

HISTORY
OF THE
CITY OF COLUMBUS
OHIO

FROM THE FOUNDING OF FRANKLINTON IN 1797,
THROUGH THE WORLD WAR PERIOD,
TO THE YEAR 1920

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By
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CHAPTER XXIX.

STREET AND INTERURBAN TRANSPORTATION

The Omnibus and Hack—First Horse-Car in 1863—Construction of the Various Lines of Street Railway—First Consolidation—Independent Companies and Further Consolidation—Electric Light and Power Companies and Heating Companies Acquired—Electricity as the Motive Power—Doyle's "Dummy" Road—Franchises and Fares—War-Time Controversy—Columbus Transfer Co.—Reorganization of the Company in 1919—Building of the Interurban Roads

In Columbus, as elsewhere, the predecessor of the street car was the omnibus. That vehicle was employed in 1852 to carry passengers to and from the first railway station and, beginning in 1853, to carry passengers between Columbus and Franklinton, to Worthington and Canal Winchester. B. O. Ream was the agent. In 1855 Thomas Brockway introduced the "pigmy omnibus" for four passengers, which had a short popularity for shopping and for evening parties. Then came the hack, introduced by W. B. Hawkes & Co., which did a great business during the Civil War. The same company in 1860 ran omnibusses with a five-cent fare on High and Broad streets.

A street railway was talked of and a company was incorporated in 1854, but the project fell through. On November 11, 1862, the Council passed an ordinance giving a franchise to the Columbus Street Railroad Co., authorizing it to lay its tracks on High street from North Public Lane (Naghten) to South Public Lane (Livingston), also on State avenue from the Penitentiary to Broad, thence to High street, thence to Town and thence to Fourth. High street was to be double-tracked. The fare was to be seven cents, or five tickets for a quarter. The capital stock was \$30,000, and there were 21 stockholders as follows: Peter Ambos, J. F. Bartlit, Henry Miller, C. P. L. Butler, T. H. Butler, B. E. Smith, Theodore Comstock, Lewis Mills, Mrs. Celia Mills, Joseph H. Riley, Headley, Eberly & Co., J. M. Trimble, E. Hall, E. F. Bingham, J. L. Green, J. Morrison, O. H. Lattimer, P. Corzilius, Marcus Childs, L. Donaldson and John Miller.

On June 10, 1863, the first car appeared on High street, running every six minutes between the railway station and Mound street. The next year cars were running across the railway track as far north as University (now Poplar) street and as far south as Stewart's Grove. In 1864 there was a reorganization, the capital stock was increased to \$130,000, and the directors were Theodore Comstock, J. F. Bartlit, Henry Miller, Peter Ambos, C. P. L. Butler, T. H. Butler, A. C. Headley, B. E. Smith, L. Donaldson, Isaac Eberly and Samuel McClelland. W. H. H. Shinn, superintendent, resigned, and Theodore Comstock, president, seems to have served till 1866 when Thomas Brockway was chosen, Mr. Comstock continuing as president, with William Ferson as secretary. The business was unremunerative and the Council permitted the company in 1865 to charge a 7-cent fare or to sell 10 tickets for 50 cents. In 1866 the company voluntarily reduced the fare to five cents, but in 1867 was again permitted to charge seven cents or to sell five for 25 cents. Business continued bad and there was talk of abandoning the enterprise; but, as a last resort, there was a reorganization, giving to Isaac Eberly as superintendent a free hand to rescue the business if he could. There had been two-horse cars with a driver and conductor for each. Mr. Eberly substituted one-horse cars, with a pay-box for each, saving the wages of a conductor, sold the extra horses and renewed the track, making it single. He also introduced new tickets to head off a manifest fraud from a dishonest handling of the old. When after about three years he resigned, he had paid the company's share of paving High street with Nicholson block and had put the business on a paying basis. Henry Miller then came into the management and, after a few months service, he and Samuel Huston leased the road, paying 5 per cent. per annum on the stock, a rental of \$4,200. Together they bought enough of the stock to secure a controlling interest, at 40 cents on the dollar. Three years later, in 1873, they sold to Henry T. Chittenden at 75 cents on the dollar.

