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This story is not complete especially the information from Elwood through Hobbs to Tipton. I personally thank Phil Hobbs of Hobbs, Indiana for his help and apologize for not editing the material and finishing the report in detail in Tipton County. In light of the fact I am not in the country I wish to make this information public. With this said I welcome and corrections and additions to the story of the Alexandria-Tipton Line of the Union Traction Company.

David L. Dwiggins

Trolleys East And West

David L. Dwiggins

A real sleepiness was visible on most of the faces gathered at the Orestes Station whilst several roosters hailed the morning call. Everyone assembled at the station had started the day very early so they could travel on the trolley to Elwood. The first trolley had passed earlier about 5:00 a.m. traveling to Alexandria from Tipton. The electric train had turned around at the Union Traction station in Alexandria at 5:35 a.m. and was hurriedly bouncing and skipping along Monroe Street in order to arrive in Orestes by 5:45 a.m.

The morning sun was low in the eastern sky and several were shielding their eyes with their hands as they looked toward Halls Crossing anticipating the arrival. Eventually a tiny light appeared in the distance and the warning of a whistle reassured them that the coach was only a half mile away at the edge of town.

Soon the whistle blew again and the light on the front of the motorcar grew brighter and brighter as it moved toward Orestes Station. The shadowy green wooden coach rattled and creaked as the wooden coach inched toward the

station. A large number 238 was painted in bold letters on the cab and motorman, Dusty Rhodes was dressed in his meticulous uniform piloting the controls in the vestibule. He was managing the trolley bell with his foot to warn pedestrians as he journeyed along the middle of Broadway Street toward the station. At last he reached above his head and tugged on a small rope. The shrill whistle blew and the children leaped simultaneously as the warning was given to those near the Superior Street depot. The trolley was arriving at Orestes Station.

The motorman methodically slowed the large coach and rolled it to a stop. The conductor carefully assisted the passengers as they stepped to the walkway. The new passengers handed their tickets to him and he managed the fares with a shiny money changer on his belt. Once everyone was inside he climbed back on the car and gave the signal to continue. Gradually the car moved westward toward the Powell Tile and Brick Company where it would make its final stop before continuing to Waymire Crossing, Dundee Station, Leeson Crossing, Cooley Crossing, Red Corner and Elwood Station.

The interurban adventure was exciting and eventful as its travelers grew affectionately appreciative of the dependable transportation. Despite the absence of the trolleys, a century later the love affair can still be seen in the sparkling eyes of some of its passengers as stories are told and memories are rekindled. This is the story of the trolley line that connected the communities of Alexandria, Orestes, Dundee, Elwood, Hobbs and Tipton. The adventure I am about to describe is authentic and how it all originated many years ago.

The Beginning of the Anderson Street Railway

Natural gas was the heart of many discussions and decisions that were made in Madison County during the 1880s and 1890s. Natural gas had been discovered in Findlay, Ohio and prosperity seemed to be within everyone's grasp throughout Central Indiana too. Gas lit streetlamps sprouted like mushrooms and businesses flourished in every town. The new energy was so abundant and no doubt it would last forever.

Anderson had more than ample supply of gas and the crazed vision of growth and prosperity filled the minds on innumerable citizens. The times were exciting.

On August 19, 1887 the Anderson City Council granted a twelve year charter to

Seldom R. Williams and D.C. Williams of Lebanon, Tennessee to build and maintain a street railway system powered by mules. This would undoubtedly modernize Anderson, Indiana.

Meridian Street was chosen as the avenue in which the railway would travel first and the project was accomplished with great pride September 6, 1888. The unprecedented service was comprised of two open passenger cars with capacities of twenty passengers each and a few healthy mules. City officials, the Riverside Park Band, and some prominent citizens were invited to take the first ride. The celebration was very festive with folks lining the streets to view the new idea. Robert E. Burke, a resident of Iowa drove the mule team of his Uncle Newton T. Burke.

In 1892 the Anderson Electric Street Railway Company was organized and the city promptly granted the business a thirty year right of way in the streets. The new company reconstructed the roads and a large electrical plant was built to power the street cars.

At precisely 2:00 p.m., March 12, 1892, officials claimed the railway to be as good as the best in the country. This was the debut of the electric railway in Madison County. Charles L. Henry led the way in the project. Charles became known as the Father of Interurbans in 1893. He named his new system Interurban after observing an Intramural Railway at the Worlds Fair in Chicago and the name stuck to the new fashion of transportation.

