

Streetcar History in North East Winnipeg

This information comes from John E. Baker's book "Winnipeg's Electric Transit" published in 1982

The first streetcar service into the Elmwood, East Kildonan and North Kildonan occurred in the summer of 1903 when a single track was laid from the first Louise Bridge then north on Levis and west on Vaudreuil (Midwinter) to provide service to the J. Y. Griffin meat packing plant. An agreement was signed with the City of Winnipeg to allow the company to use the Louise Bridge after the Louise Bridge had reverted back to the City of Winnipeg after the C.P.R. had built its new bridge over the Red River. The service over the Louise Bridge began in May of 1903 with this part of the track known as the Griffin's Spur. Later that year track was laid from Midwinter to Kelvin (Henderson Highway) and then north to Linden Avenue in East Kildonan. This line provided service to the Elmwood Cemetery which opened in 1902 and to the growing market garden area of East Kildonan.

In 1904 the track was extended north from Linden for a mile to near Springfield Road. The construction season of 1906 extended the track 8,000 feet to the north to Foxgrove Avenue in East St Paul. This extended service began on May 1, 1906. Sunday service on the streetcar system began for the first time on July 8, 1906.

In 1909 a new double track was installed from Redwood and Main to the single track on Redwood Bridge, built on the completed Redwood Bridge in 1908. This new Kelvin service was operated with a single car between Main Street and the Louise Bridge travelling via Redwood, Hespeler, Kelvin (Henderson Highway) and Midwinter.

The year 1912 saw Kelvin (Henderson Highway) double tracked from Talbot to Chalmers. The track was rebuilt and doubled tracked from Stadacona to Roland (Raleigh) and on Stadacona and a new double track was laid on Talbot from Stadacona to Kelvin. The single track Griffin's spur on Midwinter was abandoned when the new track work was completed in the summer of 1912.

In 1914 work was begun on a new line from Stadacona eastward on Nairn Avenue to Panet Road for an eventual service to Transcona but all work was stopped at the outbreak of World War One in August 1914. Some of the grading work had been done and some ties had been distributed along the line but the rails for this line were requisitioned by the federal government and were shipped overseas. The route was never built. The Elmwood service was combined with the Notre Dame Service travelling via Notre Dame via Portage, Main and Higgins to Talbot then west along Talbot, Kelvin, Hespeler and Redwood to Main allowing direct service to Downtown Winnipeg. The Kelvin designation was dropped. Kildonan streetcars now came

directly from Downtown via Main Street and Redwood/Hespeler eliminating the need to transfer to another streetcar at Redwood and Main

In May 1915, a new streetcar route was under construction from Johnson and Kelvin (Henderson Highway) along Johnson, Levis and then north on Watt Street to Munroe Avenue.

August 1917 saw the company build at wye (turnaround) beside the original John Black Church (Northdale Shopping Centre) to turn single-end cars which were to be placed on the line. On August 13, 1917 service north of the John Black Wye to East St Paul was reduced to a 22 minute service.

The summer of 1918 saw the construction of an extension of the service from Munroe and Watt to Munroe and Raleigh to better serve the Morse Place area.

In 1919 the Elmwood route was changed in its downtown portion from Main Street to Portage Avenue ending at Garry Street. The Johnson-Morse Place route ran alternately from the Maryland Bridge with the East Kildonan service.

The year 1923 saw the introduction of one man cars on the Kelvin Route instead of a conductor and motorman to reduce costs.

On April 5, 1924 the company name was changed from the Winnipeg Electric Railway Company to the Winnipeg Electric Company.

In 1925 all of the streetcar routes in North East Winnipeg were now operated by one man.

In 1926, Kelvin Street in Elmwood saw the double tracking of the line from Chalmers to Montrose (Larsen Avenue) and that year also saw the Elmwood Route extended from Donald and Portage via Princess to Donald and Broadway.

The year 1927 saw introduction of route numbers to the designation signs; Route 32 from Broadway and Donald East on Broadway, north on Main via Redwood Bridge to the end of the Morse Place service; Route 35 from Elmwood via the Louise Bridge to Broadway, Sherbrook, Maryland Bridge, Academy Road to Doncaster; Route 36, from Union Station, west on Broadway, north on Donald, Princess, Logan, north on Main Street via Redwood Bridge to John Black Wye; Route 37, from Elmwood via Louise Bridge, Higgins, Princess, Donald, Broadway, Sherbrook, Maryland Bridge, Academy Road to City Park; Route 38, follows Route 36 connecting at John Black Wye with cars to East St Paul; Route 42, all cars making their destination Talbot and Stadacona and Route 44, Doncaster Wye, Academy Road and the reverse of Route 35 to the end of the Elmwood Line at Talbot and Roland (Raleigh).

Service on the Morse Place Line in 1929 was improved with the installation of a second track on Watt Street from Harbison to Munroe

In 1935, the Elmwood service was removed from the Academy service and instead ran only in the downtown looping via Donald, Ellice and Notre Dame back to Princess.

On May 24, 1937 the last streetcar north of the John Black Wye to East St Paul ran; it was replaced the next day by the North Kildonan Bus.

The year 1938 saw the last of the streetcars on the Elmwood Route on November 6 and the streetcar service was replaced by the Talbot Bus Route and that service ran from Raleigh along Talbot, Stadacona, Louise Bridge and Higgins to Main Street

On May 9, 1948, the East Kildonan-Morse Place service was combined with the St Mary's-St Anne's Service. The northern part of this service was numbered 36 East Kildonan and 32 Morse Place.

On January 3, 1950 the East Kildonan-Morse Place Service was combined with the Osborne Route. On July 2 1950 the Osborne part of the route was removed as the Osborne service was converted to bus service so the East Kildonan-Morse Place service terminated downtown on the Portage, Memorial Boulevard, Broadway and Main Street loop.

January 24, 1953 saw the last streetcar leaving the Raleigh and Munroe route replaced by the Watt Street bus service the next day. May 29 saw the end of the private company and the purchase of the company by the City of Winnipeg and the suburban municipalities with the new publically owned company called the Greater Winnipeg Transit Commission. On April 5, 1953 the East Kildonan streetcar service was rerouted along Portage Avenue all the way to Polo Park, St James Loop, the service was numbered # 17 Portage to Polo Park and 40 East Kildonan on the return trip. The last streetcar service on Henderson Highway occurred on November 27, 1953 when the last streetcar left the John Black Wye at 1:37 am. The morning of November 27 saw the beginning of bus service on Henderson Highway and the route to Polo Park.

September 19, 1955 saw the last streetcar trip leave from the Polo Park Loop along Portage to Main Street.

Trolley Cars using electricity began on November 21, 1938 and ended on October 30, 1970 but these trolley cars were never in use in North East Winnipeg.