On May 6, 1868, the Friend Street Railroad Company was incorporated by Thomas Miller, M. C. Lilley, H. H. Kimball, Isaac Eberly, Nathaniel Merion, and Horace Wilson; capital stock \$25,000. This road was completed to East Public Lane (Parsons avenue) in

July, 1869, and one car began service. This road was intended to reach the Fair Grounds (now Franklin Park) and was ultimately so extended. That was the second line of street railway in the city. The third was the Long street line which was built by the East Park Place Street Railroad Co., of which W. S. Sullivant, W. B. Hawkes, A. D. Rodgers, S. S. Rickly, F. C. Sessions and John G. Mitchell were the incorporators. In January, 1872, cars were running as far as Albert street (Garfield avenue) and the track was later extended to Winner avenue and finally to the Fair Grounds. There were car barns on the south side of Long street between Garfield and Monroe avenues. The fare was at first five cents to the barns and 10 cents to the Fair Grounds, then five cents for the entire trip.

The fourth line was that on State street, built by the State and Oak Street Railroad Co., which was incorporated January 23, 1872, by Wm. S. Ide, A. D. Rodgers, E. D. Kingsley, R. C. Hoffman and Luther Donaldson. It had authority under the ordinance to build a road from the east end of the State street bridge along State, Seventh and Oak streets to East Public Lane (Parsons avenue), thence to Broad street, east on Broad to Monroe avenue and on that avenue to Long street. The road was completed east from High street as far as Seventh street (Grant avenue), July, 1872, and there it halted till 1882.



Columbus' First Street Car—1863.

On May 1, 1871, a company, capital \$100,000, was incorporated by Wm. Dennison, R. E. Neil, G. G. Collins, and M. H. Neil to build a narrow gauge road and use on it a "dummy" engine. The termini were the Tod Barracks on High street near Warren and the Mock road, and the route chiefly on Summit and Kerr streets. Samuel Doyle built the road and a "dummy" engine with three cars operated over the road for a time in 1873-74. It was a losing venture and was abandoned.

On November 16, 1874, the Columbus Street Railroad Company was authorized to extend its track from High street on Goodale street to Neil avenue and thence on Neil avenue to the University grounds, the charter being for 20 years.

The Glenwood and Green Lawn Railroad Company was incorporated April 23, 1872, by W. B. Hawkes, A. D. Rodgers, F. C. Sessions, John L. Gill, W. S. Sullivant, W. A. Platt, G. A. Doren, Wm. L. Peck, Robert D. Hague and E. A. Fitch; capital stock \$50,000. It was to build a road from High street on Broad street to the west corporation line with a branch to Green Lawn cemetery. The road was built out Broad street in 1875 at a cost of about \$40,000, and car barns were erected on West Broad. In 1891 it was rebuilt at standard gauge with electric equipment at a cost of \$150,000.

In 1876 a company incorporated for the purpose built a road on High street to the north

corporation line. This road was sold the following year to John Marzetti, R. P. Woodruff, W. A. Hershiser, Wm. Powell and Peter Merkle for \$15,000 and they, together with Frank E. Powell were incorporated as the North High Street Railroad and Chariot Company, with a capital stock of \$30,000. Cars were run south to the Union Station, where connection was made with chariots which traversed High street south.

In November, 1879, the Columbus Railroad Company, operating the High street line south from the Union Station and the Neil avenue line, the Friend Street Railroad Company and the East Park Place Railroad Company were united under the name of the Columbus Consolidated Street Railroad Company, capital stock \$250,000. A. D. Rodgers was elected president, E. T. Mithoff vice president, and E. K. Stewart secretary. The State and Oak street road was bought by the new company and, under a new ordinance, the line was extended out Oak street to Franklin Park, near which car barns were built. In 1883 the Mt. Vernon avenue line was built as far as Twentieth street and in 1885, the property of the North High Street Railroad and Chariot Company was acquired, and cars for the first time were run without change the entire length of the street. To do these things and make other extension, the capital stock of the company was increased, November 28, 1883, to \$1,000,000. In 1889, the Schiller street (now Whittier street) line was built.

