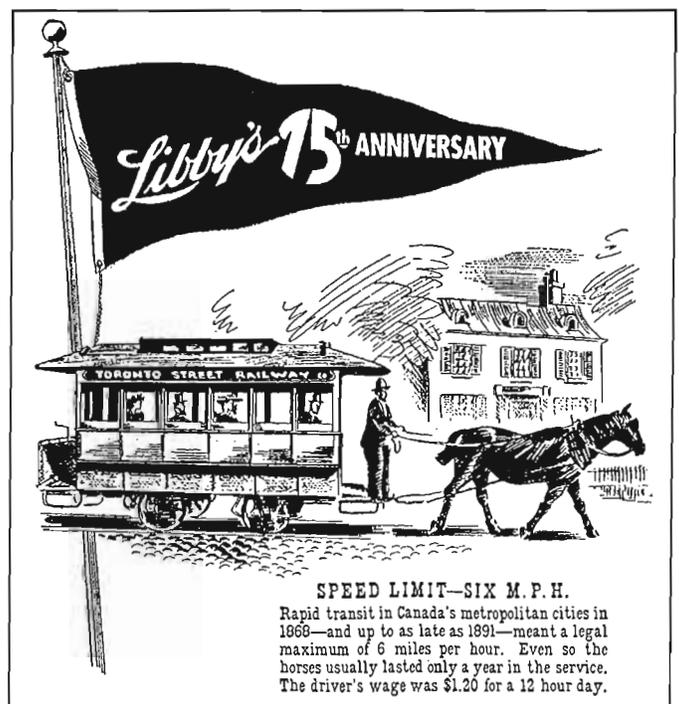
## 7. RELICS OF A BY-GONE ERA

The end of horse operation on street railways was not the end of all the cars. Street railway companies were too frugal to scrap equipment in good condition, much of it only a few years old. As we have already seen, their first thought was to convert the cars to electric propulsion and continue to use them. This was easier said than done because of the light construction of the horsecars and their lack of a truck. Since the electric cars did not have to depend on the strength of a horse, they could be made heavier and stronger (even the smallest electric cars were at least 25 or 30 horsepower). Some horsecars were fitted with motors without major modification (see photos on page 207, top and 208, top) but such conversions were not very satisfactory. More successful was the addition of a truck (example: car 21 on page 207, bottom), but even this method was not perfect since the average horsecar was considerably smaller than the new electrics. Most conversions of horsecars to electric motor cars were short-lived, and were retired by about 1900. Somewhat more successful were the conversions to trailers, and both Montreal and Toronto did this to considerable numbers of horsecars, both open and closed. Montreal's trailers were retired by 1902, but some of Toronto's had amazingly long lives, a few being in passenger service right up to the formation of the TTC in 1921. Two closed horsecars (16 and 64) were saved, and some of the open cars, refused by the TTC, were scrapped by the old Toronto Railway Company in 1925.

Many horsecar bodies were sold to individuals for various uses. It is reported that a group of Montreal closed cars became boathouses at the Lachine wharf in the 1890s, but all traces of these is long gone. A newspaper article of 1902 reports that Saint John car No. 17 (a former Boston horsecar electrified in 1893) was sold as a country cottage. This car's claim to fame was in 1894, when it became the first street car in the Maritimes to be fitted with electric heaters. In 1904 and 1905 ten ex-Toronto horsecars became houses on the grounds of a tuberculosis hospital; they remained in use until 1929. A group of Quebec City horsecars was still in existence in 1932, and another survived as a hot dog stand as late as 1964! A few Toronto horsecars that had become trailers were among the large group of old street cars that were sent north to Haileybury after the disastrous fire there in 1922. Old horsecar bodies (some used as the proverbial chicken coop) dotted the countryside for years, but after more than a century it is very doubtful that any survive today.



Old Toronto horsecars at the tuberculosis hospital at Weston.



When Libby's food company celebrated its 75th anniversary in 1943, it ran a series of nostalgic advertisements. One of these featured a Toronto horsecar.

St Thomas *Times-Journal*, December 4, 1943.



