

DEVELOPMENT OF STREETCAR SYSTEMS IN NORTH CAROLINA

By Walter R. Turner

Edward Dilworth Latta, a classy dresser who operated men's clothing businesses in Charlotte for several years, was ready for a new challenge. Now thirty-nine years old and married with three small children, he had traveled widely and understood how electric streetcars were beginning to transform cities. Asheville and Winston (later Winston-Salem) had already established streetcar systems, but he was determined to do something even more impressive. With a new company and strong financial backing, he made his move in 1890. Latta purchased Charlotte's horse-drawn streetcar system, completely rebuilt it, and extended the lines to the outskirts of the city to Dilworth, creating the state's first major streetcar development. Dilworth eventually encompassed residential sections for different economic classes, a sprawling park, and an industrial district.

"Clanging, swaying, grinding along, the streetcar created the modern city; rolled two generations of Americans to work, to the suburbs, to the ball park, out to the laughter and bright lights of the Ferris wheels and roller coasters. . . ." ¹ During the period from 1886 to 1948, more than a dozen cities and towns in North Carolina acquired streetcars, usually operated and owned by electric utility companies or their subsidiaries. In most of these cities, streetcars transported riders to work and play while greatly influencing the establishment of suburban neighborhoods and recreation/amusement parks.

¹ William D. Middleton, *The Time of the Trolley* (Milwaukee: Kalmbach Publishing Company, 1967), front flyleaf.

National Overview

In the mid-nineteenth century, transportation companies in the nation's largest cities developed "street railroads." Horses or mules pulled small vehicles called "horsecars," which accommodated twenty to thirty passengers, along railroad tracks on city streets. This method of transportation became widespread, despite being slow, difficult to climb hills, and hard on the animals. Some cities experimented with applying steam locomotives, called "steam dummy locomotives," to street railroads, but they were never successful.

The cable railway was invented in the 1870s. A wire cable, powered by a steam engine at a central power plant, was pulled through a trough below the tracks. Streetcars were attached to this cable, providing power for movement. By the 1890s, cable railways operated in twenty-eight cities, especially San Francisco and Chicago.²

Electric streetcars were the big breakthrough in streetcar technology, made possible by the applying electricity to streetcar motors. Thomas Edison developed a way to distribute electricity to large geographic areas, beginning service to customers in New York City in 1882. In 1885, Raleigh became North Carolina's first city to obtain an electric lighting system, and the state's other cities enjoyed this service by the end of the decade.³

During the 1880s, numerous experiments were conducted to produce an efficient electric railway operation. Among the challenges were how to get electricity to the cars and how to transmit power from electric motors to wheels? After his tour of duty, U.S.

² Middleton, *The Time of the Trolley*, 12-51.

³ Jack Riley, *Carolina Power & Light Company* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Company, 1958), 7-10.

Naval Academy graduate Frank J. Sprague (1857-1934), a Connecticut native, worked as an assistant in Thomas Edison's electric light business and then formed the Sprague Electric Railway & Motor Company, designing and selling electric motors. His big opportunity came in 1887 when he contracted to build an electric railway system in Richmond, Virginia. The system consisted of twelve miles of track with grades as steep as eight percent (well beyond the capabilities of a conventional steam locomotive), overhead electric wires, a central station power plant, and forty trolley cars, each powered by two motors and connected to overhead power by a pole.⁴ Upon its completion in May 1888, Sprague commented, "Fatigue and worry were all forgotten in what was to us a supreme moment."⁵

At the time, Boston had the world's largest trolley system, which used 8,000 horses to pull horsecars. The city was ready to convert to a cable system, but instead opted for an electric system with Sprague motors after seeing his achievement in Richmond. The new technology spread rapidly. By 1890 there were more than 200 electric streetcars systems, including Asheville and Winston, in the United States. These systems, capable of operating efficiently in all kinds of weather, expanded quickly. By the end of the nineteenth century, electric streetcars had replaced horsecars and nearly all cable systems.⁶

From the 1890s to the 1920s, almost every city of at least 10,000 people acquired an electric streetcar system that continued to expand. Typical fare was five cents. Open cars were used in warm months, closed ones during winter. State public service

⁴ Using steam locomotives for steep grades in cities was not practical. The steepest railroad grade in the United States is in Saluda, N.C., which is less than five percent.

⁵ Middleton, *The Time of the Trolley*, 73.

⁶ Middleton, *The Time of the Trolley*, 65-73. A notable cable survivor was San Francisco.

commissions regulated the companies. Most streetcar employees, who worked six or seven days a week at low wages, joined unions, especially workers in the Northeast and Midwest. Between 1915 and 1919, increased operating costs and inflation, caused in part by World War I, combined with public resistance to any fare increases, led to the failure of some streetcar companies. In the 1920s, better management fostered improved operating efficiency.⁷

But the biggest (at first unrecognized) threat to streetcars, especially during the decade of the 1920s, was the proliferation of automobiles, buses (often operated by streetcar companies), and construction of paved highways.⁸ The number of people commuting to work on trolleys increased while ridership during off-peak hours and on Sunday to amusement parks declined. Streetcar companies found it difficult to profitably serve residents in new suburbs being built farther from city centers. Many people blame General Motors for buying streetcar systems in order to replace them with buses, a charge that the corporation denies. GM did not buy any systems in North Carolina.⁹

Beginnings in North Carolina

In 1881 the North Carolina General Assembly chartered street railway companies for Raleigh and Asheville, authorizing use of "steam, animal or other power."¹⁰

Additional charters followed. The Raleigh Street Railway Company opened the state's

⁷ Stanley Mallach, "The Origins of the Decline of Urban Mass Transportation in the United States, 1890-1930," in *American Cities, A Collection of Essays* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), 6:244.

⁸ The terms "streetcar" and "trolley" are interchangeable in this paper, particularly when used as nouns.

⁹ Mallach, "The Origins," 239-255. The Subcommittee on Antitrust and Monopoly in the U.S. Senate held hearings in 1973 about whether General Motors's played a role in the decline of electric traction in U.S. cities. Critics contended that GM worked "aggressively and sometimes nefariously from the mid-1920s on to replace fixed-base transport with rubber-wheel vehicles." GM responded that "it was the negative economics of electric traction and public preferences, not the machinations of the corporation, that led to the almost complete substitution of buses for trolleys in the nation's cities by the late 1950's." The debate was unresolved. Mallach, "The Origins," 253.

¹⁰ Riley, *Carolina Power & Light Company*, 10.

first streetcar system on Christmas day in 1886. The operation consisted of four miles of track and four light horsecars. "I well remember the appearance of the first streetcars, drawn by mules, with tinkling bells, and the crowds of people who were attracted by the novelty," wrote R. C. Lawrence.¹¹ The Durham Street Railway Company, opened in 1887, ran from West Main Street (near the present-day east campus of Duke University) to downtown. But wagons often had accidents in Durham when crossing the tracks (which were six to eight inches high), leading to financial problems, disbanding of the system, and removal of the tracks. In 1888 the Wilmington Street Railway started a five-mile, horsecar system in that city. The same year, the Wilmington Sea-Coast Railroad opened a steam-powered railroad for passengers and freight between Wilmington and Wrightsville Beach, a distance of ten miles.¹²

Charlotte's experience illustrates the challenges of starting a new transportation venture. On January 26, 1883, the North Carolina General Assembly chartered the Charlotte Street Railway Company, an action quickly endorsed by the Charlotte Board of Aldermen. But the company's local officers, unable to get the project off the ground, sold the charter to Dr. J. R. Zearing and his investors from Chicago in August 1885. Despite much publicity, the Chicago group bailed out two months later. Finally in 1886, the city signed a contract with F. W. Dickson and his associates from Georgia and Alabama, whose corporation already operated streetcar systems in several cities. The Dickson company opened Charlotte's streetcar system on January 1, 1887--consisting of three streetcars, each one pulled by two mules and holding twelve passengers, and tracks in

¹¹ R. C. Lawrence, "A Boy's Life in the 1880s," *The Uplift*, March 11, 1944, reprinted in David Perkins, ed., *Raleigh, A Living History of North Carolina's Capital* (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1994), 110.

three directions from the Square (corner of Trade and Tryon) that connected with the city's two major railroad stations. By the end of 1887, horses had replaced mules and a line was extended from the Square eastward to Sugar Creek (near present-day Central Piedmont Community College).¹³

After these bumpy starts, the extension of electricity into urban areas—coupled with increasingly reliable electric streetcar technology—opened a dramatic new transportation era in the nation and in North Carolina. The state's five largest cities took advantage of the opportunity. They were Asheville (10,235), Winston and Salem (10, 729 combined), Charlotte (11,557), Raleigh (12,678), and Wilmington (20,056).¹⁴

Asheville

Asheville was an isolated mountain town for many decades. But when railroads finally reached the community from Salisbury in 1880 and from Spartanburg in 1886, Asheville grew as a tourist and health resort. But the two-mile trip from the depot to downtown was still a challenge. This journey required climbing hills with a ten and a half- percent grade, too steep for horsecar operation and too expensive for a cable system.