The undisputable first undertaking to electrify a railway system in an Indiana city was in South Bend in 1882 and the project was unpleasantly unsuccessful. Three years later on November 15, 1885, the South Bend Railway made another attempt to become the first city with an electric railway. This time the eventuality was only partially successful and an unfashioned street car system did run for some short distances and was advantages to a few of the residents. The line was not complete and did not extend to the outer locations of the city limits.

The Lafayette Street Railway registered the recognition for being the first totally successful operation August 30, 1888. The street car traveled most areas of the city. Travel was somewhat dependable and schedules were not always met but

the mode of travel was very popular and soon caught on most everywhere in Indiana.

Union Traction Company Founded in Anderson

Charles Henry founded the Union Traction Company in Anderson and was one of the earliest interurban railways in the Midwest when it connected with Alexandria December 23, 1897. The first actual run was January 18, 1898. Although other cities traveled in the city cars between towns at earlier times, the Anderson Alexandria line was the very first to have a comfortable coach designed for interurban travel.

All Union Traction Company train orders were given from the main office located on the 6th floor of the Union Building (11th St. & Meridian St.) in Anderson. The company was promoted by local businessmen and in 1899 Dolan Morgan of Philadelphia wanted to promote a more spacious network of interurbans throughout the gas belt in Indiana connecting prominent cities and towns. Steam powered locomotives already had a conventional network of rail passenger service around the state but the service was unpunctual and sporadic. The interurbans soon connected the towns and abruptly reduced the time and distance between them.

The cars became significantly dependable, most comfortable and travel was remarkably unaffected by most of the winter storms. The interurbans effortlessly plowed through snows where automobiles were often stranded on country roads and highways. Farmers soon traveled on the interurbans with regularity and fresh produce was readily available in most general stores.

The terrain in the region was mostly flat so excavation costs were as minimal as could be. The initial tracks were constructed with ballast base and 70 pound per yard rails. In most cases the right of way would vary from 22 feet to 66 feet and concrete collars were constructed around the base of the electric poles protecting from fire and pole deterioration. The tracks were purposely routed through towns and traveled on the primary streets. The tracks were also constructed to pass the county seats and court houses. The interurbans were throttled back in these areas for safety since usual traffic hampered movement. Constant road repair paving was costly and accident liability costs were also expensive. Whenever the

opportunity existed the interurbans were routed away from the paved roads between towns, across woodlands and farm fields eliminating the problems.

Most of the depots were traditional in design, quite simple and weren't as elaborate as the brick ones in Indianapolis, Muncie, Elwood and Kokomo. A majority of the buildings were compact frame structures. In innumerable instances the station also served as living quarters for the ticket agents and their families. As a rule there was a waiting room, freight room, baggage room and ticket office.

The first cars were purchased from the Barney & Smith Car Company in Dayton, Ohio and the cars had been built in April 1896 for the Columbia & Maryland Railway. The standard car design extended 46 to 60 feet in length, had a seating capacity of at least 36, was made of wood and was equipped with a cowcatcher at the front. The cars were originally decked out in dark green but a new color scheme was chosen in 1921, a deep red.

As you traveled along the wooden cars would rattle and bang and as you looked forward you could even see the cars twist in different directions front to back. The windows were constructed to open in hot weather giving travelers a bit of a breeze as they moved along. During winter a small coal burning stove and a miniature boiler were managed by the motorman and conductor. The steam was circulated through water pipes within the cars to keep the passengers comfortable on their trip. During the later years electric stoves kept the trolleys warm.

The interurbans were numbered in the sequence that they were bought for the Traction Company. The lower number was the earlier model. The interurbans previous to number 400 were all made of wood and they had maintained their original numbers after being purchased from other trolley companies. The cars numbered 400 to 445 each was named after a town that the Union Traction serviced. For instance, the number 400 car was named Pendleton and car 402 Arcadia. Local cars were 408 Summitville, 428 Tipton, 434 Anderson, 440 Alexandria and 443 Elwood. This did not mean that the Alexandria car was used exclusively for Alexandria. The cars moved around from town to town and the Alexandria car could be seen in Indianapolis. The numbers were painted over by the Indiana Railroad System in the mid 1930s.

