

INTERVIEW WITH ED ROGERS FOR THE FOREST PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY-INTERVIEW BEGAN MIDSSENTANCE, NO INTRODUCTIONS, DATE, ETC.

ER: ...previous was the town of Harlem, and Harlem has been around since 1853. It's registered in Proviso Township and it's registered there. When Forest Park began building up its railroad out here with the Chicago Northwestern 1849, the end of the line was at Harlem and Circle. And, I told Ed a year and ½ later they built a bridge to get across the Des Plaines River, the depot was right over there and most of the employees that were at the end of the depot were blue-collar German immigrants. And that's one of the reasons why in the 1850's 150 years ago that they settled out here. And, this was a German community. Streetcar lines, other railroads, they've all been centered at one time in Forest Park as a junction. Example was Chicago Harlem Batavia. It originated at Pulaski and Harrison Street in the city of Chicago. It was originally in the 1878, 1882 as a steam railroad, but it's route was north on Pulaski to present day Maple west Ave. in Chicago when West to Oak Park got out here and come down Randolph continued west of Lathrop to Gail Street and that's one reason why Gale's got the curve going south there because that's the old right away from the railroad. And it ended up over here in the Waldheim/Forest Home Cemetery. So you could take a streetcar line for a funeral from the west side of Chicago all the way out here. Later on it became electric and when they electrified that in the mid 1895 area, Charles Yurky (2:13) who was the railroad, the owner of the Chicago Metro area or the Oak Park elevated line, they had bought it up and used that part of the route so that you could take the Lake Street El out here also, and

went on to Randolph and went south of here and also ended up over at the old Harlem race track that was over on Harrison, oh excuse me, Roosevelt Rd. at the torpedo plant. So he had commuter service to the Lake Street El, you could take it to the city or the village and get all the way out through there. Because they didn't build the Lake Street El until the turn of the century past to Harlem, out here to Forest Park. Wisconsin Central was originated about 1880 as St Charles Airline, they called airline railroad service, and they would come in from Franklin Park to the present day Wisconsin Central over to Des Plaines Avenue that went East and went all the way downtown and it was a commuter line. There was a stop in Franklin Park, Conway Park there was a stop at all line, there was a stop there was one over there in River Forest about Augusta, and it stopped at Madison at Altenheim, there was a station there, and then it swung east. That commuter service lasted about 30-35 years-has it's pros and cons on that.

I: What were the end points on that particular line?

ER: Well, the passenger commuter was the Franklin line, the passenger line and that was the northwestern boundary. But it did go all the way downtown to approximately Harrison and Canal Street. It was part of the Wisconsin Soo line commuter service they had in there.

I: OK and what was the northwest end point?

ER: In Franklin Park station.

I: Franklin Park, OK.

ER: Franklin Park, so that would be about I would say about 20-2400 north and the equivalent of about 1st Ave. and River Road. They followed the same route as the present day Wisconsin electric is now, that's the old right-of-way. They changed the names,

different businesses, but they still follow the same tracks. They had notoriety, pros and cons, in fact there was an accident right there on Harlem and, no the accident was on the Wisconsin Central line on Madison Street there and usually they stopped at the station at Altenheim, but this particular day it was an express train southbound and when it got there the engineer didn't see the switch was open and he instead of going start swinging out towards the southeast he went straight onto the siding, there was a derailment. I guess 8-9 people were killed, 200 injured. Because it was the only commuters way on the weekenders going on picnics whether Altenheim or up there in Franklin Park or and all of Rose and everything like that and they ended up over there. Until Chicago changed the boundary in 1896, the city limits was Pulaski and these were all independent from the Chicago service line-these streetcar lines were the Chicago Proviso Suburban, the Du Page transit, and some of the other streetcar lines in there were all independent but they all had their own route. Another one was Chicago Ave. Streetcar Line in 18885 or 1890, originated at Chicago and Austin proceeded west on Chicago Ave. to Harlem, turned south on Harlem, and went all the way over to Roosevelt Road, then went east on Roosevelt Rd. down to equivalent of Laramie Ave., turned south and started going south to 31st Street and ended up at 31st and Austin. So, you could go all day a ride for one fare! But that was one of the routes up there. Madison Street, originated Madison and Austin, come down Madison St. and got up to American Can, 5th Ave, 5th Ave.. and Madison went north to Chicago Northwestern tracks then went west on 9th Ave., then south back to Madison, and East back to Oak Park and Chicago. Harrison St. line, and that was just about 6 blocks long, it was tied in with the suburban line and that went to the racetrack at the old torpedo plant. Chicago Nor in Elgin, followed the same tracks as the present day

Eisenhower route and went all the way out to Fox River-that was another commuter service up to 1956 I guess it was the last year when they closed that down because in '56 the terminal eastern terminal that didn't go downtown, they ended right here in Forest Park. That's like I say, just a general idea. Any one of specific topics you probably which I am working on is a small booklet on each one of many. Something else if you had in mind..