E. D. Davidson of Long Island, New York, who had financed a horsecar system in Halifax in eastern Canada, came to Asheville in early 1888 to explore opportunities. The city of Asheville authorized a charter for an electric railway that would include lines from Pack Square to various sections of the city, including the depot that served the Western

¹² Riley, *Carolina Power & Light Company*, 17-19; Jean Bradley Anderson, *Durham County* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 187; Andrew J. Howell, *The Book of Wilmington, 1730-1930* (Wilmington, circa 1930), 170, 171; Riley, *Carolina Power & Light Company*, 268-270.

¹³ Dan L. Morrill, "A Brief History of the Mule-drawn Or Horse-drawn Streetcar System In Charlotte, North Carolina, 1883-1891," unpublished article, November 27, 1991.

¹⁴ United States census figures for 1890, cited in John L. Andriot, *Population Abstract of the United States* (McLean, Va: Andriot Associates, 1983), 574, 575.

North Carolina Railroad (which ran east to Salisbury). Davidson agreed to build the system in close collaboration with Frank Sprague, builder of the Richmond system. John Barnard helped supervise construction and became the company's general manager. The line to the depot opened on February 1, 1889. From the Public Square (now Pack Square), the line extended down South Main Street (present Biltmore Avenue) and Southside Avenue, and then was routed onto Depot Street (west of present-day McDowell Street) to the depot, which was located on flat land in the railroad yard (a half-mile west of Biltmore Village). Ida Briggs Henderson, an eyewitness to the opening events, remembered the excitement: "I can still recall the applause that was given by the people who stood along the sidewalks, watching the demonstration which took place on that day."¹⁵

Various railway companies organized and built lines to emerging neighborhoods north of downtown; to outlying areas, including the Sulphur Springs resort west of the city; and to Biltmore Village, a town near the emerging Biltmore estate. In 1907 Asheville led the state by carrying three million streetcar passengers (total number of trips by riders), compared to Charlotte and Wilmington with two million each. By 1915 the street railway reached its maximum size, operating forty-three rail cars on eighteen miles of track, including one to the newly opened Grove Park Inn.¹⁶ The streetcar system continued to serve Asheville's tourists and growing population, which reached 28,000 in 1920 and 50,000 in 1930.

¹⁵ Ida Briggs Henderson, "One of the First Street Cars," *The State*, January 8, 1938, 16.

¹⁶ Track mileage stated in this paper during the 1900-1940 period is documented in the annual and biennial reports of the North Carolina Corporation Commission, which regulated the street railways. These figures are for main tracks both inside and outside city limits but do not include sidings, switches, or tracks to car barns.

Thomas Wolfe, the noted novelist who grew up in Asheville, described the city's streetcars in one of his short stories. "The street-cars ground into the Square from every portion of the town's small compass and halted briefly like wound toys in their old quarter-hourly formula of assembled Eight."¹⁷

In 1900 most of the city's railways were consolidated into the Asheville Electric Company, the utility furnishing electricity to the city. Although the majority of directors and officers were from Asheville, James H. Cutler of Boston, an agent for General Electric Company, was a major investor in the company. Asheville Electric became Asheville Power and Light Company in 1912, with the majority of the directors at that time coming from New York. In 1926 the company was sold to Raleigh-based Carolina Power and Light Company (now Progress Energy).¹⁸

Winston-Salem

Leaders of the growing tobacco-manufacturing town of Winston organized the Winston-Salem Street Railway Company on March 11, 1889, a little more than a month after Asheville opened its system. On July 14, 1890, the Salem Band played and crowds cheered as the first cars rolled down the tracks. Frank J. Sprague, who probably designed the system, attended the celebration. The north-south line ran from the courthouse in Winston down Main Street through Salem, further uniting the two towns. Another line from the courthouse extended west one mile to the new, three-story, Zinzendorf Hotel.

¹⁷ Thomas Wolfe, "The Lost Boy," in Francis E. Skipp, ed., *The Complete Short Stories of Thomas Wolfe*, (Charles Scribner's Sons: New York, 1987), 359.

¹⁸ David C. Bailey, Joseph M. Canfield, and Harold E. Cox, *Trolleys in the Land of the Sky, Street Railways of Asheville, N.C. and Vicinity* (Forty Fort, Pa: Harold E. Cox, 2000), 5-32; Riley, *Carolina Power & Light Company*, 93-112; Chris Morton, "The Electric Street Railway in Asheville," *The Ledger*, January 2002, 1, 4, 5; Henderson, "One of the First Street Cars"; Letter of transmittal, *North Carolina Corporation Commission*, annual report for 1907 (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton, 1907).

Streetcar cars ran from the courthouse in every direction by 1907, close to reaching the system's maximum size of forty-three trolleys using nine miles of track, operating on ten-minute schedules. Even though the Zinzendorf Hotel had been destroyed by fire in 1892, the availability of the streetcar helped to spur growth of the West End neighborhood on the sloping hills beyond the hotel site. Nissen Park was built at the end of the South Main Street line. Tracks out Liberty Street to the north led to Piedmont Fair Grounds and east along Third Street to City Hospital.

In 1891, after one year of streetcar service, the Winston-Salem Street Railway Company merged with the local electric utility to form the Winston-Salem Railway and Electric Company. Later in the decade industrialist Henry E. Fries founded the Fries Manufacturing and Power Company, which owned both the streetcar system and the area's electrical network.¹⁹ In 1913, however, the company was sold to Southern Public Utilities Company, a subsidiary of Southern Power (forerunner of Duke Power) in Charlotte.²⁰

Charlotte

Edward Dilworth Latta and five Charlotte entrepreneurs he recruited organized the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company, known as the Four Cs, in 1890.²¹ The

¹⁹ A native of Salem, Henry Elias Fries (1857-1949) attended Davidson College, served in the General Assembly and as mayor of Salem, and was a founder of North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts (now N.C. State University). He and his brother Francis organized the Winston-Salem Southbound Railway from Winston/Salem to Wadesboro in 1909. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Fries, Henry Elias."

²⁰ Frank Tursi, *Winston-Salem, A History* (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1994), 146-148; Manly Wade Wellman, "Transportation and Communication," *Winston-Salem in History* (Winston-Salem: Historic Winston, 1976), 4: 23, 24, 31, 32; *North Carolina Corporation Commission*, annual reports for 1900, 1905, 1910, 1915, and biennial report, 1920, State Archives.

²¹ Edward Dilworth Latta (1851-1925), a native of Pendleton, S.C., attended Pennington Seminary in New Jersey and moved to Charlotte to open a clothing store in 1876. By the late 1880s, he established Charlotte

company's first project was to upgrade the old horsecar system and establish a new neighborhood, Dilworth, one and a half miles south of the city center. Four Cs paid the Edison Electric Company (which Thomas Edison helped organize) \$40,000 to install an electric streetcar line along the former horsecar lines and extend the route to Dilworth. As with most horsecar-electric streetcar conversions, this required removing the horsecar tracks and installing heavier tracks. The first trolley on the new system ran on May 18, 1891. "While the prospect of considerable profit certainly inspired Dilworth's formation, Latta's thinking also evinced a broad streak of New South boosterism," wrote Charlotte historian Tom Hanchett.²²

The neighborhood park, Latta Park, helped attract riders and prospective residents to Dilworth. In addition, a textile mill and industrial area were established on the edge of the neighborhood. Four Cs extended streetcar lines to other neighborhoods on the city's outskirts. Later, during World War I, the War Department built Camp Greene, which trained up to 65,000 men, west of the city on a streetcar line.