Some interurbans carried classification flags or lamps on the front at the side of the cab. White signified that the train was an extra train not on the timetable schedule. Green meant that the train was running in sections and that another train would be following the first train quite closely. These were the only conditions that the cars displayed flags or classification lamps. The rear running lamps were red and flags were also displayed at times and some of the trains had used oil lamps.

The primary shop for the Union Traction Company was located in Anderson on North Broadway and the steam plant was located just north of the repair yards. The building still exists and is located approximately a block north of White River at Broadway and on the east side of the street. Kirby Risk currently operates part of their business in the structure. At the northwest corner of the building the UTC insignia is still visible. As growth permitted, most divisions or towns had their own steam plant or they purchased electricity from a local source. The Anderson shop performed inspections, built, repaired and modified all the Traction Line cars. The Anderson shop was a very busy and masterful enterprise. Activities were continuous and usually around the clock. Early interurbans were short and underpowered and the cars had to be lengthened and modified to move faster. They were all modified at the Anderson shop. The shop was one of the best in the country employing about 125 in its heyday. Inspection shops were also maintained in Marion, Elwood, Muncie and Tipton.

The company conducted business in five divisions: Anderson, Indianapolis, Marion, Muncie and Tipton. Each division had a superintendent responsible for his area. Train orders were instructed on telephones over company pole lines. Each train carried a telephone on board to be plugged in at various jack box locations on the route. Some locations even had phone booths. During the interurbans pioneer period phone booths had semaphores or wooden signals attached to them and could be operated electrically by a dispatcher to halt a train and distribute orders. The semaphores were reset by the crew before departing. The semaphore system was discontinued in 1910 and automatic block signals were installed in 1913 in most of the divisions.

The Union Traction Company completed the line to Alexandria December 23, 1897 and to Summitville April 12, 1898. This enabled the passengers to travel

from Indianapolis to Marion with very minimal inconveniences. A projection was soon made to extend the operation westward to Tipton if an agreement could be reached with the Elwood & Alexandria Railway Company.

Important Dates in Indiana Trolley Systems

South Bend Railway November 15, 1885
Anderson Mule Driven Railway August 19, 1887
Lafayette Street Railway August 30, 1888
South Bend & Mishawaka Railway 1889
Marion Electric Street Railway August 21, 1889
Richmond City Electric Street Railway September 6, 1889
Indianapolis Street Railway June 18, 1890
Vincennes Citizens Street Railway September 8, 1891
Logansport Electric Railway October 1, 1891
Kokomo Street Railway December 1891
Fort Wayne Street Railway 1891
Elkhart Electric Railway 1891
Terre Haute Electric Railway January 6, 1892
Anderson Electric Street Railway March 14, 1892
Marion Electric Street Railway to Jonesboro August 1, 1893
Elwood Electric Street Railway November 6, 1893
Marion Street Railway Jonesboro to Summit July 1, 1894
Union Traction Company (UTC) to Alex December 23, 1897
UTC first trip from Anderson to Alex January 18, 1898
UTC Alexandria to Summitville April 12, 1898
Elwood & Alex Electric Rail Co formed May 4, 1898
Elwood & Alex Railway opened to Elwood June 26, 1899
UTC of Indiana formed June 27, 1899
UTC of IND opened Anderson to Indianapolis January 4, 1901
UTC Alex-Elwood line starts construction Tipton April 1902
UTC Alexandria to Elwood line test run December 31, 1902
UTC Alexandria Elwood & Tipton line begins service February 10, 1903
UTC opened the Alexandria Street Railway May 1905
The Elwood & Alexandria Railway Company

The Elwood & Alexandria Railway was formed May 4, 1898 as an independent company with a bankroll of \$225,000. Members of the Board of Directors were: Dee Allen, Battle Creek, Michigan; Loren N. Downs, Kalamazoo, Michigan; Sherman B. Harting Rensselaer, Indiana; and Cassius M. Greenen of Elwood, Indiana. Two interurbans were employed between Elwood and Alexandria on nine miles of mostly straight tracks. The first running was June 26, 1899. The line encountered very few engineering problems that other railways experienced and revenue was spent wisely and conservatively.

The Union Traction's interest in the line generated a situation. Should the company enter into competition with the Elwood & Alexandria Railway or to manufacture another railway parallel to the existing one or attempt to purchase the present operation that wasn't for sale? The Traction Company decided to nevertheless complete the line from Elwood to Tipton and encounter what would happen after the completion extension.

