

AROUND THE LOOP

A Publication of the Museum of Transportation Trolley Volunteers.

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*Happy
Thanksgiving*

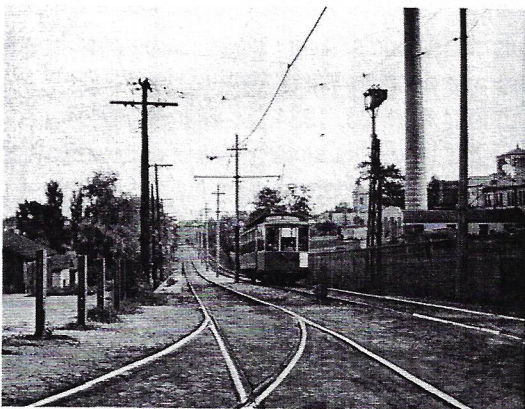


*To all of the Museum of Transportation Trolley
Volunteers a very
Happy Thanksgiving Holiday.*

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World's Fair Class Streetcar



Pictured above is a World's Fair class streetcar headed northbound approaching Wise Avenue on the City Limits

line. The date is April 26, 1931. St. Mary's Hospital is on the right. At the time, this stretch was a right-of-way and is now the site of a modern residential development on the west side of Yale Avenue.

Erastus Wells: The Father of St. Louis Mass Transit – and of Wellston

Erastus Wells, the entrepreneur who gave the area the boost it needed to become a developed area, was well known as the father of public transportation in St. Louis. Born on December 2, 1822, in Jefferson County, New York, Wells came to St. Louis in September 1843 intent on seeking his fortune. He quickly formed a partnership with Calvin Case, and together they built the first omnibus line west of the Mississippi River. The authors of *Mound City on the Mississippi* note:

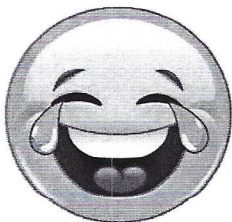
“The horse-drawn car ran from Third and Market Streets to the north side ferry landing at Madison Street. After just five years of operation, Wells and four competitors had 17 omnibuses that went on 200 daily rides, carrying 3,840 people at 5¢ a ride. Total profit from all the omnibus routes was \$67,000. Wells, along with Calvin Case and other entrepreneurs, bought out all the competition, giving him the first citywide transit monopoly. Case and Company grew to 90 buses and 450 horses and eventually included a short line to Belleville.”

Their company prospered, but after Case died, Wells sold the company for a "considerable sum of money."

In 1859, Wells was granted a charter for St. Louis's first street railway company which ran horse-drawn streetcars or "herdics." On July 4 of that year, note the authors of *Mound City*, "the City's first streetcar, called a 'street railroad,' was partially completed along Olive Street. Erasmus Wells, the president of the Missouri Railroad Company, made the first run." Scott K. Williams, author of "Ridin' in the Street Cars," describes this historic first run: *This car loaded with company representatives as well as city officials drew a large cheering crowd, but rocks along the tracks derailed the car on its maiden run. Company engineers devised a way to eliminate this problem and soon the street car business overtook the omnibus (which was a large stage couch) method of local travel. The main advantages of using a horse drawn street car on rails versus the horse drawn omnibus was the increased passenger capacity and a much smoother ride.*

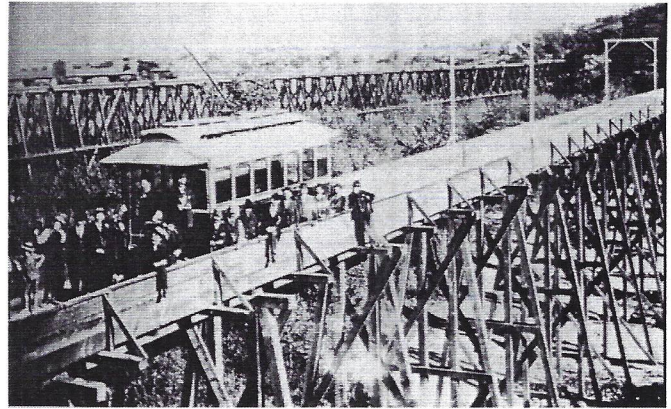
Establishing himself as president of the Missouri Railway Company, Wells built the first street railway west of the Mississippi River. He later developed the Narrow Gauge Railway, which stretched from St. Louis (from near Grand and Olive) to Normandy and, in 1878, to Florissant. The railway system had a substation at what later became Wellston. Wells also served as director of Ohio and Mississippi Railroad, president of Accommodation Bank, and vice president and director of Commercial Bank. In 1848, he was elected to the city council of St. Louis and, after a brief absence, was elected to the council again in 1854 and served until 1869. Wells was elected to the United States Congress in 1868 and served as a representative from 1869 to 1877. Wells continued his entrepreneurial efforts, obtaining the first substantial appropriation for the improvement of the Mississippi River and, in 1879, leading St. Louis citizens in gaining control of the Laclede Gas Light Company, of which he later became president.

Source: Web search.



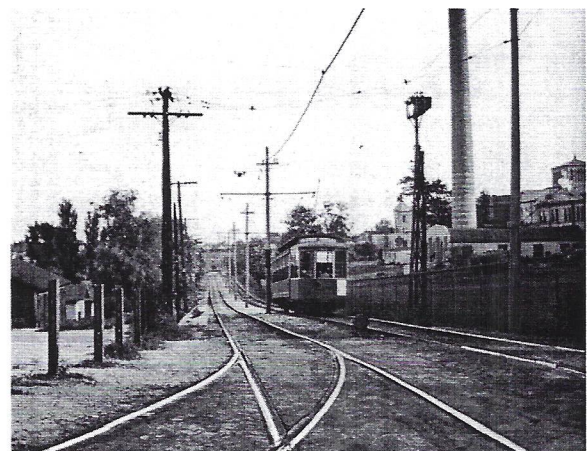
Many members of Congress are in the habit of using daily a free pass over the Washington Street Railway, and even United States Senators are not ashamed to present their dead-head ticket to the conductor to be punched, in

order to avoid the payment of a five cent fare.



The first interurban route of what was to become the world's greatest traction system was created when General Moses H. Sherman and Eli P. Clark connected two local lines with this bridge across the Arroyo Seco and inaugurated electric car service between Los Angeles and Pasadena in 1895. This is the first car.

Our Streetcar Heritage



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