Tobacco and textile manufacturer James B. Duke established a new utility, Southern Power Company, in Charlotte in 1905 and began building hydroelectric plants along the Catawba River and the Piedmont region.²³ The company won approval for a streetcar franchise in 1910, despite opposition from Latta. Shortly thereafter Latta sold

Trouser Company to manufacture pants, which employed 120 workers. In addition to developing Dilworth, he built several downtown buildings. He moved to Asheville in 1923. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Latta, Edward Dilworth"; Thomas W. Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City, Race, Class, and Urban Development* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 55.

²² Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City*, 56.

²³ James Buchanan Duke (1856-1925), who grew up in Durham and attended New Garden School (later Guilford College), worked in the family's tobacco manufacturing company before organizing the American Tobacco Company in 1890. When the federal government initiated anti-trust actions against his company early in the twentieth century, Duke turned his energies to hydroelectric power. Though Duke's primary homes were in the New York area, he purchased a house in the Myers Park neighborhood of Charlotte in 1919. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Duke, James Buchanan."

his trolley company, Charlotte Electric Railway Company, (consisting of thirteen miles of tracks, thirty-nine trolley cars, and a car barn), to Southern Power for \$1,235,000. At the same time, Latta sold Duke his gas supply business.

Southern Power, at Duke's initiative, also established the Piedmont and Northern Railway in 1911, the state's only successful interurban electric railway and one of a few such systems in the Southeast. The Greater Charlotte Club (now Charlotte Chamber of Commerce) supported this move by raising and contributing \$300,000. Interurban lines operated between cities, also accessing electricity overhead, but using multi-car trains that served freight as well as passengers. P&N's Charlotte-Gastonia line opened in 1912 with its own tracks and included passenger stops in Pinoca, Thrift, Mount Holly, North Belmont, McAdenville, Lowell, Ranlo, and Groves. The railroad also operated a passenger and freight line between Spartanburg and Anderson, S.C. and an all-freight line from Mount Holly to Terrell, N.C. in Catawba County.²⁴

In 1913 Southern Power (which became Duke Power in 1924) organized a new subsidiary, Southern Public Utilities Company, to operate streetcar systems and expand the company's retail activities. The following year, the company opened a new, forty-car barn. By 1930 Duke Power owned the streetcar systems in Winston-Salem, Greensboro, High Point, and Salisbury. The Charlotte system expanded to serve several new outlying neighborhoods and reached a total of twenty-nine miles of trackage (ten of them double tracks) utilizing fifty passenger cars.²⁵

²⁴ Author's telephone interview with Dan L. Morrill, February 1, 2002. An enthusiastic trolley fan, Morrill is professor of history at UNC-Charlotte, consulting director of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, and founder of Charlotte Trolley Museum.

²⁵ Morrill, "Edward Dilworth Latta," *North Carolina Historical Review* 42 (July 1985) 293-316; Dan L. Morrill, "Edward Dilworth Latta and the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company," (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, survey and research report online at www.cmhpf.org); Dan L. Morrill, "Dilworth: Charlotte's Initial Streetcar Suburb," in the unpublished report by Little-Stokes and

Raleigh

According to one writer, "Raleigh was stung by the report that Charlotte had beat it to electric car service."²⁶ Dr. S. J. Jacobs of Iowa purchased the existing streetcar charter and announced ambitious plans. Arrangements were made for Edison General Electric Company to furnish electrification and four elegant trolley cars to be purchased from Philadelphia. Disputes developed between the owners and construction company, and some electric wires were removed. To resolve matters, Baltimore bondholders became involved, and Raleigh residents bought \$50,000 in bonds to finance construction of the streetcar system. When he became unable to pay a bill for machinery, Dr. Jacobs quietly left Raleigh and never returned.

The Raleigh Street Railway Company, however, began scheduled runs on September 1, 1891. The system covered the same general route as the mule-drawn system. From downtown, the tracks ran west along Hillsboro Street (now Hillsborough) as far as St. Mary's College, north on Blount Street to Brookside Park near Oakwood Cemetery, and down Fayetteville and Cabarrus streets to the depot southwest of downtown. When the company failed in 1894, James H. Cutler of Boston, who already had streetcar interests in Asheville and other southern cities, acquired more investors and reorganized the company as the Raleigh Electric Company.

Morrill," Architectural Analysis: Dilworth"; Thomas T. Feters and Peter W. Swanson Jr., *Piedmont and Northern, the Great Electric System of the South* (San Marino, Calif.: Golden West Books, 1974), 15-17; Robert F. Durden, *The Dukes of Durham, 1865-1929* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1975), 185; *North Carolina Corporation Commission*, biennial report for 1931-1932, 252; Sarah McCulloch Lemmon, *North Carolina's Role in the First World War* (Raleigh: Department of Cultural Resources, 1975), 57; email from Dennis Lawson, Duke Energy Archives, to author, February 8, 2002.

²⁶ Riley, *Carolina Power & Light Company*, 24.

Carolina and Power & Light Company, organized in 1908 in Raleigh, incorporated Raleigh Electric and its streetcars, other area utilities, and the newly built Buckhorn dam and plant on the Cape Fear River. Only Fayetteville Street, of all the streetcar routes, was paved at the time. Frank Shearin, a conductor, recalled, "People in the residential areas used to complain about the dust."²⁷ To solve the problem, CP& L bought a 4,000-gallon capacity tank car to water down the roads. This was only one example of how CP& L invested the necessary funds to modernize Raleigh's streetcar operation.

By 1915 the system boasted twelve miles of trackage. It served the state technical college (now N.C. State University) and reached the State Fairgrounds, ran along New Bern Avenue to the east, and in (1912) arrived at the new 100-acre Bloomsbury Park out Glenwood Avenue to the north. As a student at N.C. State in the early 1930s, Willie York (developer of Cameron Village Shopping Center and other properties) recalled riding streetcars downtown to the California Fruit Store to meet girls from Meredith College.²⁸

Wilmington

With assistance from northern financiers, the Wilmington Street Railway converted from a horsecar to an electric streetcar system in 1892. The legislature also authorized the company to supply electric power to the city. By 1900 two of the

²⁷ Harry Ethridge, "Men Reminisce About Local Streetcar Era," *News and Observer* (Raleigh), December 10, 1967.

²⁸ Riley, *Carolina Power & Light Company*, 21-29, 53-61; Phil Pitchford, "Rolling Out the City," *Raleigh Times*, August 24, 1987, in Perkins, *Raleigh*; "Memories Of Street Car System Are Preserved In Keepsake Form," *North Carolina*, July 1976, 56-58, 86; Treva Jones, "DOT workers track ties to city's past," *Raleigh Times*, September 6, 1986; *North Carolina Corporation Commission* reports for 1900, 1905, 1910, 1915, and 1920-1921.

company's officers were from New York and one was from Wilmington. In eight years the company had not built any new tracks, despite the fact that Wilmington, at nearly 21,000, was the largest city in the state. Both the streetcar company and the Ocean View Railroad (formerly Sea View Railroad) line to Wrightsville Beach, which suffered damage from a coastal storm the year before, were losing money.

In 1902 Hugh MacRae of Wilmington formed Consolidated Railways, Light and Power Company, and purchased the city's street railways, light, and power facilities.²⁹ He had already established a company to generate electricity near Rockingham on the Pee Dee River. In 1907 MacRae strengthened his holdings by forming Tide Water Power Company, retaining ownership of the streetcar system.

MacRae converted the Wilmington-Wrightsville Beach line into an electric system and consolidated the county's two rail systems. Instead of starting their trips at a station at Ninth and Orange Streets, a mile from downtown, beach passengers began boarding downtown. The city's lines were extended to accommodate growth of suburbs on the city's northern edge. Equally significant was the opportunity for trolleys to encourage new neighborhoods along the beach route. Whereas the steam train probably had no stops, the electric streetcar eventually served a total of twenty waiting stations. These stations, one of which has survived, consisted of attractive, small concrete shelters.³⁰ In 1905 MacRae opened Lumina, a pavilion located on the ocean at the last

²⁹ Hugh MacRae (1865-1951), a native of Wilmington, studied at Bingham School in Asheville and graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He worked in the N.C. mountains as a mining engineer, bought Grandfather Mountain (now run by his grandson, Hugh Morton), and became president of Wilmington Cotton Mill. He established communities near Wilmington for European immigrants. Tide Water Power Company remained an independent company until sold to CP&L after his death. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "MacRae, Hugh."