I: Well, I have a couple of questions from just what you've said here. What's the line that we see no longer seems to be in tact but the one that ran between Harlem and Circle running south from Harrison?

ER: That was part of Chicago Avenue.

I: Chicago Avenue.

ER: Yeah, there was on Harlem and Madison that was where the 2 routes crisscrossed and one kept going further south to Roosevelt Rd., that was the Chicago Ave. as I mentioned previously, but Madison just crossed over and coming up with through here. But, the Madison there was another route that was on there and it branched off instead of American Can and went south on Desplaines to Roosevelt and then swung around the corner and ended up over the track so that was another one. As I was mentioning, there's approximately 16 streetcar lines and 6 railroads that commuters that did come through here. If you remember over by the ? (9:12) , by the swimming pool, the Forest Park Swimming Pool, there used to be an old junction house there. Where that junction house is at is actually was 5 railroads because you had the Metropolitan El, you had the Chicago Great Western, the Illinois Central was over there, they had a terminal line there, you had the Chicago Aurora Elgin, they all converged right there in a one block area. And what

happened is that the Illinois Central, the old line is the, in back of the park, the Forest Park Park where there's a slight circle when you park in there and they come around to get out of the parking lot there, well that was the old right away for the old Illinois Central, and it started going south there and you can see the curve that's going there, that is the line that's there on the east end of the torpedo plant where the shopping mall that we have today. And, it went all the way south to Riverside and the tracks are still over there. They tore it up at Roosevelt Rd. you couldn't get coming further north, but that was a one line there. Chicago Great Western route or right away was the present day parking lot we have over here just in back of Altenheim cemetery. We got, we just got cleaned up over there. The terminal at Des Plaines and the Eisenhower for the El, when I left the terminal there it went south to present day Eisenhower position and was adjacent, parallel right along with it over the river and then it swung back north a little bit and then followed all the way out to Wheaton and that one there, let's see, the Wisconsin Central was tied in there. They brought their freight in from Wisconsin Central area, the twin cities, they come in this route, they come through Forest Park they hit the junction over there and they ended up about 4600 west about Arthington, that was the Chicago Great Western and Wisconsin Central line. The freight terminal was there.

I: With all the lines that passed through here, let's say the freight lines, let's talk about them to begin with. Were there any goods that were coming into Forest Park or leaving from Forest Park that traveled by these rail lines? What went out of Forest Park?

ER: Oh Yeah! Well, we start over here on Circle Ave. there was 2 or 3 freight companies, there was coal companies over there. Circle, Franklin, and Brown Street I am told in the 1929's they was all an industrial area there. They also brought in ice from

Wisconsin and dispatched around here in the metro Forest Park area. And that's one of the reasons why we still have remnants over here in the meat packing places, and that was as I say owned by the railroad. They called it a railroad-crossing junction. But that was all built up by the commercial zone over there. Another example is that if you take Van Buren west of the railroad tracks and then going south and then you start swinging east there's a huge piece of metal structure over there. That was 5 or 6 sidings over there of the various companies in there where they could download all their stuff or pick it up over there. If you take a walk along the Wisconsin Central Line, walking south today, there are 3 or 4 more sidings that are still over there, factories over there, commercial zoning. And, they did uploading, downloading over there for business and sometimes it even swung west and hooked up with Great Western and went out to the western area.

I: Is there anything that comes in and goes out today?