**LEFT (WHOLE COLUMN):** Five views of old horsecar bodies from Quebec City, comprising a closed car, an open car and a sleigh. These were photographed by Donald F. Angus at St André de Kamouraska south-east of Quebec City in 1932. Collection of Fred Angus.



**The Quebec City horsecar that became a diner, seen here in that role at Kamouraska, Que. It was rescued about 1964 and is now at the Canadian Railway Museum. Photo by Omer Lavallée.**

In addition to conversion to passenger use, some horsecars became work equipment. Most famous are those converted to mail cars by the Ottawa Electric Railway, but there were others. Two examples are the Quebec cars (see page 208, bottom) that had trucks fitted for work service, and one of which became a snow plough. As with the passenger cars, these work cars have long since vanished.

Although most people were happy to see the horsecars replaced by electric cars, there was a certain amount of nostalgia, and some companies actually did save one or two examples of the old technology. Montreal saved at least one horsecar, an omnibus and a sleigh as relics; while the omnibus and sleigh have survived (and are now at the Canadian Railway Museum), the horsecar deteriorated and appears to have been scrapped in the 1920s. Certainly a photo taken about 1910 shows it in rather poor shape. Ottawa also saved a horsecar, and this is now at the Museum of Science and Technology in that city. While Toronto did not officially preserve a horsecar in the 1890s, they did have some remaining in service as trailers, and they did save two horsecars in 1921. These are also at the Museum of Science and Technology in Ottawa. Interestingly, when Toronto celebrated its centennial in 1934, they built replicas of early street railway equipment that had previously been scrapped. This included an omnibus, a sleigh, and an open horsecar, as well as an early electric open car. Years later, a replica of a Winnipeg horsecar was built, and is now at Heritage Park in Calgary.

The only other horsecar to have been saved in Canada is the aforementioned Quebec car that had become a hot dog stand and diner at Kamouraska. It was rescued about 1964, went to the National Museum of Science and Technology, and later came to the Canadian Railway Museum. It is a Stephenson car of about 1880, and still has some of its original glass bearing the name of that firm. Unfortunately it does not have its pedestals, platforms or running gear. The relics mentioned above are the only remaining survivors of the horsecar era in Canada.



Two views of Douglas Corporation Transport car 27. This car, along with Nos. 28 and 29, were built by G.F. Milnes of Birkenhead England in 1892. These three cars are virtually as built and the most authentic examples of horsecar construction in service anywhere. They are usually used in rainy weather when the open cars remain in the barn. All IOM photos by Fred Angus.

## 8. THE HORSECAR TODAY

After the great conversions to electricity in the 1890s, some horsecar systems remained. There were several reasons for this, many of them economic; some of the smaller systems could not afford the cost of the change to electric power. In Europe street railways were slower to electrify, so the horsecar hung on a few years longer. Britain still had 37,000 horses in tramway and omnibus service in 1900, and 1200 as late as 1912. In North America few horsecar lines lasted beyond 1900; Boston's huge system ran its last horsecar that year. One of the strangest lines was the Cherrylyn line in Denver. Originally an electric line, it went broke in the panic of 1893, was de-electrified and converted to horsecar operation. Since the line was on a steep grade, the horse pulled the car up the hill, then climbed on to the specially-strengthened platform and rode the car back down! This strange procedure lasted until the horsecar was discontinued in 1910. New York City's last horsecar line survived until July 26, 1917 before it was closed. In other parts of the world, horsecars lasted even longer, one line in Mexico is reported to have lasted until 1957.

What about the horsecar today? Well, there are a number preserved in Museums, some of which are run on occasion by real horsepower. There are also several replicas

used at amusement parks, including the famous ones at Disneyland. A replica horsecar is run at the railway museum at Budapest, Hungary. This is an exact duplicate of one that ran in the Hungarian Capital. It is also reported that in the summer of 2002 a rail enthusiasts excursion in Romania used horses to pull a coach when it was found that the line was in too bad condition to use a locomotive! However, amazingly, it is still possible, in the 21st century, to ride a horsecar on an actual street car line in regular city service. In order to do this, one must go to Douglas, the capital of the Isle of Man.