³⁰ Stations added to the Wilmington-Wrightsville Beach streetcar line included Oleander, Audubon, Winter Park Gardens, Greenville, MacCumber Station, and Hammocks. Edward F. Turberg, National Register of

southern trolley stop at Wrightsville Beach. Name bands played for dancing, and movies were shown. Automobiles were not allowed on Wrightsville Beach until the mid-1930s.

The streetcar lines also served the Delgado Cotton Mill and its village on Wrightsville Avenue. When the Carolina Shipyard opened in 1918 to build ships for World War I, the streetcar lines were extended to the plant.³¹ By 1925 Wilmington's streetcar system included twenty-two miles of tracks (nine of them double tracks).³²

In summary, Asheville, Winston, Charlotte, Raleigh, and Wilmington established electric streetcar systems during the 1889-1892 period. The next phase of North Carolina's streetcar development occurred in the first decade of the twentieth century, when private companies built systems in Greensboro, Durham, and Salisbury that operated until the 1930s.

Greensboro

When the Greensboro Electric Company, financed by New Yorkers, began electric streetcar service on June 11, 1902, replacing a small horsecar operation, everyone was excited about the Greensboro Patriots, a minor league professional baseball team.

With streetcars providing easy access to the ballpark on Summit Avenue, the team led its

Historic Places nomination form for Audubon Trolley Station, Wilmington, N.C., 1993, on file at State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, N.C., Section 8, Page 1.

³¹ The Carolina Shipbuilding Company was built on a 100-acre site on the Cape Fear River to build steel ships for the war effort. Although the war ended before any ships were completed, eight steel freighters and two tankers were constructed before the plant closed in 1921. Liberty Shipbuilding Company, located north of Carolina, was likely also served by the streetcar. The sites of these former shipyards are currently used by North Carolina State Ports. Claude V. Jackson III, "Carolina Shipbuilding Company," *The Cape Fear--Northeast Cape Fear Rivers Comprehensive Study* (Wilmington: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1996), 241-244.

³² Riley, *Carolina Power & Light Company*, 267-283; Turberg, Audubon Trolley Station; Tony P. Wrenn, *Wilmington, North Carolina, An Architectural and Historical Portrait* (Charlottesville: University Press of

league in attendance. On the other side of town, the trolleys ran to Lindley Park, where one could row a boat on the lake, bowl, dance, and watch movies or vaudeville shows. The tracks to the park went by Greensboro College (though students were not allowed to ride them as late as the mid-1920s) and the State Normal and Industrial School (now UNC-Greensboro). St. Leo's, the city's first hospital, was built on the Summit Avenue line. Because the lines ran by the mills and mill villages built by the Cone brothers, the workers and their families could easily move around the city. The streetcar had a major influence in the establishment of new suburban neighborhoods, of all economic levels.

In 1909, the W. N. Coler Company of New York City purchased the streetcar systems and electrical and gas utilities of Greensboro (eleven miles of track) and the franchise for High Point, to organize a new company, North Carolina Public Service Company. Based in Greensboro, the company was controlled by officers and directors from the North, although it included representatives from its N.C. service areas. By 1915 the company had expanded Greensboro's North Elm Street line to the upscale Irving Park neighborhood and purchased utility companies (including streetcar systems) in Salisbury and Concord. The company did not own hydroelectric plants to generate its own electricity. Rather, Public Service bought bulk or wholesale electricity from Southern Power Company and then retailed the power in its service area for general electricity needs and streetcar operations. In 1926 the North Carolina Public Service Company was sold to Southern Power's successor, Duke Power Company of Charlotte.³³

Virginia, 1984), 272-274; Howell, *Book of Wilmington*, 170, 171, 175, 194; *North Carolina Corporation Commission*, biennial report for 1925-1926.

³³ Marvin A. Brown, *Greensboro, An Architectural Record* (Greensboro: Preservation Greensboro, 1995), 41, 42, 61, 62, 151, 179, 380, 381; Jim Schlosser, "Wake-up Call: Lindley Park Fights Back," *News & Record* (Greensboro), October 7, 1996; Jim Schlosser, "Streetcars: Late Arrival Brings Lasting Changes," *News & Record*; January 4, 1999; Raymond E. Manieri, "Streetcar Speculators: The Role of Street Railway Promoters in Development of Suburban Neighborhoods in Raleigh and Greensboro, North Carolina, 1886-

Durham

The Durham Traction Company organized and opened the city's electric streetcar system in June 1902. Entrepreneur Richard H. Wright, company president, and other Durham civic leaders were the owners of this company, which was also involved in the production of electricity.³⁴ Because the city limits had been extended the previous year, Durham had well over 10,000 people and would reach a population of 18,000 by 1910. Within a short time, the trolleys ran six miles, including lines from the Trinity College area (now Duke University's east campus) through downtown to the town's east side, and another line to Lakewood Park, an amusement park the company established at the end of the southwest line.

Although Durham Traction Company retained its name and most officers were unchanged, Henry L. Doherty of New York and the H. L. Doherty Company controlled ownership by 1912. F. W. Frueauff of New York, the only non-Durham director in 1915, was president by 1920, when streetcar lines extended eleven miles within the city. The company's name changed to Durham Public Service Company in 1921. R. L. Lindsay, vice president and general manager, had been manager of Durham Traction.³⁵

1923," master's thesis, North Carolina State University, 1982, 76-86; North Carolina Corporation Commission report, for 1910, 706-709; *North Carolina Corporation Commission* report for 1915, 684-687; Robert F. Durden, *Electrifying the Piedmont Carolinas: The Duke Power Company, 1904-1997* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2001), 45-54.

³⁴ Richard Harvey Wright (1851-1929) was born in Franklin County and educated at Louisburg Male Academy and Horner Preparatory School. He financed and led companies manufacturing tobacco, traveled the world as salesman for Washington Duke's company, owned large tracts of real estate in Durham, and was a leader in the city's development of public utilities. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Wright, Richard Harvey."

³⁵ Jean Bradley Anderson, *Durham County* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990) 187, 263-265; Joel A. Kostyu and Frank A. Kostyu, *Durham, A Pictorial History* (Norfolk: Donning Company, 1978), 80, 81, 87;

Salisbury

Salisbury, with a population of only 7,100 by 1910, was the state's least populated area to acquire an electric streetcar system that survived many years. About 1902 the Southern Development Company began building a new subdivision, Fulton Heights, located a mile south of Salisbury. J. M. Maupin, William Murdoch Wiley, and three men from elsewhere were the investors. At the same time, Southern Railway was establishing a major maintenance facility in a new town, Spencer, three miles northeast of Salisbury. The Fulton Heights developers pushed for a streetcar system that connected their neighborhood to downtown Salisbury and Spencer. What strengthened the system was the steady expansion of the Southern Railway facility (and Spencer) and Fulton Heights (which added an amusement park). In fact, many managers of the railroad lived in Fulton Heights and commuted to work on the streetcar.

Though the Salisbury and Spencer Railway Company, operator of the streetcar system, maintained its name for several years, it involved different owners. By 1911 the system was sold to North Carolina Public Service Company. Shortly thereafter, another streetcar line was added from North Main Street, near the Southern Railway depot, north to the Yadkin Valley Fairgrounds (present site of the Veteran's Administration Hospital). Activities at the fairgrounds included circuses, races, and fairs. A traveling circus, Charles Sparks' Circus, spent the winters there during 1912-1919. Southern Power Company purchased the nine-mile system in 1919.³⁶

North Carolina Corporation Commission reports for 1905, 1910, 1915; *North Carolina Corporation Commission* biennial reports for 1920-1921, 1925-1926, and 1931-1932.

³⁶ James S. Brawley, *Rowan County* (Raleigh: Department of Cultural Resources, 1977), 119-121; Kaye Graybeal, National Register of Historic Places nomination form for Fulton Heights Historic District, Salisbury, N.C., 1999, on file at State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, N.C.; Duane Galloway and Jim Wrinn, *Southern Railway's Spencer Shops* (Lynchburg, Va.: TLC Publishing, 1996), 7-13; *North Carolina Corporation Commission Reports* for 1910 and 1915.