Construction on the extension started April 2, 1902. The service was ready to be extended but an unexpected quandary occurred. A few hundred yards into Tipton County the new extension gradually elevated some 35 to 40 feet and crossed the Lake Erie & Western Railroad on a trestle constructed with dirt and concrete. Although the Panhandle Railroad offered no resistance to the crossing in downtown Elwood, the Lake Erie & Western Railroad Company demanded that the Union Traction Company provide a watchman even though the trains never physically connected. Their defense was an Indiana Statute stating that: if it becomes necessary for the track of one railroad company to cross the track of another railroad company, the company owning the road last constructed at such crossing shall unless otherwise agreed to between such companies, be at the exclusive expense of constructing such crossing in a manner to be convenient and safe for both companies.

This set off events in December 1902 that necessitated intense proceedings combined with a franchising dispute with the Union Traction Company, the city of Elwood and the railway. The Elwood & Alexandria Railway Company sold out to the Union Traction Company and the section to Tipton was opened for service February 10, 1903. One car made a test run December 31, 1902.

During September 1902 the Traction Company contracted to have the Alexandria,

Elwood and Tipton line extended to the east to Muncie for a more straightforward route. Several bridges were constructed, some grading was completed and several miles of track was laid in the Alexandria vicinity but financial problems plagued the endeavor and the project was abandoned about a year later. The rails were removed and sold for scrap during World War I.

The Company had another comparable experience later that year. Another new section was to be completed from Anderson to Frankton and then proceed to Elwood. A bit of grading was done but the line was never a major priority and the line was never completed.

Orestes Station

The Orestes Station was of traditional depot design and was located at the intersection of Broadway and Superior Street. The depot was a popular place to catch the interurban. The only door was on the north side and seats and benches were arranged in an open waiting area. The east end had a tall double window that faced Broadway Street so passengers could view the trolleys arriving from Alexandria. The west end was constructed having a ticket window and a freight room that was enclosed. The station wasn't always open so the conductors made the ticket transactions much of the time. This wasn't a bit uncommon since many passengers boarded in the countryside.

The Orestes station attendant was Gilbert Lane and he managed both the ticket and freight office. Gilbert had an early bout with spinal meningitis and was left crippled for life but his afflictions did not hamper his ability to do the job. Usually the passengers would wait outside for the trolley to come but during the cold and wet Indiana winters, most waited inside. The coal burning stove was quite warm and inviting.

The line from Alexandria to Tipton was maximized extensively by the communities and farm families all along the line and the fares were inexpensive. In 1909 a passenger could procure a ticket from Orestes to Alexandria for five cents, ten cents to Elwood and twenty-five cents to Tipton. Usually the Orestes passengers didn't go further than Elwood or Alexandria but could if they aspired to do so. A trip to Anderson was twenty-five cents and forty-five cents for the round trip. Going to Indianapolis was no problem either. A round trip ticket cost only a dollar

and fifty-five cents. An interurban ride was a thrilling adventure and a super bargain.

Orestes became quite a town during the natural gas boom but the gas industry was quickly dying out by the early 1900s and as the decline continued the population dropped from 2,500 to nearly 200. The lifestyle was now sluggish and most of the residents were not prospering as they were a few years earlier. The vision of connecting the gas belt cities and towns with the interurban network became a reality but the extensive construction took time and by the time the coaches reached Orestes, the boom was over.

Nonetheless folks used the rail travel regularly. Many students used the interurban to travel to and from school. "We purchased our student tickets in Elwood and we did not have to pay full fare." Freda Norris accounted. "That is right," her sister Mary repeated, "and we got a reduced rate to go to school."

Although the two girls resided in Monroe Township they attended school in Elwood. The interurban did not arrive in Alexandria at a convenient time to get to school on time but was perfect in Elwood and right beside the school. A transfer had to be approved and issued from the township office.

The single air horn was loud and was unceasingly heard when the motorman gave it a blast as it approached Leota Street, just a block west of the station. The interurbans stopped on the north side of the depot and the conductor helped everyone on and off to insure safety and that the schedule in other stops would also be kept. The stops were very brief.

Bernice Knotts, a longtime Orestes resident explained a common situation. I rode the interurban to Delco Remy in Anderson to work as many residents did. I would ride to Alexandria, change cars, and continue to the Anderson Station on 5th Street. Upon arriving there I would get on an Anderson city streetcar and continue to the Delco Remy plant. We never thought much about traveling on the coaches then but they always arrived on time. I was a regular passenger and if I was a little late they would wait on me in Orestes.

