

Sherman Garden Cooperative Apartments

A monthly publication for residents of Sherman Garden Apartments, 1856-66 Sherman Avenue, Evanston, IL

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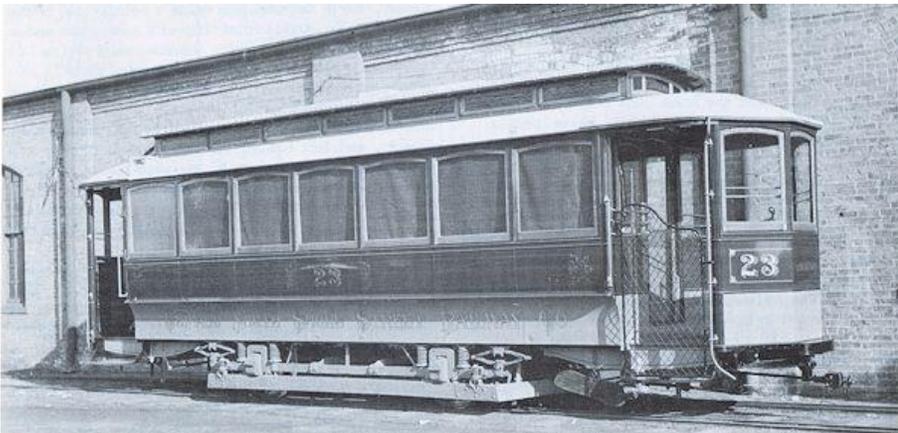
STREETCARS IN EVANSTON

By Diane Petersmarck (1860)

Did you know that a street car used to run right out in front of our building on Sherman? I've enjoyed delving into the history of our neighborhood and I hope you'll enjoy this story from long ago.

The town of Evanston (previously called Ridgeville) was chartered in 1863. Public transportation was very limited - the main carrier in 1863 being the Milwaukee & Chicago Railway with service from Chicago to Milwaukee (one train a day into Chicago in the morning and out in the evening). The Chicago & Evanston Railroad ran three trains each way daily between Evanston and Chicago beginning in 1885.

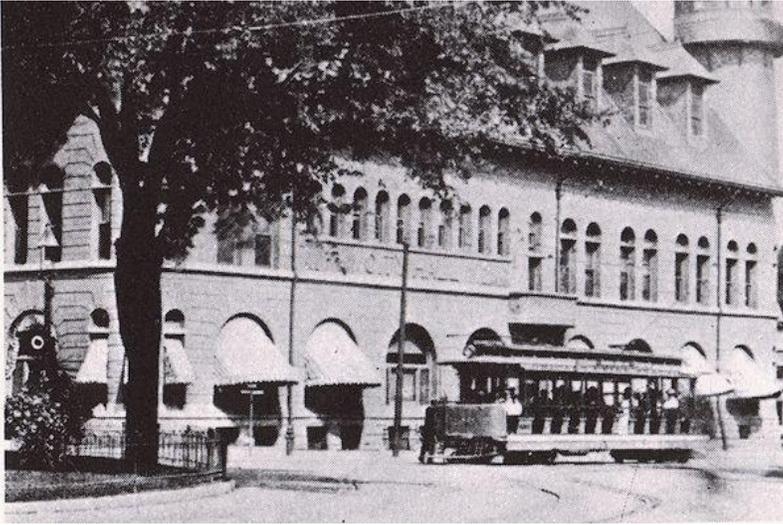
In 1892 the Chicago North Shore Street Railway Co. (CNS) was formed and street car lines (also called street trains) were built starting in 1893 from what is now roughly Irving Park and Broadway in Chicago to Dempster in Evanston, then over to Sherman and north to Emerson. Fare was a nickel and two-car "trains" were run every 10 minutes.



One of the first Pullman cars ordered by the CNS. Photo credit: John J. Brown

In 1896 a company called Evanston Electric Railway Company (EE) agreed to build and operate a double track street railway on Sherman from Emerson (where it would connect to existing Chicago North Shore track) north to Central with a single track extension on Central west to what is now Crawford. A single car ran back and forth every 12 minutes and the fare was still a nickel with a free transfer to the CNS line.

In the early 1900s the line went through ownership changes, name changes and controversy over quality and service from their ridership. In 1913 the Evanston Railway Company (ERC) took over and began rehabilitation of the lines and the equipment. The fare went up to seven cents with a 10-ride ticket available for \$.55. Children's tickets cost three cents. Cars ran every five minutes.



Early 1900s at the old city hall on Fountain Square. No photo credit given.

In 1935 the city of Evanston started a street improvement project that widened streets and would force the ERC to move track and overhead power poles and wiring. They decided that it would be less expensive to replace the street cars with busses. The first busses ran on Chicago Avenue to Davis where passengers switched to the streetcar line. Eventually the streetcars were all replaced with the last Davis to Central run on Sherman taking place on November 23, 1935, on the day of a Northwestern Homecoming game.



At Fountain Square, October 1935. Photo credit: Ed Frank

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