Ed Rankin, who grew up in Spencer because his father worked for Southern Railway's shops, recalls a special treat streetcars afforded him. "When I was old enough to go by myself, my mother would give me twenty-five cents on a Saturday morning, and I would pay five cents to ride up town (to Salisbury), ten cents for a movie ticket at the Victory Theater, five cents for a hot dog or candy bar, and five cents for return trip. It was a great--and rare--treat in the depths of the Great Depression."³⁷

Additional Systems

When James W. Tufts (1835-1902) of Boston began buying land and planning the village of Pinehurst in the early 1890s, he needed a convenient way for his guests to be transported the six miles from the Southern Pines railroad station to Pinehurst. He therefore established an electric streetcar company between the two communities by 1896, primarily for passengers but also for freight. During the winter, there were seven scheduled trips daily, costing fifteen cents per ride.

In 1905 Thomas Cotter, the streetcar general manager, placed a sign, "Pinehurst Junction," on the Southern Pines depot. The meaning of the sign was interpreted different ways and became a public controversy. The residents of Southern Pines concluded that the Pinehurst Resort wanted to change the name of their community. This controversy led to discontinuation of the line in 1905, though the trolley line around Pinehurst, including the golf course, operated for two more years. Leonard Tufts, who assumed management of the resort after his father died, arranged with Seaboard Air Line

³⁷ Email from Edward L. Rankin Jr. to author, January 29, 2002.

Railroad and Aberdeen and Asheboro Railroad for a direct Washington, D.C. to Pinehurst train via Aberdeen, which operated until World War II.³⁸

Business leaders in Burlington, led by J. W. Murray of Burlington and Junius H. Harden of Graham, started the Piedmont Railway & Electric Company in 1912. The company ran streetcars between Burlington, with less than 5,000 citizens; Graham, the county seat of Alamance County; and Haw River, a community that included a concentration of textile mills along the river (Haw River). Riders could change cars at Harden Park (later Piedmont Park) in Graham. Investors from Richmond purchased the local streetcar and utility company, renamed Piedmont Power and Light Company. Fares were five cents, except for the Burlington-Haw River run, which cost ten cents. The system operated until about 1922.³⁹

In 1906, businessmen from New York started a company to provide an electric streetcar system (which probably lasted only a year) for High Point and interurban lines to Greensboro and /or Winston-Salem (never built) as well as electric lighting and gas systems. In 1912, the North Carolina Public Service Company purchased and reactivated

³⁸ The principle railroad serving Southern Pines was Raleigh & Augusta Air-Line Railroad until it was sold to Seaboard Air Line Railroad in 1900. S. David Carriker, *Railroading in the Carolina Sandhills* (Matthews, N.C.: Heritage Publishing Company, 1985), I: 151-165. James Tufts sold and popularized soda fountains and soda fountain supplies. One of his purposes in establishing Pinehurst was to provide a vacation destination for those from the North who could not afford to travel to Florida. Pinehurst is most famous for its golf courses, including one designed by Scottish golfer Donald J. Ross. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Tufts, James Walker" and "Tufts, Leonard."

³⁹ Carole Watterson Troxler and William Murray Vincent, *Shuttle & Plow, A History of Alamance County* (Burlington: Alamance County Historical Association, 1999), 394, 395; Durward T. Stokes, *Auction and Action: Historical Highlights of Graham, North Carolina* (Graham: City of Graham, 1985), 268-275; Gail and Bob Knauff, *The Story of Haw River, North Carolina* (Haw River: Haw River Historical Association, 1996), 27; *North Carolina Corporation Commission* report for 1915, 697-700; *North Carolina Corporation Commission* biennial report for 1919-1920, 168-170.

the streetcar system, extending lines to several of the city's textile mills and furniture plants. The streetcar lines eventually consisted of about six miles of track.⁴⁰

Some towns experimented with different kinds of street railroads. When the North Carolina Railroad came through Concord, the depot was located a mile west of downtown. Residents wanted a better way to get to the depot than by buggies and wagons. Beginning about 1889, the Concord Railway Company built tracks and operated a steam railroad, nicknamed the “dummy line,” from the depot to downtown and Locke Mill (later Randolph Mill). Because of controversy over the train’s speed and other problems, the company lasted only a few years, and then the tracks were removed. In 1911 a company operated by men from Philadelphia began service with battery-powered streetcars developed by the Edison Electric Company. New tracks were built along routes similar to the dummy line, but also including South Union Street and Gibson Mill (later Cannon Mills Plant 6). Though popular at first, the storage battery cars had too many mechanical problems. Passengers sometimes had to help push the trolleys. After years of no service, the North Carolina Public Service Company converted the lines to handle electric streetcars, which ran during the 1920s.⁴¹

The Piedmont and Northern Railroad started a traditional streetcar system in Gastonia in 1913 to complement the company's interurban Gastonia-Charlotte service. The streetcars ran for four miles--from Groves Mill in eastern Gastonia to the P&N station downtown at Franklin and Broad streets and to the Loray and Parkdale mills on

⁴⁰ Martha Clontz, "Riding in Style," *High Point Enterprise*; *North Carolina Corporation Commission* report for 1910, 706; David F. Burnette, "Tar Heel Traction," *Headlights*, June 1973, 5.

⁴¹ E. Ray King, "Dummy Line Railroad First Hauled Freight," *Concord Tribune*, September 26, 1965; Clarence E. Horton Jr., *A Century of Progress: The Concord Telephone Company, 1897-1997* (Concord: Concord Telephone Company, 1997), 45-47; Middleton, *The Time of the Trolley*, 113; Clarence E. Horton Jr., ed., *A Bicentennial History of Concord* (Charlotte: Delmar Printing Company, 1996), 339.

the city's west side. In addition, streetcars connected Belmont to P&N's interurban line at North Belmont. The Fayetteville Street Railroad operated in Fayetteville around the 1908-1909 period. Its first single streetcar was powered by steam and connected the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad depot to the old fairgrounds on Gillespie Street. When the huffing and puffing of the steam bothered horses on the streets, the company experimented with gasoline engines, but that didn't work either. Other companies later tried to establish an electric streetcar system, but operations lasted for only a brief period.⁴²

In New Bern, developers of a new neighborhood (Ghent) and a popular park with a recreational pavilion and casino two miles west of the town, were responsible for developing the town's streetcar line. With help from Virginia investors, they organized the New Bern-Ghent Street Railway. The company began operation 1913 from various points in New Bern, including the new (railroad) Union Station, to Ghent. The streetcar system started with storage battery-type cars (similar to Concord's) but shortly switched to an electric system that lasted until the late 1920s.⁴³

Other communities in the state experienced mixed results with streetcars. The Goldsboro Traction Company, with the involvement of outside investors, operated a two-mile, electric streetcar system in Goldsboro from 1910 to 1912. The Goldsboro Electric Railroad Company, with all officers and directors from Goldsboro, expanded the system

⁴² Weeks Parker, *Fayetteville, North Carolina, A Pictorial History* (Norfolk: Donning Company, 1984), 118, 119; Carriker, *Railroading in the Carolina Sandhills*, 44, 53, 91, 102.

⁴³ Peter B. Sandbeck, *The Historic Architecture of New Bern and Craven County, North Carolina* (New Bern: Tryon Palace Commission, 1988), 152, 435, 436; John B. Green III, *A New Bern Album* (New Bern: Tryon Palace Commission, 1985), 123, 225; "Street Cars Here Be Running Soon," *New Bern Weekly Journal*, December 3, 1912; *North Carolina Corporation Commission*, annual report, 1915, 680-683; *North Carolina Corporation Commission*, biennial report, 1919-1920, 162-164.

during the 1915-1920 period to five miles of track.⁴⁴ Small companies in Hendersonville, south of Asheville, operated horse-drawn, steam street railroads, and electric streetcars, running from the Southern Railway depot to other parts of town.⁴⁵ The town of Statesville granted streetcar franchises to different companies and at one time communicated with North Carolina Public Service Company about a possible system in Statesville, but no action was taken.⁴⁶ Many other communities made attempts to obtain streetcar service, but such efforts failed because of a lack of community support and financial funding.⁴⁷

Streetcar influence on suburban developments

During the 1890-1920 period, towns and cities in North Carolina experienced great change and expansion. The state made huge advances in education, technology, and industrial growth, particularly in tobacco, textiles, and furniture. At the turn of the century, railroads still dominated long distance travel, while trolleys increasingly provided transportation within cities. But automobiles, trucks, buses, and improved highways were in the early stages of development and enjoyed phenomenal growth by the 1920s.