The Trip to Alexandria

The eastbound trolleys kicked up the dust as they bounced down Broadway, the Baptist Church on the right and then the two-story Orestes School on the left. The gas street lamps still stood along the roadway, only relics of the boom. At the peak of the boom brilliant flambeaux or open fires in the yards and fields lit the skies at night as the interurban passed. Now the lamps were unused.

The line had regular stops and if the cars weren't too crowded, the conductor would instruct the motorman to stop at locations between them to assist the older folks.

The coach also passed within a short distance of the Kent, Jumbet and Red Onion Hotels. An Orestes town ordinance prohibited saloons from being located west of Main Street so all the taverns were in the eastern part of town. There were many too! Some say there were as many as twelve to sixteen saloons when the Sunflower Glass Company was nearby during the boom.

The next stop is Halls Crossing. This was the last stop the interurban would make in Orestes if you were traveling east. Halls Crossing was named after the nearby Republican Hall where there were weekly dances, barbecues and public gatherings.

Once the coach started rolling east of Halls, the track sloped at a fairly nice grade into the Lily Creek Valley. The grade was surrounded by trees, weeds and scrub brush. Despite the grade the tracks still were elevated about six feet over the meadow and fifteen feet over Lily Creek.

Just beyond the creek to the east the grade becomes elevated again and levels at Young's Crossing (Mad Co Rd 200 W). Hannah E. Young owned the land east of the county road giving the stop its name. There was a waiting shed on the east side of the road and the north side of the tracks to provide shelter during bad weather.

At the county road the tracks bend to the southeast and extend for a little less than a half mile lining up with the dead end of Monroe Street at Bunker Hill. The line then bent to the left and an eastward heading on Monroe Street. Bunker Hill was the first stop then Harry Berries Store which was a favorite gathering spot for

travelers along the line. The store was a usual general store with flour, eggs, canned goods and candy for the children.

The next stop was Central Street and then just a few yards from Minnesota on the north side was the sub station and interurban car barn. The cars were kept in the barn when the daily routes were finished. The substation provided power to help maintain the operating voltage for the line. Substations were also located in Elwood and Tipton and all were powered by two Westinghouse 250 Kilowatt generators.

Further to the east the coach would slow for a stop at the transfer station at the Harrison and Monroe intersection. This was not the main Union Traction station in Alexandria but was referred to as the transfer station and was the primary location for travelers to wait if they were going east and west.

As soon as the trolley turned south the main business district was only a few blocks away. The main Union Traction Station ticket office was just south of Washington Street on the east side next to the Rotheringhouse Drug Store. Passengers made their transfers here to connect to Marion, Anderson, Muncie and Indianapolis. There was no direct route to Muncie and Indianapolis so passengers would take the interurban to Anderson to connect to their preferred routes.

Dundee to Elwood

The interurban departed Orestes Station rolling to the west and making one stop just north of the Powell Tile and Brick Works. Originally the route rolled about a hundred feet to the west after stopping then made a right hand turn to the north for approximately another 150 feet. The turns were awkward and were later straightened when additional property was purchased.

The motorman would accelerate once the trolley was out of town and a half mile away was Waymire Crossing at 400W. Will and Nancy Waymire had a 19 acre piece of property just a few yards north of the tracks and the location adopted their name. If the motorman didn't see anyone waiting at the stop he still blew the whistle and slowed before continuing.

The line proceeded westward another half mile to Dundee Crossing. The

interurban stopped at the Seeley General Store. The store was a natural place to congregate before boarding and Pipe Creek Township School #14 was nearby. Rolling west the tracks remained straight and flat. R.L. Leeson owned all the real estate on the north side of the tracks to the highway between 450W and 500W.

The line then dissected the farmlands of Jane Wright, Michael Wise and then approached the properties of the Cooley's on the north side. W.G. Cooley, R. Cooley, A.F. Cooley, Dora Cooley, and Mary Cooley owned the parcels to the west.

Red Corner was the next stop and Brickyard Road another to the west as the line entered Elwood. At this point the route began to curve gradually to align with Main Street or St Rd 28. The main stops in Elwood were 28th St and 22nd St.

Main Street was narrow and was paved neatly with bricks. The interurban traveled the center of the roadway to the main Union Traction terminal at 16th and Main. Elwood High School was located just a few yards on the north side of Main. The trolleys slowed to a stop just west of 16th St and then backed into the station unloading area.