ER: No, most of the stuff is more economical and faster with a flat bed semi trailer to get in and out. Another thing is that, as I mentioned at Harrison, Chicago Harlem Batavia you can still see today the present route that when you're taking Van Buren south of Madison and where it starts swinging east there's a chain link fence there that goes in the parking lot, well that chain link gate, that was the old route that went into the cemetery. And, quite a few times they picked up at the cemetery gravel. They took gravel out for the railroad beds in there and that's one of the reasons why Ferdinand Haas was doing a good business in there. He had the funeral yard there, the cemetery was there, and when the train was empty with passengers and everything you would pick up 2 or 3 flatcars of gravel and take it back in the city. So, it was, a way there that there that went through the area was free, they built it free for him, so they got free gravel in exchange for it, but it

was part of municipal maneuvering. Before Haas expanded the cemetery for Forest Home and Waldheim west there they did have an amusement park over there too. And we also had one on there at the present day Eisenhower that was serviced by the street car lines and that was the White City Amusement Park that was over there until 1926-28 when it burned down. Some of those, it was before River View and on the west side here out in Forest Park there was, summer time this was a great place for it, all kinds of excursions that was there.

I: You know it's, even today the Lake Street El seems to be elevated for a certain part of it's history wasn't the Congress line, and I'm not even sure what it's called today, the one that runs along the Congress Expressway-that used to be elevated as well at a certain point wasn't it?

ER: Well it was above the ground like the Lake Street El to Laramie, 5400 west, and then it went down on the ground at Laramie Avenue and came west.

I: And came West.

ER: And came west, and it was on the ground and that's one of the reasons why as I mentioned that the 5 railroads and street car lines converged over here on Des Plaines Ave. and Circle. That's one of the reasons why Circle Ave. Bridge was built in the late 20's because they had to go over 5 railroads. And they sure weren't going to dig a hole in there for a viaduct and everything. That's one of the reasons why it wasn't part of the Eisenhower; they built that bridge there. It was there a long, long time. The south end was Ferrara Candy there and the only way to get across the railroad tracks and commute to the south side of Forest Park was to go by the overpass there. Otherwise you had to come all the way out here at Des Plaines and the present day Eisenhower on the ground

level. You could have sitting in the car in the 20's waiting for the gate to go up when the metro line, the El, went by the gates went up and you still had to stop because then the Chicago Great Western had their gates down and when 100 cars went by and the freight train was in there you're ready to step on the gas you had to wait because Aurora and Elgin was still coming through. So the 3 sidings is over by the old restaurant that was over there by the terminal so they would just park their car and wait until it was clear and get a snack or something like that to get on the north side of Forest Park! (Laughter)

I: OK.

ER: So, we had congestion-it's been out here a long, long time.

I: Just out of curiosity, how long have you actually been in the village?

ER: I've lived out here about 26-27 years.

I: And, I'm sure that you're interest in the rail lines precedes that, right, you're moving to the village?

ER: Generally just on the west side.

I: I see, I see.

ER: I've had interest in Chicago North Western because it was one of the first railroads that was built out here and quite a bit of information I got from a gentleman that lives in Oak Park, his name is Charles Stats. And, this gentleman happens to be the archive emeritus is retired now, but he's in charge with the Chicago Northwestern Historical Society, and he gave me 20?, quite a few pieces of information that was referred to out here from the old railroad yards, the plans and so forth. There's very limited photographs in there and Circle Avenue is one of the reasons why they all the retail restaurants that were built there because like Goldy's Hamburger that was built since the 20's, they were

in business. And over the Circle Inn, Circle Bowl and Stats further on but that's one of the reasons why the restaurants follow Circle Ave. all the way over to Des Plaines and there'd be 2,3,4, restaurants or bars there, locally right in there so when it was 4 o'clock employees the first thing they did is get their refreshment over there or get a bite to eat, have a beer and sandwich and that was it.

I: These were the railroad employees?

ER: Yeah, yeah.

I: I also wanted to ask you if you recall, you talked about the accident at Altenheim on the siding there, the derailment, are you familiar with one that took place on Harlem at the Congress El?

ER: Ah, there's been, you mean from the El?

I: Well it was on the ground. This must have been I'd say 57?

ER: There's been quite a few of them. And it was, I think we've got it over in the archives someplace the photograph of the Aurora and Elgin that took care of a car that tried to get around the gates and they both ended up in the sides in there so they are in there. The stories are either in the Forest Park or Aurora, or the Forest Park Review. But they ah, there's every couple of years it seems like there's a major disasters over there at one time or another.

I: As long as it was on the ground?

ER: Yeah.

I: And what year specifically did it go, I guess what would you call that, the structure that the highway, the expressway and the commuter line follow now? I don't know exactly what you would call it but it's not on ground level, you don't cross it.