In addition to skyscrapers, another remarkable physical change in cities during this time was the establishment of attractive, suburban neighborhoods and developments, a trend initially facilitated by electric streetcars and later by the automobile culture. One

⁴⁴ *North Carolina Corporation Commission*, report for 1910, 703-705; *North Carolina Corporation Commission*, biennial report for 1919-1920, 158-160.

⁴⁵ Bailey, *Trolleys in the Land of the Sky*, 75-80; North Carolina Corporation Commission, *Report 1915*, 677-679.

⁴⁶ Dameron H. Williams, "Farewell to 'Old Ironsides,'" *The State*, October 23, 1948, 3, 4, 17, 18; Homer M. Keever, *Iredell, Piedmont County* (Statesville, Homer M. Keever, 1976), 392.

of the best examples of this movement was the creation by Edward Latta of Dilworth subdivision in Charlotte, North Carolina's first urban streetcar development. By 1911 he expanded Dilworth by hiring the Olmsted Brothers of Boston to design curving streets that complemented the rolling terrain and by extending the streetcar tracks down Dilworth Road.⁴⁸ In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Raleigh, Durham, Greensboro, Winston-Salem, Asheville, and Wilmington created their own versions of the Charlotte example. The model was to establish a well planned, primarily residential, development and a recreational park to serve as the city's entertainment complex, located on the outskirts of the city and connected to the city by streetcar line.

Between 1905 and 1910, four suburban, middle-income neighborhoods in Raleigh were platted on former plantations. Riding the trolleys from downtown westward on Hillsboro (now Hillsborough) Street, Boylan Heights was on the left with Cameron Park further out on the right (between present N.C. State University and Cameron Village Shopping Center). The streetcar line out Glenwood Avenue northward led to the Glenwood and Brooklyn neighborhoods. The streetcars of Durham and Greensboro, manufacturing towns, affected a bigger variety of neighborhoods. Durham's streetcars boosted the middle-income suburbs of Trinity Park (east and northeast of Duke University's east campus) and Lakewood off Chapel Hill Road as well as the developments of Morehead Hills (upper-class), Club Boulevard (mix of upper and middle-income), and low-income Needmore/The Bottoms (now Lyon Park). But the lines also served the Walltown (blue collar) and East End (black) communities.

⁴⁷ S. David Carriker, *Electric and Trolley Companies among the North Carolina Railroads* (Charlotte: Heritage Publishing Company, 2002), 16, 17.

⁴⁸ The Olmsted firm was started by Frederick Law Olmsted Sr., who designed Central Park in New York City in the 1850s. His sons, John Charles Olmsted and Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. continued the firm.

Greensboro's system served the middle-class areas of College Hill and Lindley Park, Fisher Park (middle and upper-income mix) and elegant Irving Park. It also included Proximity and other mill villages in northeast Greensboro as well as the working-income Glenwood and Piedmont Heights subdivisions.

Winston-Salem's trolleys influenced the middle-income areas of West End (a hilly development between downtown and current Hanes Park) and Washington Park (south of Old Salem). Asheville's streetcars helped develop several neighborhoods north of downtown, including middle-class Chestnut Hill and the more upscale Montford and Grove Park suburbs. Extending a line across the French Broad River to the town of West Asheville encouraged that town's consolidation with Asheville in 1917. The Wilmington streetcar lines helped develop the Carolina Place neighborhood (working and middle-income), Carolina Heights (upper middle-income), and Winoca Terrace (middle-class). Stops were added on the line to Wrightsville Beach as the middle-income subdivisions of Winter Park, Audubon, and Oleander developed. Streetcar systems helped to develop Fulton Heights neighborhood in Salisbury and Ghent in New Bern, each of which included a park.

Building upon Dilworth's success, developers established streetcar suburbs surrounding the city. John Nolen, soon to be a nationally prominent city planner, designed Myers Park in Charlotte (as well as Irving Park in Greensboro). The Charlotte prestigious development, begun in 1911, included a streetcar line through the area's central boulevard, Queens Road West, and small parks in their natural settings. By the 1920s, it was the neighborhood of choice for the city's elite and an enduring model for the entire South. Other streetcar communities in the city included Elizabeth, Western

Heights, Wilmore, Rosemont, Wesley Heights, and Biddleville.⁴⁹ In 1912, white developer W. S. Alexander financed development of Washington Heights, northwest of Biddleville, which was probably the first black neighborhood in the South originally established as a streetcar suburb.⁵⁰

Following the Reconstruction era in the United States, African-Americans faced growing discrimination and segregation. In a key 1896 ruling, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the U.S. Supreme Court sanctioned the "separate but equal" doctrine. Yet according to urban historian David Goldfield, "Despite the codification of Jim Crow [which derived from the name of a song and refers to racial segregation in turn-of-the-century South] in the 1890s, strict racial residential segregation in southern cities was unusual."⁵¹ One consequence of the trend toward suburban developments, however, which became widespread in the first decade of the twentieth century, was the segregation of people by race and class. It was understood at the time that streetcar suburbs and parks were exclusively for whites. In order to buy a lot in such neighborhoods, many developments required signing a contract that forbade the occupant from selling their house to a non-white.

In 1899 the N.C. General Assembly passed legislation requiring railroads and steamboat companies to "provide separate but equal accommodations for the white and colored races at passenger waiting stations or waiting-rooms, and also on all trains and

⁴⁹ Biddleville was a black neighborhood started in the late nineteenth century across from Biddle Institute (now Johnson C. Smith University).

⁵⁰ Catherine W. Bishir and Lawrence S. Earley, eds., *Early Twentieth Century Suburbs in North Carolina, Essays on History, Architecture and Planning* (Raleigh: Department of Cultural Resources, 1985); Catherine W. Bishir, Michael T. Southern, and Jennifer F. Martin, *A Guide to Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1999), 263, 264, 277-281, 295; Catherine W. Bishir and Michael T. Southern, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Eastern North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1996), 207, 208, 257-259; Hanchett, *Sorting*, 134-142.

⁵¹ David R. Goldfield, "North Carolina's Early Twentieth-Century Suburbs and the Urbanizing South," in *Early Twentieth-Century Suburbs in North Carolina*, 18.

steamboats carrying passengers," with exemption for servants or express trains.⁵²

Streetcar companies followed the railroad precedent. In 1907 the General Assembly passed similar legislation for street and interurban railways, but this time specifically mandated that "white passengers" sit toward the front of each car and "colored passengers" sit toward the rear. This legislation was expanded in 1939 to provide details of maintaining segregated seating in buses.⁵³

Streetcar influence in establishing parks

To encourage ridership (especially during off-hours, weekends, and summers) streetcar companies developed recreational and amusement parks. The parks were typically located at the end of a streetcar line in an area that developers, often including streetcar company owners as partners, were developing as residential neighborhoods. The variety of entertainment, attractive landscaping, and innovative use of electricity made the parks very popular, and, in nearly all North Carolina cases, the first parks of substantial size in their respective towns and cities. The typical early park included a lake for boating, a bandstand or pavilion for music, and sports facilities (such as a baseball field or bowling alley). Some included silent movies, swimming, theater performances, arcades, and other attractions. Though several parks eventually included merry-go-rounds, only three in the state featured roller coasters and could be considered

⁵² Pauli Murray, ed., *States' Laws on Race and Color* (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1997), 344.

⁵³ Murray, *States' Laws on Race and Color*, 347, 348; Charles Weldon Wadlington, "Jim Crow and Public Transportation in North Carolina: 1900-1965," November 2000, North Carolina Historic Sites, Raleigh, N.C. In 1991 Walter Elijah Campbell III completed a Ph.D. dissertation, "The Corporate Hand In An Urban Jim Crow Journey" at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Written from a national perspective, the paper explores how Jim Crow streetcar legislation developed, including the role of streetcar companies.

true amusement parks--Lakewood Park in Charlotte, Bloomsbury Park in Raleigh, and Lakewood Park in Durham.

