

Remember The Radials? . . .

THE ONCE FAMILIAR ELECTRIC COACHES MAY MAKE A COMEBACK



Parasols and straw hats were the style in 1912 when these passengers disembarked at the Toronto-York Radial Terminal south of St. Clair Ave., Toronto.

Radial cars were once a familiar sight in Georgetown, one of the main stops on the Toronto Suburban Railway Line to Guelph. The radial station was the Main St. N. building recently purchased by the Halton-Peel Trust and Savings Co. from the Christian Reformed Church. The tracks entered town from the west along a right of way which has since become Princess Anne Dr. They crossed Main St. North at the James St. corner, ran through what is now the downtown parking lot and were carried on a trestle over the river gully at the base of the Guelph St. hill. Behind the High School the tracks paralleled the highway, out of town. A swath, devoid of construction, marks the former route of the radial through the town's east end development.

The radials came into being in 1912 and disappeared from the local scene in the early 1930s. The former station and rolling stock dotting the path of the electric railway is all that remains here as a reminder of the commuter service that lived and died three decades before its time.

The following story on the radials is reprinted from the Ontario Hydro News:

Straw boaters and panamas were stylish at Woodbine that

year. The latest in three-button men's suits were advertised by Eaton's for track-opening day at \$18.50. Charming as the ladies looked in their ankle-length skirts with high-button blouses and bows, it was preposterous, sir, to suggest they be given the vote.

Evidenced by its fast-growing Hydro system, industrialization was the coming thing for Ontario. There was plenty of work available and skilled tradesmen earned "as much as 25 cents an hour" on such construction projects as Toronto's Union Station.

It was 1912 and the latest tunes atop the player piano roll included "In the Evening by the Moonlight," "When Irish Eyes are Smiling," and "Old Girl of Mine"—placid melodies which generally reflected placid times, but the year was not without its tragedies and controversies. The sinking of the Titanic and subsequent inquiry dominated 1912's newspaper headlines, as did the U.S. threat—ultimately acted upon—to send the Marines into Cuba.

Locally, the Methodist-sponsored "Ban the Bar Room" movement was gaining momentum. And familiar-sounding citizens and officials were urg-

ing extension of inter-urban rail service.

While many of these railways had been operating in parts of Ontario since the early 1880's, proponents of the extended network envisaged it as a Hydro service radiating 900 miles from Toronto and connecting all surrounding municipalities. Electricity would supply the motive power. The "radials," as the systems were known, were seen as not only essential in arresting the developing drift of workers from the farm to the city, but the key to rapid distribution of goods and produce.

The concept was advanced at the annual meeting of the Ontario Municipal Electric Association in 1912, when Ontario Hydro was called upon to investigate the possibilities of establishing such a rail network, which—like the province's newly-established electrical system—would be operated on a service at cost basis.

Adam Beck, Hydro's first chairman, was one of the strongest advocates of the electric urban transit system. He had seen similar networks operating in densely populated areas of Europe and the United States.

Ontario's expanding population already numbered more

than 2,500,000 and with almost 12,000 motor vehicles registered in the province he anticipated costly highway development programs ahead.

With even greater foresight, Sir Adam believed that the St. Lawrence River would eventually be deepened into a Seaway and Toronto would become an Atlantic port. Rapid interurban rail service would become even more essential for moving people and commerce.

Inter-urban electric had already been operating along side roads, such as they were, in various parts of the province for some 15 years.

Two steps from the stagecoach era, Ontario's earliest electric railways succeeded horse-drawn trams and often inherited the tracks along which they ran.

Capable of travelling at 50 miles an hour, the early dials wood-and-steel cars operated on single track lines, with sidings about every quarter of a mile. Blaring horns warned unwary man, beast or vehicle to keep clear, and served as a means of communication in determining which of two approaching cars would pull into a siding to allow the other to pass.

Sometimes they travelled with as many as five cars but more usually they ran singly or coupled in pairs. Elaborately appointed, the interiors featured ornate lighting fixtures, plush upholstery and rich, in-laid mahogany.

Powerful electric lamps mounted on the cars lit up the tracks far ahead and swept adjacent roadsides. Outside built up areas the tracks forsook the side of the road for the middle creating not only traffic problems but something of an eyesore.

Within six months of the OMEA meeting in 1912, 11 municipalities had asked Hydro for advice concerning construction of an electric railway from Toronto to Markham.

Public interest was heightened in 1914 when 2,000 marchers descended on the House of Commons in Ottawa to demand financial aid for Hydro radials. The following year, 1,500 persons appeared at Queen's Park to ask the Ontario government to provide a line-building subsidy.

Twenty-three of 26 municip-

alities including Toronto had voted heavily in favour of radials and another 230 municipalities interested in scrapping the horse-and-buggy as the principal means of suburban and inter-urban transport were seeking information from Hydro engineers.

Encouraged by support Beck and his followers pressed for an immediate start on a 2,000-mile provincial system, to cost an estimated \$92,000,000. But World War I was still raging and claiming that such expenditure couldn't be justified at the time, the government shelved the program by passing legislation prohibiting any action on radials until the end of hostilities.

Following the Armistice another radial program was presented involving lines from Toronto connecting Bowmanville, Hamilton, St. Catharines, Guelph, Kitchener and Niagara. Beck promised that this "initial stage" would be followed by province wide extensions.

But the age of the automobile had arrived. The government had embarked on an

extensive highway development program and feared that to encourage radials would be to encourage competition to highways.

It handed the question to a Royal Commission, which after sitting 112 days issued a report describing the proposed radial scheme as unwise and economically unsound. Commented the Toronto Globe of the day: "The cost of inquiry, amounting to the staggering sum of \$496,754, is the price paid by the taxpayers of Ontario for the government's evasion of its responsibility."