Experimentation with electricity as a motive power began in 1887 when Sidney Short, using his own patent devices, built for the company a line from High street to the State Fair Grounds on Chittenden avenue. The system was not entirely successful, but it pointed the way. A decision was soon reached to introduce electric motive power and, an ordinance having been passed permitting the change, the company erected a power station on West Spring street near the river. On November 7, 1891, in order to meet the cost of electrification, the company again increased its capital stock to \$1,250,000. About the same time the Glenwood and Green Lawn Street Railroad Company adopted electricity as a motive power, and the first electric cars appeared on its line in August, 1890. Electric cars first appeared on High street January 14, 1891; on Long street September 7, 1891, and on Main street and Mt. Vernon avenue, November 11, 1891.

On June 25, 1892, the system with its entire equipment was sold by the Columbus Consolidated Street Railroad Company to the Columbus Street Railway Company, capital stock \$3,000,000, with the following directors and officers: Emerson McMillin, B. J. Burke, G. W. Sinks, C. D. Firestone, P. H. Bruck, and Theodore Rhoads; E. E. Denniston president, E. K. Stewart vice president, general manager and treasurer, R. E. Sheldon second vice president, James Williams secretary. The Glenwood and Green Lawn Street Railroad Company property had then been acquired and improvements and new lines costing \$646,000 were in immediate prospect. The line from High street on Chestnut to Fourth and thence north to Chittenden avenue was built that year, and the extension of the High street line south from Stewart avenue had recently been completed.

In 1893 the Columbus & Westerville Railway Company, which held a franchise in Cleveland avenue to the north corporation line, was granted by Council the right to operate a road from Cleveland avenue by various streets to Spring, thence to Front, thence north on Pennsylvania avenue to Fifth avenue, and south on Front, east on Livingston and south on Parsons to south corporation line. This road was built and operated by what was known as the Columbus Central Railway Company.

An independent company in 1893 secured a franchise for the building of a street railway on Leonard avenue and the Crosstown Street Railway Company was organized that year of the Leonard Avenue Street Railway Company and the Glenwood and Green Lawn Street Railway Company, but in 1899 the Crosstown Street Railway Company fell into the hands of the Columbus Railway Company, which at the same time acquired the city lines and the interurban lines of the Columbus & Westerville or Columbus Central Railway Company. The Indianola and Fourth Street Railway Company which had been organized in 1893 and built a line on Fourth street was acquired by the Columbus Railway Company in 1895.

In 1901 S. B. Hartman, O. A. Schenck, Louis Seidensticker, Wm. H. Luchtenberg, and Benjamin Monett incorporated the Central Market Street Railway Company and obtained from the Council the right to build a line in Rich, Fifth, Donaldson, Livingston, and other streets to the south and north corporation lines. The road was built and was acquired by the general company in 1907.

Up to 1898, as narrated in another place, there were two companies furnishing electric

current for light and power—the Columbus Electric Light and Power Company and the Columbus Edison Electric Light Company. These were consolidated as The Columbus Edison Company, in 1903 and in 1904 sold to the general railway company which had become the Columbus Railway, Power & Light Company. In the meantime four companies that had been selling electricity and hot water heating were consolidated in 1904 as the Columbus Public Service Company. They were the Columbus Heating Company, incorporated April 20, 1900; the Indianola Land & Power Company, incorporated March 26, 1901; the Indianola Heating & Lighting Company, incorporated September 7, 1901, and the East Columbus Heating & Lighting Company, incorporated April 26, 1902. All the property of the Columbus Public Service Company in 1908 was leased, and in 1915 was sold, to the Columbus Railway, Power & Light Company.

At the death of Mr Denniston in 1893, Emerson McMillin was elected president. He resigned in 1898 and was succeeded by Robert E. Sheldon who, in turn, was succeeded in 1912 by Samuel G McMeen who served till 1919; Norman McD. Crawford vice president, E. K. Stewart vice president, general manager and treasurer, C. M. Clark vice president, P V Burington secretary and auditor, H. M. Burington assistant secretary and assistant auditor, Harold W Clapp general superintendent, board of directors, the president and vice presidents and the following: Carl J Hoster, D Meade Massie, Wm. A. Gill, Randolph S. Warner, Casper W Hacker, Adolf Theobald, Wm. C. Willard and Charles L. Kurtz.