In June 1888, the Raleigh Street Railway Company opened Brookside Park just north of the city near Oakwood Cemetery, connected to the mule-drawn streetcar system by a spur track. Baseball was a major attraction, along with a merry-go-round and picnicking. The same year, the city opened Pullen Park on the western edge of the city.⁵⁴ Brookside Park was developed to a greater extent than Pullen, probably because it was privately owned and on the streetcar line. By 1912 Raleigh was growing fast and there was no room to expand Brookside. CP& L, at that time owner of the city's electric streetcar system, opened Bloomsbury Park on 100 acres located three miles out Glenwood Avenue. Using 8,000 lights, the park was nicknamed the "electric park." The park's features included an octagon-shaped pavilion where orchestras played for dances; a Dentzel carousel with a Wurlitzer organ, costing \$12,000; a roller coaster; and a penny arcade.⁵⁵

In the meantime, Edward Latta enlarged Latta Park in Charlotte to ninety acres of entertainment. By 1902 the park included a pavilion, bowling alley, baseball park, theater, 10,000-square-foot greenhouse, merry-go-round, and skating rink. A fairground was added the same year, which featured horse racing, exhibitions, and fairs.

The park included a pavilion for blacks to gather for picnics and meetings.

Blacks apparently had access to much of the park, including the ballpark, where black

⁵⁴ Pullen Park, located on the edge of N.C. State University, exists today.

⁵⁵ Manieri, *Streetcar Speculators*, 15, 16; Lynne Wogan, "Bloomsbury Park exists in memories," *Raleigh Times*, undated. Dentzel carousels, made in Philadelphia, were immensely popular rides and featured hand-carved wooden animals upon which riders sat. Dentzel built many carousels in the East and South before the company went out of business as the Great Depression began in 1929. The Bloomsbury Park Dentzel carousel was moved to Pullen Park in 1921, where it remains (restored and on the National Register of Historic Places) today. www.triangle.citysearch.com/profile/6183639.

semi-pro teams played. That openness ended in 1903, when a growing sentiment for segregation led the *Charlotte Observer* to recommend that whites and blacks not mingle together at Latta Park. Edward Latta closed the black pavilion at the park and built a new one near Biddle Institute.

On July 9, 1910, Latta opened Lakewood Park, so that he could dismantle nearly all of Latta Park to provide more residential land for Dilworth. Located on the streetcar line just outside the city limits on the northwest side, Lakewood Park featured amusement rides, including a roller coaster which cost \$15,000 and a 100-seat merry-go-round, as well as a lake for rowing and swimming, a zoo, and a dancing pavilion. Latta leased Lakewood to Southern Public Utilities before selling it to the company in 1916 for \$50,000. The parents of Billy Graham met while attending a picnic in the new park. Lakewood Park developed a tradition of extending its season an extra week in the fall for African-Americans.⁵⁶

Streetcar parks appeared across the state. Asheville's Riverside Park, located on the French Broad, was the state's only such park with a river setting. While the water provided a scenic outlook, it and the flood of 1916 destroyed the park as well as many of the city's streetcars.⁵⁷ When Greensboro's Lindley Park (1902-1918) was discontinued, that park's lake was drained and the area transformed into an attractive neighborhood

⁵⁶ Morrill, "Edward Dilworth Latta," 299, 305, 312; Mary Kratt Norton and Mary Manning Boyer, *Remembering Charlotte, Postcards from a New South City, 1905-1950* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2000), 55, 56, 59, 60; Hanchett, *Sorting*, 119; Tom Bradbury, *Dilworth, The First 100 Years* (Charlotte: Dilworth Community Development Association, 1992), 15-26. Lakewood Park covered 92 acres and was a typical amusement park. It also had a roller coaster with 2,200 feet of track and purportedly the largest carousel in the country (in 1910). Attendance slumped greatly by 1933. A tornado hit in 1936, and rain destroyed the lake's dam. Repairs were never made, and the park closed. www.members.aol.com/somekick/lakewood.html.

⁵⁷ Bailey, *Trolleys in the Land of the Sky*, 26-28.

with the same name.⁵⁸ Durham had a park and surrounding neighborhood, each named Lakewood Park, located in southwest Durham.⁵⁹ In Alamance County, a streetcar rider could visit Harden Park in Graham, Spoon Lake for swimming, or Haw River for promenading “across the wooden trestle bridge by the grist mill.”⁶⁰ New Bern had Ghent Park, with a pavilion as the centerpiece, featuring a skating rink, dance hall, casino, and porches overlooking the baseball fields. The town's current YMCA occupies the site of the former pavilion.⁶¹ Though not a park, Lumina at Wrightsville Beach was the best known entertainment center in the state located on a streetcar line. Opened in 1905 as the last stop on the beach's southern streetcar route, this pavilion was famous for name bands that played for dances on a huge dance floor. A visitor also could swim in the ocean or, in the evenings, sit on the beach and watch silent movies. One writer concluded, “It established a legend among seaside pavilions and stands today [1958] as a reminder of generations of fun and frolic on this beach.”⁶²

Streetcar workers

Each streetcar typically required two workers, a motorman who operated the car and determined speeds and a conductor who collected fares, announced stops, and kept order. The hours were long and pay low. Charlotte's early trolley workers worked six days a week, twelve hours per day. Their only holiday was Christmas, when Edward

⁵⁸ Schlosser, "Wake-Up Call: Lindley Park Fights Back."

⁵⁹ Roberts, *The Durham Architectural and Historic Inventory*, 245-246.

⁶⁰ Gail and Bob Knauff, *The Story of Haw River*, 27.

⁶¹ Interview with Callaghan Joseph Patrick "Callie" Newman, February 27, 1992, Memories of New Bern Oral History Program, Interview 1502, New Bern Craven County Public Library, New Bern, N.C.

⁶² Riley, *Carolina Power & Light Company*, 273.

Latta gave the employees a banquet. The workers were paid eight cents per hour the first two years, eleven cents the next year, and twelve cents thereafter.

In December 1903 conductors and motormen of Charlotte walked off the job, protesting the company's decision not to turn on electric heaters in the trolleys. A few days later, Latta announced that the heaters would be turned on, but that none of the striking workers would be reinstated in their jobs. "Latta behaved with the traditional hostility to labor organization that was characteristic of most capitalists who came to the forefront in the New South," summarized Prof. Dan Morrill.⁶³ A later strike in Charlotte had a more violent outcome. In August 1919, workers went on strike for higher wages and union recognition. As officials of Southern Power Company, by then the streetcar owners, hired new employees to keep the trolleys running, tensions increased. On August 25, 1919, police, in trying to control a crowd at the car barn, killed five men. Two weeks later, a settlement was reached and all employees returned to work without joining the national union.⁶⁴

In 1913 Asheville's conductors and motormen, members of the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees of America since 1899, began a strike demanding a higher salary than twelve cents per hour.⁶⁵ (Wilmington's workers were also members of this union.) The strike was settled a week later when the company

⁶³Morrill, "Edward Dilworth Latta," 309. Two years later, in January and February 1905, roundhouse workers at Southern Railway's maintenance facility in Spencer came close to a strike over the issue of inadequate heat in that chilly building.

⁶⁴Bradbury, *Dilworth*, 71-81; LeGette Blythe and Charles Raven Brockmann, *Hornet's Nest* (Charlotte: McNally of Charlotte, 1961), 437, 438. The year 1919 was a time of general unrest and labor turmoil in the nation.

⁶⁵ Amalgamated Association of Street Railway Employees of American was founded in 1892. The name was changed in 1905 to Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees of America. Many of the union's strikes in the early years involved violent confrontations. Today, this union, now called, Amalgamated Transit Union, has 175,000 members representing transit workers in the U.S. and

agreed to a salary increase to nineteen cents per hour, with future provision to twenty-five cents. A new salary scale was set in 1920, which paid beginning workers forty-five cents hourly and up to fifty-six cents in the second year of employment. When CP&L purchased the Asheville operation in 1926, the workers initiated a strike demanding sixty-one cents per hour. After the company began hiring non-union replacements, employees returned to their jobs at the same salary.⁶⁶

Manufacturing streetcars

Streetcar companies in North Carolina purchased trolleys from different manufacturers. The J. G. Brill Company of Philadelphia was the nation's largest manufacturer, claiming about half the market. It is estimated that the St. Louis Car Company had a twenty percent share and the Cincinnati Car Company, fifteen percent. In his book, *The Time of the Trolley*, William D. Middleton lists the "principal car builders and suppliers" in North America. That list includes only two companies in the Southeast, both located in High Point: Southern Car Company and its successor, Perley A. Thomas Car Works.⁶⁷ The Briggs Car Company of Amesbury, Mass., began building lightweight, wooden, electric streetcars in 1890, but the company moved its operation to High Point as Southern Car Company in 1904 to take advantage of better timber (and probably lower labor costs). In 1910 Perley A. Thomas left employment with a carbuilding company in Cleveland and moved to High Point to join Southern, helping the company make the transition to building steel cars. But Southern, unable to compete

Canada. Scott Molley, *Trolley Wars, Streetcar Workers on the Line* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), 3; web site, Amalgamated Transit Union, www.atu.org.

