NEW! Chicago Surface Lines: Linking Chicago’s Neighborhoods Dispatch No. 8.

Chicago is a city of neighborhoods, with residents self-identifying as being from, for example, Hyde Park or Albany Park or Beverly or Uptown. The neighborhoods are where things happened: education, entertainment, shopping—the everyday things of life. The neighborhoods in the 1940s and 1950s were like villages where “everybody knew your name.” The common denominator? The streetcars of the Chicago Surface Lines which, while serving the individual neighborhoods, also linked them to other neighborhoods, near and far. Dispatch 8 covers 12 of CSL’s streetcar lines from January 1, 1945 until the end of streetcar service. These 12 routes (including Broadway-State, Western, 63rd Street and Lawrence) carried about 20% of CSL’s total originating revenue passengers with an average of 521 streetcars daily. Eight of the 12 routes covered served only outlying neighborhoods and did not even enter the Central Business District. The Dispatch includes detailed narratives on the routes and George Kanary takes us for a long ride on the Cottage Grove line, reliving his experiences on the route.

Chicago Surface Lines: The Big 5 Routes and 5 Others Dispatch No. 6. CSL was the world’s largest street railway. In 1931, the five largest Chicago Surface Lines routes, in terms of originating revenue passengers, were Ashland, Clark-Wentworth, Halsted, Madison and Milwaukee. The combined riding on these routes was greater than the total riding in many medium-sized American cities. CSL also had some very small routes in terms of ridership and they demonstrate the diversity of CSL’s operations. George Kanary vividly relives the sights, sounds and aroma of the countless neighborhoods that the Halsted cars traversed from the north to the far southwest side including passing by Chicago’s famous Stock Yards. George rode this line from end-to-end many times as a kid and as an adult for the thrill of a ride on a CSL streetcar soaking in the neighborhood scenes. The Big 5 Routes and 5 Others explores in depth ten fascinating routes, the principal streetcar types used and a chronology of significant events from 1945 to 1958 with detailed text and over 110 thoroughly captioned photographs in 100 pages including then/now photo comparisons in black & white and color showing the changes in some of the neighborhoods where the cars ran.

A Transportation Miracle, XXVIII International Eucharistic Congress, Chicago, June 20-24, 1926 Dispatch No. 7. There has never been anything like the 28th International Eucharistic Congress held in June 1926. Steam railroads from across the U. S. and Canada carried 600,000 people to Chicago, and overall 1,000,000 people participated. Streetcars provided 15 million passenger trips. Interurbans, rapid transit and suburban trains carried people throughout Chicago. Five railroads combined to provide over 300,000 passenger trips for the closing ceremonies, in a triumph of logistics and coordination! During Chicago’s first 100 years this Eucharistic Congress and the World’s Fairs of 1893 and 1933-34 established Chicago as an international city. A Transportation Miracle tells this incredible story. Topics include background information, day-by-day details, the role that the rail lines played and information on Cardinal Mundelein, who orchestrated the Eucharistic Congress. Available as either softbound or hardbound.

The Road of Service — Perspectives on the North Shore Line Dispatch No. 4. This 100-page publication brings together a collection of diverse recollections by Shore Line members and people of different backgrounds who rode and/or lived along the North Shore Line. Collectively, it explains the influence the North Shore Line had on our lives and why, 50 years after its abandonment, the railroad still fascinates many people. Included is an impressive collection of color photographs, an extensive then-and-now section of the railroad between Waukegan and Milwaukee, the evening rush hour at Briergate, Ed Tobin’s recollections of the streetcar service in Waukegan, taking us back to hanging around Kenosha’s station and a dining car article by Dick George.
Competing Rails—The Milwaukee Road’s Legacy in Evanston and Wilmette Dispatch No. 2.
This is a complex story full of business, political and financial intrigue covering the early days of the railroads serving Evanston and Wilmette. John Evans did not want Chicago & North Western to have exclusivity. He obtained a horse-car franchise that ended up as The Milwaukee Road commuter service. Plans to electrify manifested in the Northwestern Elevated Railroad, today’s CTA Purple Line, coming to Evanston. Competition grew. From the north came North Shore Line’s predecessor. From the south came a streetcar line that evolved into Evanston Railways.

One Hundred Years of Enduring Tradition – South Shore Line Dispatch No. 3. Very different from all other railroad publications, Dispatch No. 3 covers the history of the South Shore Line as told by the people who were involved since 1926. We reflect on the first 100 years of the South Shore Line. Discover fascinating new information, enjoy in-depth discussions of why “The Last Interurban” survived and understand how a successful public-private partnership was created. 84 pages in color and duotone. Cover illustration by Mitch Markovitz.

The Chicago “L’s” Great Steel Fleet –The Baldies—Dispatch No. 5. In the early 20th Century, overwhelmed with riders, managers of Chicago’s elevated railways were faced with two huge challenges, an insufficient car fleet and tremendous congestion on the Loop. Through routing of trains and terminals short of the Loop eased the congestion. Providing sufficient rolling stock resulted in ordering the famous fleet of 4000s, 250 of which were called “Baldies” due to their bare steel arched roofs. Now, 100 years after the delivery of the first cars, Bruce Moffat discusses what was then a revolutionary car design with rolled steel components.

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Cooperation Moves the Public Dispatch No. 1. Well-known traction railroad author Bruce Moffat tells the story of the integrated operations of the Chicago Aurora & Elgin Railroad and the Chicago Rapid Transit Company and later the Chicago Transit Authority over the Garfield Park Branch of Chicago’s rapid transit system until September 19, 1953. Trains were operated seconds apart “on sight” as there were no signals and no radios. This was a very complex operation, best described as cars of wood operated by men of steel pursuant to a book of rules that included a rule stating that “no collision with another train will be excused.” Available only as a Shore-Line Electroreader™ download in universally readable, high-quality PDF. $10.00 regular price, $5.00 member price.

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Winter '10: Armour Yellow Under Wire, Operation Lifesaver Limited, Racine’s First Interurban, Riding The Dolton Cannonball – The Chicago & Western Indiana Railroad, and more! Circle 84

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