The first barn of the original street railroad company in 1863 was on High street just north of Goodale, a location then far out in the country. The second barn on North High street was at the corner of Chittenden. In 1891 that building, together with 25 cars, was burned. The present carhouse for that end of the line is near Olentangy park. Carhouses are also maintained on Meritt street, Rose avenue, West Broad street, and Cleveland avenue. Besides the power station at Spring street and the river, a larger one was built and equipped and put into operation in 1918, furnishing power, not only for its own cars operated on its 135 miles of track, but also for the cars of the Ohio Electric Company, within the city, the Ohio & Southern and the Columbus, New Albany & Johnstown (inter-urbans). Its own extensions beyond the city limits are the lines to Arlington, Westerville and Bexley.

Olentangy park was laid out and completed by the Columbus Street Railway Company in 1896, and was operated by that company till 1899 when it was leased to West & Dusenbury. A subsequent lease was to J W and W J Dusenbury.

The Columbus Railway, Power & Light Company in 1918 operated 309 motor passenger cars and 58 work and miscellaneous cars. Its capital stock was: Common, \$6,041,230, 4% prior preferred, \$13,000, series A preferred, \$1,634,916; series B preferred, \$4,188,125. Total, \$11,877,271.

Except for the brief periods in which Council, in order to help out a losing business, permitted the company to charge seven cents for a single fare, the prevailing charge at first was five cents. The early consolidation of three separate companies in 1879 relieved that situation by giving for five cents what had previously cost 10 or even 15 cents, the transfer system having been then introduced, though there were new connections and extensions of routes that made transfer in many cases unnecessary. In 1889 began the period in which six tickets were sold for 25 cents. On February 4, 1901, after long discussion, Council passed an ordinance renewing for 25 years the franchise of the Columbus Railway Company on all the lines owned by it as well as on those bought from the Columbus Central Railway Company. As this franchise was meant to cover all the lines and bring all franchises to an end at the same time, it was called the "blanket franchise." Among its provisions was one that tickets should be sold seven for a quarter from the date of the acceptance of the franchise and that, when the aggregate of receipts from fares should reach \$1,750,000 annually, eight tickets should be sold for a quarter. That aggregate was reached April, 1912, and the universal fare became $3\frac{1}{8}$ cents, with transfer for a continuous ride in the same general direction.

Early in 1918, the company sent to Council a statement to the effect that increased operating costs, due to the war conditions, had made its income inadequate; it therefore asked permission to charge a higher rate of fare. Council took no action. In the meantime the employes of the company were asking for higher pay and in July struck. For two days no

cars were operated, the company asserting its inability to pay more unless its revenue was increased. The dispute was referred to the National War Labor Board, and operation was resumed. The board soon made its award, allowing large wage increases, adding to the annual payroll more than \$560,000, according to the company's computation. Consequently, on August 20, President McMeen sent a communication to the Mayor and the Council announcing that the company had discontinued the sale of tickets and would charge a 5-cent fare for every ride and that for a transfer a charge of one cent would be made, transfer to be used only at designated points. In justification of this action he cited the fact that Council had failed to offer any relief and declared that to a deficit already existing the War Board had added a wage charge of \$560,000 more. He said it had been arranged to give the passenger a receipt for payment in excess of the charge provided for in the "blanket franchise," the money to be returned if it were found that the company's action was unjustified. He claimed for the company perpetual franchise rights in six streets—Main street from High street to Rose avenue; State street from High street to Grant avenue, thence to Oak street, thence to Sherman avenue; Long street from High street to Parkwood avenue and thence in Parkwood to Broad street; Cleveland avenue from Long street to Mt. Vernon avenue and thence to Washington avenue; West Broad street from High street to the Columbus State Hospital, and Glenwood to the Harrisburg pike and thence to Green Lawn cemetery. All other franchises he surrendered, adding that the company considered itself a tenant at sufferance and would vacate on proper official demand.

At the time of making this change, the company brought suit in the Federal District Court to enjoin the city from seeking to enforce the terms of the franchise ordinance of 1901. The court refused the injunction. Mayor Karb asked the Federal War Board to undertake a settlement of the dispute, but the board declined to act. The situation continued, nearly half the passengers offering to buy tickets at the old rate, and, getting none, refusing to pay and the conductors not seeking to enforce payment. The Council refused, four to three, to give even temporary relief until the results of an expert investigation of the company's business was laid before it, and in November employed E. W. Bemis, of Chicago, to investigate and report.