The last hope for the radial network depended now on whether Toronto would grant Hydro a six-track right-of-way along the city's waterfront. The question was settled by ballot on New Year's Day, 1922. The proposal was turned down by 5,000 votes but the issue had raised emotions to a fever pitch. Typical of press treatment was this three-deck headline in the Toronto Telegram of November 2, 1921: "Pharisees of Queen's Park Crucified Hydro Radials—Big Interests on Top—Mothers and Babies

Cheated of Hope—Outrage on Humanity. The opposition press was no less restrained.

Defeat was complete when the government followed up by cancelling existing financial agreements between Hydro and the municipalities, making it clear that those interested in radials from then on were strictly on their own.

Time had run out for the radials—at least for that particular period of Ontario's history. In the years that followed many municipalities that had invested in them suffered heavy losses.

Lines were gradually abandoned and torn up. Some were taken over by the major railways and converted to steam or diesel operation. Others were ironically, covered with asphalt to accommodate motor vehicles which today constitute one of the province's greatest transportation problems. Authorities are taking a new look at commuter and inter-urban transportation and electricity is to the fore in much of their thinking.



Electric railway coaches cross a trestle. At right, the front view of a radial car.

Mary Jo Reid is Wed In Brampton Ceremony

A honeymoon trip to Cape Cod followed the recent wedding of Mary Jo Anne Reid, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas G. Reid, Brampton, and Robert Edwin Lewis, son of Mrs. Margaret Lewis and the late Mr. Edward M. Lewis, Mono Road.

Mr. and Mrs. Lewis will be residing at R. R. 1 Mono Road. The bride's parents are former Georgetown residents. She is a granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Beene, R. R. 1 Georgetown.

St. Mary's Church, Brampton was decorated with baby-blue and mauve delphiniums and pink carnations and mums. The marriage ceremony and nuptial mass were performed by Father Bernard C. Ganning, Jerry Lawson, Brambles, played the organ and Mrs. Bob Beene of Georgetown, the bride's aunt, was the soloist. She sang "Ave Maria" and other numbers.

Given in marriage by her father, the bride wore a long traditional-style gown, with an empire waist and three-quarter-length sleeves, and a detachable train, all of white crepe. The

gown was trimmed at the bodice, sleeves, near hemline and the train with a white silk fringe. A headpiece of netted petals and crystal droplets held her full-length veil of illusion tulle. She carried a bouquet of white-stephanoids and trailing ivy.

The maid of honour was Patricia Kirley, Brampton and the bridesmaids were Mrs. Bert Speirs, Bolton, sister of the groom, and Susan Reid, Brampton, sister of the bride. The flowergirl was Janet Lavoie, Georgetown, cousin of the bride and Christopher Beene, Georgetown, cousin of the bride, was the ringbearer.

The bridesmaids wore full-length sheath dresses, sleeveless and empire-waisted of peach-pink crepe and white and pink organza twist, with high white gloves. The flowergirl was dressed in an all pink, short-flared dress and the ringbearer was in a short-sleeved white suit. The girls carried white gathering baskets filled with deep pink carnations, baby white mums, purple-blue cornflowers and green fernery. Headresses were of pink and

white organza onion rings and netting. Bert Speirs, Bolton, the groom's brother-in-law, was the best man, and the ushers were Tom Reid, Brampton, brother of the bride and David Lewis, Mono Road, brother of the groom.

The outdoor reception was held at Terra Cotta Inn. The bride's mother wore a two-piece suit of dark pink silk-knit with pale pink accessories and she wore a corsage of pale pink sweetheart roses. The groom's mother wore a floral printed aqua silk dress with a matching hat and her corsage was of orange tinted mums and carnations.

For her honeymoon the bride chose a turquoise-green patterned shantung suit, with a white cloche hat and white accessories. Her corsage was pale yellow carnations and a white gardenia.

Mr. and Mrs. Lewis are residing at RR 1, Mono Road.

TUBED TREES

Twenty-seven million tree seedlings will be planted in tubes this year by the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests. The three-inch-long, open-ended plastic tubes are split down one side so the trees can shed them as they grow.

Irate Councillor

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the water at the base of the bank. They claimed that reference to this spill-over was made in reports in 1962 and 1963 and "the spill-over remains in the bed of the diversion channel."

The OWSC requested some action be taken, and their Commission notified of the progress.

"The whole thing originated from newspapers trying to sell copies," opined Reeve Hunter, "and I'd like to see the letters filed and forgotten."

The mayor reminded the Reeve that as the town's representative of the Credit Valley Authority, he should contact the chairman, and have him look over the site. The Reeve agreed to do this.

SEEK CEMENT BOTTOM AT TERRA COTTA SWIM POOL

Council gave unanimous backing to Cr. Smith's resolution Tuesday that the CVCA members be told of the immediate need for a cement bottom on the Terra Cotta swimming pond.

"The mud and silt make it impossible for the lifeguards to see an inch below the surface. Again we had a near miss the other day up there," said Cr. Smith as he stressed the urgency of the situation.

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DETERGENT TIDE Large Package **45^c**

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KELOGGS Frosted Flakes 2 10 1/2 oz. Pkgs. **63^c**

MAXWELL HOUSE SALE INSTANT COFFEE 6 oz. Jar **\$1.09**

10-oz Size Packed in **Free Party Pitcher \$1.69**

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POTATO CHIPS Hostess 12 oz. size Reg. 6^c **59^c**

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Fruit Cocktail Henley 20 oz. Tins **2-69^c**

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Ontario Grown Sweet, Tender **DOZEN EARS CORN 59^c**

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