

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

1. In most USA states and parts of Canada, Interurban Railways provided a seamless transition between electrified "steam" railroads and street trolley lines (or street railways - electric tramways in UK). At their peak (1916) nearly 16,000 route miles were operated. It is a concept of electrified rail transportation that was little developed outside USA and parts of Canada. Their most remarkable feature was their short life. Most systems were built 1900-1920 and most had been abandoned by 1939. A few of the more substantial systems survived WW2, but only one line, the Chicago South Shore & South Bend still operates a passenger service today, now operated as the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District. A small part of the Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee still operates as the Skokie Shuttle. Lines with partial interurban characteristics still operate out of Pittsburgh (South Hills lines) and Philadelphia (to Media, Sharon and Norristown). Some systems continued to provide freight service for many years and still do today. This has helped preserve rights of way for use by the emerging second generation of electrified urban rail transit. Recent examples include parts of Pacific Electric and the Denver-Golden line.

2. The definitive book on the subject is: *The Electric Interurban Railways in America*, by Hilton & Due, originally published in 1960. This contains a full history of the interurban industry, with a brief description of all systems considered to be typical interurbans and maps of each state showing their location. Hilton & Due classify USA intercity and rural electric railways as (1) "Lines with typical interurban characteristics"; (2) "Lines with partial interurban characteristics" and (3) "Rural trolley lines". Most lines in categories (2) & (3) are shown on the maps, but not all are mentioned in the text.

3. Typical interurban lines operated mainly on private right of way, either roadside, alongside "steam" railroads or cross-country. In towns and cities, the tracks were generally laid in the streets, shared with the local city street railway (tramway) where these existed. Some of the city systems were owned by the interurban companies. The more substantial systems sometimes had their own segregated tracks to and from central city termini or constructed these in later years as traffic increased. The Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee RR used the Chicago Elevated Railway tracks to the Chicago Loop. Some systems were previously steam RRs, whilst others operated on RR tracks shared with steam trains (e.g. SP West Side Lines, Oneida Rly over NYC West Shore, MKT out of Dallas), pre-dating the "tram-train" concept operating today in Karlsruhe and elsewhere by several decades. Interurban stock was generally of heavier construction than city cars and often operated as trains of 2 or more car units. A few companies that considered themselves to be Interurban Railways never electrified their lines but operated gasoline powered cars. Local services serving all stops and limited stop services were operated on the longer routes and freight service was a common feature.

Stops were frequent, typically 2 per mile, but could be at most street intersections in cities and towns.

4. Information on Interurban passenger stations and stops is not easy to find. Most public timetables only show the main stops (a few systems e.g. the Utah systems, and some of the lines radiating from Chicago did include most stops). Some interurbans published their TTs in the Official Guide, others in local guides such as Russells and Central States, but generally in less detail than the public TTs. Even the employees timetables usually did not include all passenger stops - many only included locations of operational importance, e.g. passing places. Separate passenger tariffs and stop lists were issued by many companies, exceedingly difficult to find. Thus, my lists are often incomplete, maybe I have detailed information on about 50% of USA systems. Extra information always welcome! I aim to include all category (1) systems in my lists, whether or not I have detailed stop information. Usually, I will only include category (2) lines where I have detailed stop information. Category (3) lines are generally not included, but exceptionally I have included a few where stop information is available.

5. The following lists include all states having a substantial number of Interurban Railways. Surprisingly few category (1) interurbans were built in NE USA, probably due to the more extensive local services operated by the steam RRs and early establishment of networks of intercity electric railways. The latter were mainly street based or side of road local operations, the majority classified by Hilton & Due as Category (3). Many states, mainly in the south and middle USA west of the Mississippi, had few Interurbans or even intercity category (2) or (3) lines. Interurbans in states with few such lines are included in the relevant USA RR lists.

6. The only other country outside of North America that developed a substantial network of Interurban Railways was Japan. Unlike USA, however, the majority of the lines remain in operation today, having been progressively updated to the efficient electrified railway systems around Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto and Nagoya. Many of the more rural systems have now been abandoned, but virtually all lasted into the 1970's. In Cuba, the F C Cubano de Hershey is certainly a typical heavy American-style interurban, still in operation. Some lines that could be considered to be USA style interurbans were built in continental Europe (mainly Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Netherlands and Belgium) and a few in South America. Most of those in Switzerland, several lines in Germany including Düsseldorf Fernlinie and OEG/RHB systems, the one line in Austria (Wien – Baden Lokalbahn) and the Belgian coastal tramway still operate. No lines that could be considered Interurbans were ever built in UK. The nearest to the concept were the Swansea & Mumbles Railway (former steam railway), Grimsby & Immingham Railway and, still operating, the Manx Electric Railway and the Blackpool & Fleetwood tramway.