The Isle of Man, situated in the Irish Sea, is noted for its ancient railways. These include a Victorian narrow-gauge steam railway, an electric interurban of the 1890s - and an authentic horsecar line! This line was built in 1876 and has run with horse power ever since, despite several schemes in the past to either electrify or abandon it. Today it is the only authentic horsecar line running anywhere in the world, and is a great tourist attraction. One can still board a 110 year old car, pay the fare to the conductor and sit back and listen to the "clip-clop" of the horse's hooves and the rumble of the wheels as the car rolls along at a leisurely 4 or 5 miles an hour. It is almost like being transported back to the time of our great great grandparents, the 19th century, and that interesting, but long gone time, the horsecar era.



LEFT: A front view of No. 28, identical to No. 27

LEFT: An interior view of No. 27, showing the roof construction so typical of the horsecar era.

RIGHT: Car 18 was built as a double-decker in 1883 and later rebuilt.





Open car 44 was built in 1907.



"Toast rack" car 31 dates from 1894.



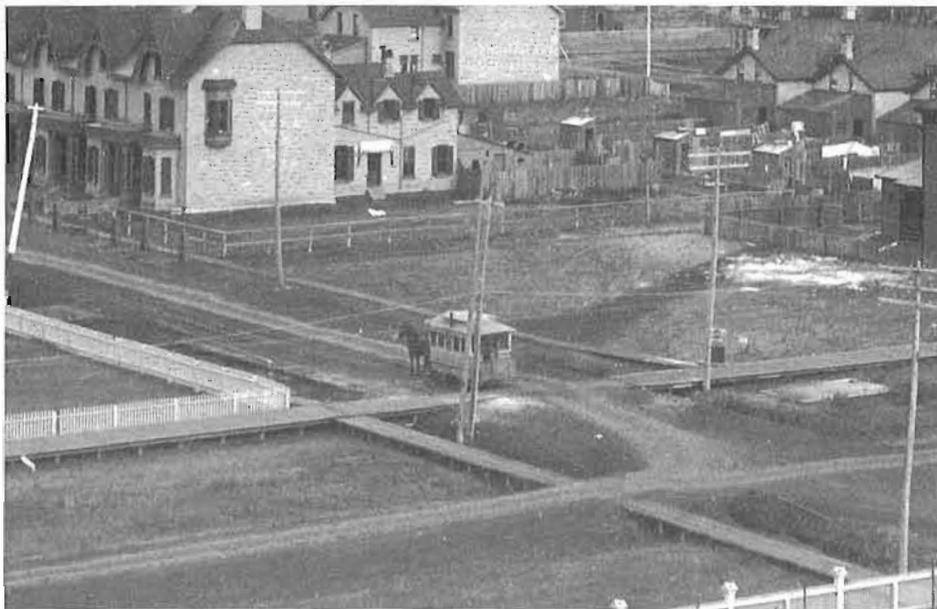
Car No. 49 is one of three convertible cars built in 1935, the newest cars in the Douglas horsecar fleet. They are open cars which can be converted to closed in bad weather.



Horsecars still turn up in unexpected places. This delightful 1905 scene, complete with turning loop, appeared on a Brazilian banknote (now demonitized) in the late 1980s.

### 9. OUR LAST LOOK BACK

As a final backward look at the era of the horsecars, we have chosen this photo taken at Winnipeg about 1890. The little horsecar is at the end of the line, ready to return back downtown. The houses stand on land that had, until not long before, been bare prairie, but, thanks to public transportation, was now close to the centre of the city. This represents the limit of the horsecar in Canada, for Winnipeg was the most westerly city in the Dominion to be served by a horse-operated street railway.



**BACK COVER TOP:** Douglas Corporation Transport car 27, built in 1892, moves along at a fine rate behind a sure-footed horse. **BACK COVER BOTTOM:** Ottawa City Passenger Railway car 4 outside Cobourg Barn on May 2, 1959, the last day that Ottawa street cars ran. Car 4 was built in 1870 (not 1866 as shown) and has been preserved. Both photos by Fred Angus.

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