⁶⁶ Bailey, *Trolleys in the Land of the Sky*, 26, 28, 29. Substantial inflation in the years immediately after World War I (reflected in the 1920 raise) was a cause of much labor unrest during the period.

with the larger manufacturers, went out of business in 1917. That same year Perley Thomas started Perley A. Thomas Car Works in a different building in High Point and hired several former, Southern workers. Winston-Salem ordered the first Thomas trolleys, two in 1918 for \$4,000 each. New York City and High Point followed with orders. The Thomas company manufactured a total of 400 streetcars before converting from streetcars to buses in 1936.⁶⁸

End of the line

Streetcar ridership in the state continued to grow during the 1915-1920 period despite a recession. More than 10,000,000 passengers, many of them soldiers at Camp Greene training for World War I, rode Charlotte's streetcars in 1918, an all-time high for North Carolina. Charlotte still led the state in 1920 with 7,800,000 riders, followed by Asheville (5,900,000), and Winston-Salem (4,100,000).

During the decade of the 1920s, government policies did not benefit streetcar companies. North Carolina constructed an impressive highway system while car ownership in the state tripled. In 1922 the chairman of the state's Corporation Commission summarized the plight of the streetcar: "The increasing competition with automobile and auto bus traffic has made it exceedingly difficult for street railway utilities to provide necessary equipment and extension to keep pace with rapid growth of our cities. . . ." He also mentioned the financial difficulty that streetcar companies faced

⁶⁷ Middleton, *The Time of the Trolley*, 420-425.

⁶⁸ Clint Johnson, *From Rails to Roads, The History of Perley A. Thomas Car Works and Thomas Built Buses* (Raleigh: Lifescapes Corporation, 1996), 5-27.

since they were required to pave and maintain roads they used as right-of-way. As auto and truck traffic mounted, such maintenance became ever more costly.⁶⁹

Nevertheless, Asheville, Raleigh, and Greensboro managed to increase ridership in the 1920-1926 period, while most other systems experienced a decline. By the mid-1920s, many streetcar companies were supplementing their service with buses to outlying areas not served by the trolley lines. The state's smaller systems—such as Concord, Burlington, Goldsboro, and New Bern—terminated services. The stock market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression were further blows. Asheville, Greensboro, Durham, and Raleigh ended service by 1934, High Point the next year, Winston-Salem in 1936. Charlotte and Salisbury survived until 1938. On April 18, 1939, W. R. Savage, who had operated the first electric car in Wilmington, also piloted the city's last one, closing the state's era of traditional, electric streetcar companies. Automobiles and buses replaced trolleys across North Carolina. Ida Briggs Henderson in Asheville spoke for many when she reacted to the streetcar-bus transition by observing that streetcars had "become entirely out-of-date" and that now "we have smooth-running buses."⁷⁰ In the meantime, Piedmont and Northern Railroad continued interurban passenger service on its Charlotte-Gastonia route. "Old Ironsides," a streetcar that had operated exclusively in Gastonia since 1916, made the last P&N passenger run between the two cities on September 21, 1948.

⁶⁹ *North Carolina Corporation Commission*, biennial report for 1921-1922, 5.

⁷⁰ Henderson, "One of the First Street Cars," 16. Bailey, *Trolleys in the Land of the Sky*, 29; Riley, *Carolina Power & Light Company*, 283.

Remains of streetcar operations and future plans

Neighborhoods are the most obvious and impressive reminders of the trolley era. According to Claudia Brown of the State Historic Preservation Office, "Streetcar neighborhoods are among our city's most vibrant communities--largely intact and extremely desirable places to live." In addition, Brown says, "They are well built, easily accessible, and represent a wise use of the land."⁷¹

On the other hand, much less of the state's streetcar parks has survived. Though a very small portion of Latta Park remains in Charlotte's Dilworth neighborhood, it is difficult to see how it once related to the original park. The twin stone gates for Greensboro's Lindley Park now serve as an entrance to the neighborhood that adopted the park's name. The building housing the girls' bathroom, now used as a small apartment, has survived.⁷² The site of Raleigh's Bloomsbury Park is now part of Carolina Country Club, where golfers pass a pond that was once the park's lake. The Bloomsbury carousel still operates, only now across town in Pullen Park. Lakewood Shopping Center now occupies the former location of Durham's Lakewood Park. There are no remaining traces of streetcar parks in Winston-Salem, Salisbury, or Asheville.

Three stone streetcar waiting stations for riders have survived in Charlotte.⁷³ Lumina at Wrightsville Beach operated until it was torn down in the early 1970s and replaced with condominiums. In recent years, streetcar-related structures earned placement on the National Register of Historic Places, including the Audubon Trolley

⁷¹ Author's telephone interview with Claudia R. Brown, Supervisor, Survey and Planning Branch, N.C. State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, N.C., November 17, 2002.

⁷² Jim Schlosser, "Lindley Park, Still youthful as 100," News & Record (Greensboro), May 18, 2002.

⁷³ Two streetcar waiting stations are located across the street from each other at 4th Street and Queen's Road in Charlotte and one at Hermitage Road and Queens Road. A trolley walk at 7th Street and Greenway Avenue in the Elizabeth neighborhood has also survived. Morrill interview, February 1, 2002.

Station in Wilmington in 1993 and the Carolina Power & Light Company car barn and automobile garage in Raleigh in 1997.⁷⁴

When streetcar lines were discontinued, tracks were either taken up or paved over. Some were made available for scrap metal during World War II. Occasionally, city crews still discover track remains while working on streets. This happened in 1976 when Raleigh converted a four-block section of Fayetteville Street to a pedestrian mall. In other locations, including New Bern and Salisbury, the tops of tracks can still be seen, especially where tracks make a ninety-degree turn.

After several years of vigorous efforts, Dan Morrill, historian and preservationist, succeeded in organizing the Charlotte Trolley Museum in 1988 to preserve streetcar history and restore streetcar service to Charlotte. The organization owns five vintage trolleys that are in various stages of restoration. One of them, streetcar 85, which operated in Charlotte from 1927 to 1938, has been beautifully restored. The museum offers rides on this streetcar along a track south of downtown, providing a peek at Charlotte's past and future. This includes buildings housing one of the city's first A&P grocery stores, Price's Chicken Coop, Edward Latta's Charlotte Trouser Company, and the 1914 car barn. The line also passes construction of condominium and apartment buildings. Ahead one can see the rising Westin Hotel and the city's skyline. By 2003 this rail line will extend northward across

⁷⁴ The Art Deco car barn and automobile garage was constructed by CP & L in 1925 on the block bounded by West Jones, North Harrington, North West, and West Edenton Streets in Raleigh. Brad Brewster, National Register of Historic Places nomination form for (former) Carolina Power & Light Company Car Barn and Automobile Garage, Raleigh, N.C., 1997, on file at State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, N.C. The Audubon Trolley Station was built by Tide Water Power Company at the corner of Park Avenue and Audubon Boulevard in Wilmington about 1911. "The structure's Mediterranean Revival style and unusual Greek cross plan of reinforced concrete walls anchored to a concrete foundation slab and supporting the pyramidal roof exemplify form and functionalism expressing innovative engineering and simple design detail." Turberg, Audubon Trolley Station, Section 7, Page 2.

I-277, through the Charlotte Convention Center, and as far north as 9th Street.

Charlotte's first segment of a new mass transit system, a light rail line between downtown and Pineville, will utilize this same line beginning in 2006. In the meantime, streetcar 85 will proudly travel uptown every day, reminding riders and onlookers that streetcars helped move Charlotte and North Carolina forward.⁷⁵

November 12, 2002

North Carolina Transportation Museum

⁷⁵ Morrill interview, February 1, 2002.