W. R. Pomerene, one of the company's attorneys, was elected vice president and, owing to President McMeen's illness, became the spokesman for the company. At the December meeting of the directors, E. K. Stewart was re-elected vice president, with supervision of damages and claims; Harold W. Clapp was promoted to general manager and W. B. Campbell to general superintendent, while Norman McD. Crawford was elected treasurer.

At a stockholders' meeting January 28, 1919, new directors were elected and the policy and conduct of the business were put into the hands of an executive committee consisting of Charles L. Kurtz, who had been elected president of the company, F. R. Huntington and W. B. Beebe. The former rate of eight tickets for a quarter was restored. C. C. Slater was made general manager vice Clapp. E. K. Stewart retired as vice president and W. B. Campbell as superintendent, the latter position being abolished. A serious effort was then made to regain the public good will, and the Council, on further representations that the company was in financial distress, passed an ordinance permitting a return to the rate of six tickets for a quarter, but the ordinance was ordered to a referendum vote in August and defeated. Following another period of unsatisfactory service, Council passed an ordinance providing for a cash fare of six cents or five tickets for a quarter, with universal transfer, for two years, the rate of fare for the remaining years of the franchise to be six tickets for a quarter. In consideration, the company agreed to share in the cost of certain street improvements. This ordinance was attacked, but the referendum petitions were found insufficient, and the ordinance went into effect in April, 1920, the company redeeming in cash the receipts for the excess charge in 1918.

The Columbus Transfer Company was incorporated September 17, 1881, with Edward Denmead, T. J. Janney, R. E. Sheldon, Edwin A. Dawson and W. A. Harrison as stockholders, capital stock \$50,000, subsequently increased to \$100,000. At the outset the company bought the property of W. B. Hawkes & Company, omnibuses, horses and all other equipment. In 1882 the company erected a stable and warehouse on Naghten street between High and Third streets. The company is doing business with increased capital, motorized vehicles and under new management, most, if not all, of the projectors being dead.

Interurban Electric Roads

Soon after the advent of electricity as a motive power, there began the development of a system of electric roads reaching out into the country and connecting the city with neighboring cities and towns. The first of these lines was that to Westerville, built by the Columbus & Westerville Railway Company, which was incorporated October 3, 1891, capital \$100,000, by M. H. Neil, Lewis Huffman, Adam G. Innis, George W. Williams, G. W. Meeker, F. H. Houghton, J. W. Everal, E. H. Reasoner and C. E. Bell. This road later fell into the hands of the Columbus Street Railway Company, and is now operated as a part of the city system.

The Columbus, New Albany & Johnstown road, as yet built only as far as Gahanna, was projected by L. P. Stephens in 1899. The company was incorporated that year, capital stock \$200,000, but construction did not begin until July, 1901, W. D. Brickell, George B. Cox, Daniel J. Ryan, Thomas N. Fordyce and L. P. Stephens providing the money to build it as far as Gahanna, and an arrangement having been made with the Columbus Street Railway Company for power and the use of its tracks from Taylor avenue to High street. Operation was begun in January, 1902. The original owners operated the road until November, 1910, when it was sold to Eastern parties under an agreement to complete the road to Johnstown. The purchasers were unable to carry out their part of the contract, and the property fell into the hands of Cincinnati bankers from whom they had made large loans. L. P. Stephens has been manager of the road from the first.

The Columbus, Urbana & Western (originally Urbana, Mechanicsburg & Columbus) was incorporated for \$100,000, April 17, 1900, by H. A. Axline, Colin McDonald, G. W. Hitt, J. B. Johnson, E. M. S. Houston, Julius Weber, W. B. Marvin, D. J. Burnham, T. B. Owen, F. M. Clemens and John P. Taylor. The road was built to a point just beyond the Scioto storage dam, a distance of seven and a half miles, at a cost of \$400,000. The Columbus Savings & Trust Company made large loans to the traction company and the paper was found among the assets of the bank when it failed. The road was seized for the debt and about 1915 was sold by the State Banking Department for \$36,000. The present owners are the J. B. Foraker estate, Eli M. West, Scott M. Webb, John T. Adams, L. P. and Mary J. Stephens, Harry Stafford and John J. Chester. L. P. Stephens is the manager.

