

AROUND THE LOOP

A Publication of the Museum of Transportation Trolley Volunteers.

Vol. 1 No. 11

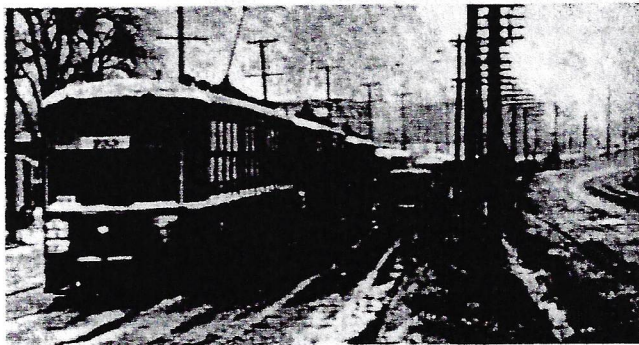
Non-Operating Season Edition - February 2017

The following response to the article "Demise of the Streetcars" in last month's issue of "Around The Loop" was submitted by M.T.T.V. member/scheduler Cal Blanksteen. I would like to thank Cal for his informative response, as I was unaware of the reasons why. -- John.

John your article on the widening of streets used as a cause for elimination of several of the streetcar lines touches on the oldest and still big questions of railroading and streetcar management; that is the costs of infrastructure. I did my senior thesis in finance in college in college 45 yrs ago and the argument has not gone away. Who pays for it and to what extent. Nobody wants to pay for infrastructure and no one wants to pay for its upkeep, yet government will tax the daylights out of the private company who owns the infrastructure. The passenger streetcar business like the passenger train business is a low profit margin business if profit is made at all and there usually would not be the monies for track work without bond issues which are very costly. When lines were converted to buses, all of these problems of the track and right of way costs went away. Even today with the loop trolley project, the biggest headache was the cost of the tracks. (more later).

In This Issue:

Breaking News: Operator Recertification's & startup date for operations for 2017 season.
Freezing Rain, Sleet Stop Streetcars.
Response to "Demise of the Streetcar."
Widening of South 12th Street.



Freezing Rain, Sleet Stops Streetcars In Their Tracks for 40 minutes. - *Front of a line of 26 westbound Manchester streetcars tied up this morning at Manchester and Tamm Avenues because of ice on trolley wires. The operator of the first car said it took him 2 hours to get to that point from Thirty-Ninth and Park Avenues. Date - Tuesday, January 18th, 1949.*

BREAKING NEWS

MASSIVE M.T.T.V. RECERTIFICATION DATE SET FOR CURRENT OPERATORS!

Mark your calendars for Saturday, February 25th, 2017 beginning 8:00 am as this is the date for returning operators to renew their operator certifications. This also includes those who only move cars in and out of the Abbott Building, TCI (Shop) Building, etc. It's an all day affair.

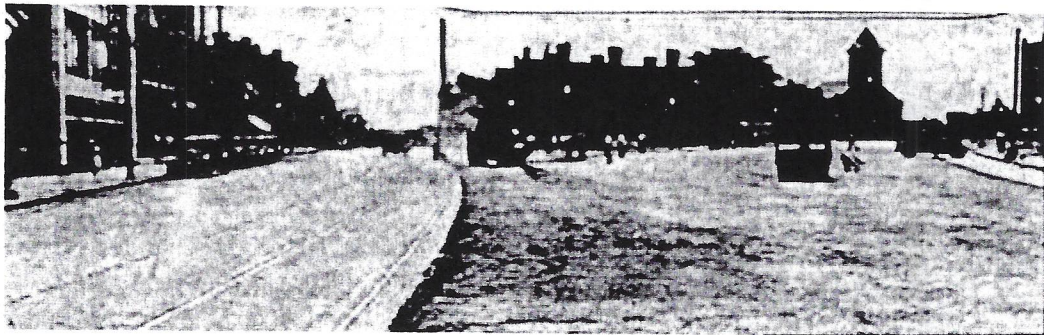
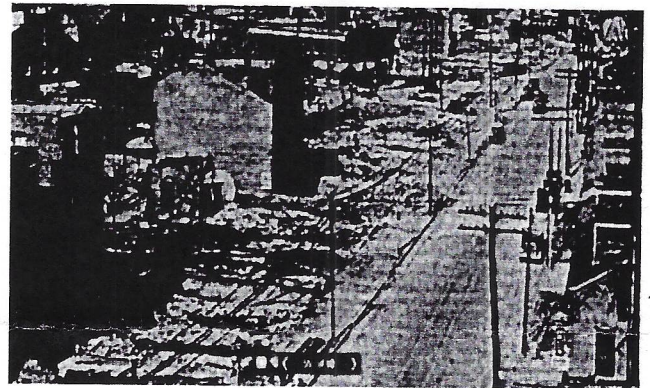
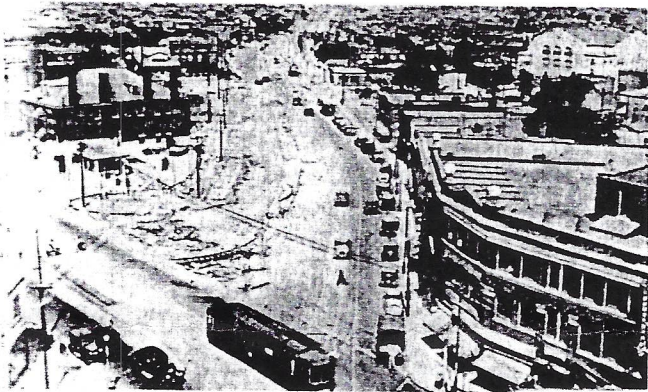
STREETCAR/TROLLEY OPERATIONS FOR 2017

Set to begin Thursday, April 6, 2017. Weather permitting.

The widening of South 12th Street was approved in 1919, but was tied up in litigation. Widening Natural Bridge was passed in 1920, but no action had been taken. In 1923, the widening of Morgan, now known as Delmar, was approved. But by 1930, over 700 meetings had been held to discuss the details, with no progress being made. So when work began on the widening of Gravois in 1931, only eight years after the project had been approved, this was seen as a step in the right direction.

With a cutoff connecting S. 12th to Gravois, the same 12 foot sidewalk was maintained on each side of the street, but all the way to Grand Avenue, Gravois was widened by 40 feet. With the roadway going from 36 to 76 feet, 272 property owners lost land, & many buildings had to be moved, altered, or torn down. Owners were compensated a total of nearly \$2 Million.

Controversial at the time, a special map was drawn of the area of those thought to benefit from the widening, & those 21,000 property owners were assessed a tax averaging 75 cents for each foot of street frontage. This tax paid for almost 3/4s of the project, with the remaining \$662,000 coming from a bond issue.



One unforeseen consequence of the street widening, was that the streetcar tracks were now in the middle of the new street. Claiming they didn't have the \$460,000 needed to move the rails, the routes of the Cherokee, Bellefontaine, & Tower Grove lines were altered or eliminated.

Photos: 12th Street cutoff, heading toward Russell; Grand & Gravois under construction; scene along Gravois.