Mary Norris rode the interurban to school from Orestes along with her sisters Freda, Nellie and Dereva and she recalls, I remember our schoolmates that lived west of Elwood. They rode a different interurban and would pull directly onto 16th St to unload. We backed onto 16th St to unload.

The station was quite large and looked much like the other depots of the time period except it had a nice brick finish. Large limestone blocks wrapped the structure from the sidewalk upward about three feet and framed the two arches above the doors. Dray wagons were generally parked on the sidewalks around the depot and a large window on the east front allowed pedestrians to view the power room where the large generators were operating.

Not Complete

The interurban traveled down the middle of the street through West Elwood and at the western edge was about an eighth of a mile to the south of highway 28. It is here where the controversy caused such a stir as the Union Traction line crossed over the LE&W. The grade is still visible several hundred yards west of County Line Road.

The roadbed continued on the south side of 28 through Hobbs and on into Tipton. At Tipton the line made the square around the Tipton County courthouse. The passenger terminal was across the street to the west on the corner and the freight house was immediately behind the passenger terminal.

Western Indiana Gravel Company Railway

It would be inappropriate to recall a bit of electric railroad history in northern Madison County without mentioning the small unique railway that serviced the Western Indiana Gravel Company southwest of Orestes. The company blossomed through the years by having a tremendous stockpile of gravel for various demands.

The Union Traction built the one and one eighth mile line to access the gravel pits as a spur from the Alexandria-Elwood-Tipton line but Western Indiana owned it. The line branched off the mainline of the Union Traction just yards east of Waymire Crossing at Mad Co Rd 400W. The wye extended approximately 2,200 feet south and crossed the Nickel Plate Railroad east of the target shed. The route proceeded to the south crossing Mad Co Rd 1100N and then gradually cut a grade through the small hills to level with the gravel pit property. The cuts left distinct banks on each side of the tracks. The grade descended to Pipe Creek and crossed the stream on a small trestle constructed of three matching parallel telephone poles at each vertical brace about eight to ten feet apart. The tracks were elevated about eight to ten feet above Pipe Creek and entered the Western Indiana property on the south bank. The line continued to the south angling to the east for a distance then a curve back to the right between the two primary pits to a point southeast of both main bodies of water. In this area the gravel was transferred from a smaller electric line. Both lines were of the same operating gauge but the gravel company's workmotor was much smaller in strength.

End of the Line

During the 1920s there were many accidents and the liabilities fell on the shoulders of the Union Traction Company. An accident at Alfont near Ingalls was the worst. At five o'clock in the afternoon February 2, 1924 a two car interurban departed the Indianapolis Traction Terminal full of passengers. A few minutes later at 5:15 p.m. a Muncie to Indianapolis trolley and trailer fully loaded cleared

the Anderson Station. There was freight onboard as well as movie film for theaters.

The car departing Indianapolis reached the Murk siding which was a normal meeting spot near Fortville. The car was instructed to stop and wait for the other car to pass before continuing. The car also overruns the Dent siding a short distance further up the track. At Alfont the two interurbans sighted each other and the southbound train got stopped and the motorman and conductor leaped to safety. The crew of the interurban out of Indianapolis kept their car running full throttle and jumped at the last second. The wooden coaches smashed head on and the Indianapolis car stopped in the fourth row of the other car. The film caught fire and spread to three of the cars involved. The conductor of the southbound trolley, although injured, uncoupled his trailer from the burning motorcar and pushed it to safety. Twenty-one persons died in the wreckage and many burned to death. Four unidentified persons were buried in East Maplewood Cemetery in Anderson with a tombstone inscribed: Four Unknown Persons Killed in the Alfont Traction Wreck.

The interurbans were made of wood and steel certainly would have given the passengers more protection from the wreck and fire. Accidents like this were many throughout the state and the Union Traction Company was obviously to blame for the problems. Almost six months to the day of the Alfont accident the U.T.C. abandoned local service in Elwood. This was only the beginning.

The financial woes of the U.T.C. during the 1920s became immense and their safety was in constant question. New equipment was needed desperately but had to be postponed due to the financial situation.

The automobile was becoming more popular with American people and highways were becoming greatly improved. Traffic jams were beginning to be a common dilemma and parking became more difficult. Furthermore trucks were also taking over a great deal of the freight business and busses were cutting into the passenger service.