The Columbus, Buckeye Lake & Newark Company was incorporated October 19, 1899, by M. Spellacy, A. J. Warner, W. A. Carlisle, M. Q. Baker and W. R. Pomerene. The Columbus, London & Springfield Company was incorporated January 26, 1900, by John G. Webb, John M. Good, Hart A. Fisher, Emmett Tompkins and Fletcher S. Penfield. These roads were built and operated separately for a time. In 1907, the Ohio Electric Railway Company was incorporated and acquired them. The station was first on Rich street between High and Third, but a few years ago was moved to Third street between Town and Rich streets, where a commodious and convenient building had been erected.

The Columbus, Grove City & Southwestern Company was incorporated March 14, 1901, by Adam Grant, H. A. Fisher, F. W. Merrick, Emmett Tompkins and George B. Darnell. This road also was acquired by the Ohio Electric and is operated as far as Orient as a part of its system.

The Columbus, Delaware & Marion Company was incorporated, October 24, 1904, by John G. Webb, Oscar M. Gottschall, E. M. Campbell, N. J. Catrow and H. B. Hane. The original capital was \$2,500,000. It was consolidated with other power and equipment companies along the line in the same year. After five years of operation, the company fell into financial difficulties, and on August 7, 1909, Eli M. West was appointed receiver. In 1918 the road was sold to the Eastern trust company that held its bonds, Mr. West was made president and the offices of the road were removed to Marion, where the company's larger local interests are centered.

The Ohio & Southern Traction Company was incorporated October 1, 1906, by S. B. Hartman, F. W. Schumacher, James M. Butler, W. V. Baker and Jonas A. Hedges, with a capital stock of \$75,000. The road was built from South Columbus 6.85 miles south to accommodate the traffic to and from the Hartman farm. Earl S. Davis, Samuel Matthews, E. C. Schwab and J. W. Spetnagle have been added to the directorate. Mr. Davis is treasurer and Mr. Schwab is general manager.

The Scioto Valley Traction Company was organized September 8, 1899. The incorporators and original stockholders were W. F. Burdell, Alex. Renick, T. King Wilson, E. K.

Stewart, W J Weaver, H. D. Bennett, Edwin R. Sharp, H. M. Daugherty and B. Mahler, the last named representing the Everett & Moore Syndicate, of Cleveland, with which the local projectors had associated themselves. The original charter contemplated only a road to Chillicothe but in 1901 the charter was amended so as to include a branch to Lancaster. Some work had been done on the road when the Everett & Moore Syndicate fell into financial straits and a local pool, of which Frank A. Davis and Edwin R. Sharp were members, was formed to complete the road. The road was completed to Lancaster and Circleville, with a power house at Reese's Station and operation was begun in 1904. The next year the line from Circleville to Chillicothe was completed and put in operation. A third rail, instead of the usual overhead wire, carries the current for this system. The total mileage, including track rights in Columbus and Lancaster, is 74.71. The company's stock is \$3,466,300; bonds \$1,520,000. Its present officers are Frank A. Davis president and general manager, E. R. Sharp vice president and treasurer, A. C. Moorhous secretary.

The Columbus, Newark & Zanesville Company was incorporated July 2, 1902, with a capital stock of \$1,500,000, by J R. Harrigan, A. C. Ralph, C. A. Alderman, H. A. Fisher, and J A. Godown. It built the road from Newark to Zanesville. This road also has been incorporated into the Ohio Electric system, the total mileage of which is 617.4.

Adding to this the 56 miles of the C. D & M., the 6.85 miles of the Ohio & Southern, the nine miles of the Columbus, New Albany & Johnstown, the seven and a half miles of the C. U & W, the 70.15 of the Scioto Valley Traction Company, we have a total of nearly 767 miles of interurban electric road leading out of Columbus. To this should be added the lines to Westerville and Arlington operated as parts of the city system, making about 783 miles. These lines have ministered to the growing city and materially aided in its development, but few have been without their financial troubles and losses. The period of stability and steady growth is believed to be at hand.