The U.T.C. began abandoning lines frequently by 1929 and on August 1, 1930 the Indiana Railroad took over all operations as a last ditch attempt to save the electric trains. Freight houses and passenger stations were modernized in

December 1930 and at the same time parlor and dining cars were discontinued. The company was losing money fast and wages for conductors and motormen were cut from 40 cents an hour to 31 cents. Brakemen were decreased from 31 cents an hour to 22 cents.

The Daily Times Tribune

Alexandria, Indiana, Thursday, Oct. 15, 1931

TRACTION LINE TO TIPTON QUILTS TODAY

Removal of Tracks Through Rural Districts Expected Soon

So far as serving the public, the Alexandria-Tipton Division of the Indiana Railroad passes into history tonight, after more than thirty years of service. Passenger cars on the division were stopped several months ago, and tonight freight service will be discontinued. The removal of the present tracks, except through the city of Elwood, is likely but a matter of a few months at the most. In Elwood the city has taken over the two-mile stretch of track on Main Street and will improve it at its own expense in which it receives the Traction Companies main building at Main and 16th Street opposite the city hall, and the ground on which it stands.

Part of the old track on West Monroe Street in Alexandria, where new paving was recently installed from Fairview Avenue to Texas Avenue has been removed and property owners between Fairview Avenue and Harrison Street are insisting that the track be taken up there and the center of the street paved. Removal of the track through the rural districts, as well as through Orestes, where it is not built in paved streets, will be a simple matter and can be done rapidly when once started.

The Traction Company has not been operating freight service into Alexandria by way of Elwood for several months, as this city is served by the Anderson-Marion Division. The abandonment of freight service tonight, however, leaves Orestes, Dundee, Elwood, and Hobbs without electric transportation, but bus and truck lines have already taken over most of the business which the Traction line formerly handled.

Stopping the freight service will effect the Western Sand & Gravel Company probably more than any other, one shipper, as its big pits southwest of Orestes were reached only by a switch from the electric road. It is understood, however,

that plans are underway to connect this switch with the Nickel Plate line, which it crosses at the interlocker tower west of Orestes, and thus furnish the gravel company with a direct outlet for its sand and gravel next year. It furnished most of the gravel for the paving of State Road 28 this year.

The End of The Run

My time table I now surrender, my rule book is framed in a case;
The cars I once manned are no longer, for the buses have taken their place.
The call box with the telephone on it, the register that tells about trains,
The siding, and the order to meet there, a memory is all that remains.

The stretch where I made up lost time, the rails that I passed on my run,
The crossings that heard the long whistle, since the day that I first begun.
The stations announced as we neared them, and the agents approach to the train,
Are in mourning now, for the days gone by and the quaint interurban refrain.

No more will I handle the baggage or carry the westbound mail,
No more will I call for an order, or man the pride of the rail.
I drove in the wee hours of the morning, in the sultry noontide of day,
At night when the stars were shining, along the right of way.

Iva run fast trains, and run local, Iva stopped when the block was red,
I passed the freight on the siding, the first section gone on ahead.
Old number eighteen how I miss you, no more will I meet you at Russ,
A limited train has been bartered, and swapped for a big yellow bus.

My uniform hangs in the closet, all dusty and needy of air,
My tool box is rusty and lonesome; Ill collect no more passengers fare.
Farewell to the trains of all numbers, to the trainmen, the agents I say,
Farwell to the boys on the section, I've made the last mile of my way.

My days on the road are now ended; my lanterns are burning dim,
I treasure the memory of that evening, when I took my last order from Jim.

Benjamin H. Harrell

Ben Harrell was a longtime interurban conductor and was perhaps Indiana's greatest hero of World War I.

If you have never ridden an interurban or trolley and you want to know what it was like. Have a chat with an expert traveler, one that has traveled the local route, and you will undoubtedly see the sparkle in their eyes or their pleasing smiles. The interurban and the passenger was quite a love affair.

The Union Traction Company and the Indiana Railroad had a tremendous railway network of transportation that was superior to all others in Central Indiana but crumbled. What Alfont began, the depression virtually completed.

This concludes one of the most fascinating and charming chapters in the history of transportation in Madison County, Indiana. Perhaps the antiquated trolleys did have a special meaning in transportation history for they are forever unmistakably visible in metropolitan travel today. Traffic helped banish the trolleys and traffic is bringing them back. They're not called interurbans, trolleys or street cars any longer. They are called Metro! El Train! And Light Rail! Maybe we will see them again.