I: No, well what happens is when they built the Eisenhower and they started construction around 1948 from downtown and working it west what they did is literally they bought one square block wide which became the right of way and that was from Harrison to approximately Filmore. And when they built that for the right of way they did construction, they went below ground level there and that's why it's below ground. Now the El until 1956 when the Eisenhower was completed out here and was opened up, they were still running on the ground. But after that when they got the terminal in there and the Eisenhower they got the median strip in there you could take the El that was down the middle of the Eisenhower and it come up out of the ground to the present day curve that was going to the terminal and was coming around there because they looped around and they went back down there.

I: You know, in talking to Dr. Orland he told me that the commuter line actually extended beyond the terminal at Des Plaines.

I: Ah, yeah another maybe 3/8ths or a 1/2 mile because as the El's got to the end of the passenger station at Des Plaines and went further west 2 or 3 blocks and began a loop to turn around to the west and come around and swing around to the east. Now at the same time it went up in the air for an overpass because Aurora Elgin was underneath it and they were coming from the west Wheaton and when they ended at Des Plaines Ave. they were on the ground level, they stopped at the same terminal on the other side of the platform, they completed their loop and they went back out west. So, that was the two of them that was right there at one time, but that's where the present shop is at right now, all that area that's built up out there where they've got the service yards there and they got

the loop and everything and the, just on the segment right there on Concordia they had all that land that was all bought up in there.

I: So the electric commuter didn't really run say as far as 1st Ave. or what's the town I'm thinking of around Hillside, it actually just turned around and came back.

ER: The Harrison El or the metra line did have a shuttle service from Forest Park and went all the way out equivalent to um, Wheaton, not Wheaton but Westchester.

I: Westchester is the town I was trying to think of, yeah.

ER: Yeah. It did have one or two cars in there and they used that as more or less a commuter service, which didn't prosper very much because it was still all vacant out there. But the Aurora and Elgin had around the, just east of Westchester, they had their large storage yard over there so when west bound or east bound Aurora and Elgin dumped all the passengers there but they went into the yard and storage. But that was also the shuttle all the way over there from the Harrison EL to Cermak and ended up at Cermak and 1st Ave. So there was a shuttle El all over there too. So we did have that until about the 1930's and right before the war they cut that down because from lack of business.

I: Would you say that the 2 main attractions at the end of our line were one the cemeteries and two the amusement park, right? Those were the main attractions.

ER: From commuters and outsiders, yes. Other than transportation, it was the main way to get around here.

I: And, so when they put this line in when they planned this line you can probably tell me when, when they initiated this line did it, did it extend all the way out to Forest Park,

did it reach it's last destination in Forest Park right away or was it done in gradual steps going west?

ER: Well, as they constructed it, the, like an example, the Lake Street El when they built it from downtown by 1893, it was only up to Cicero, and then by 1895 it got to Laramie and there was a terminal there. Then it went down in the ground and it proceeded to about Lake Street or South Blvd. today to Ridgeland Ave. then it went south of the block and ½ over to Randolph and proceeded west out here down Randolph to Forest Park. Because west of Ridgeland Ave. was, they didn't have it built there until 1907. So, when they finally got that in there they discontinued Randolph shuttle that was over there and in fact they call it the Kaimler Ave. Shuttle and that was part of the present day rapid transit system that cuts through there.

I: And I assume that they had to put in, what would you call it, it 's a riser it's an earthen sort of cement wall on each side right, with the rail tracks that run that run in them?

ER: The El tracks was just like a streetcar line, it was flat bedded in the streets.

I: Is that right?

ER: Yeah, they were at that level. In order to get on and off you had to go where the station was there was a small platform there 4 ft. 3 ft. off the ground. Just walked up the stairs and you got it in there because they also had the same kind of platforms going all the way downtown. Now when they built the Douglas Park El and also the Harrison El the one at Cermak only got up to 54th St. and that was the terminal over there. The one on Harrison or the present day terminal is in there that was coming out here from Laramie Ave. but that was in the 1890's also that was all the way out here. So, it's been about 100, 110 years we have commuter service and the CTA equivalent today.

I: Do you have any knowledge of the different systems of power that power these electric commuters, are you familiar with that or are you just familiar with the lines?

ER: Yeah, the lines are the Chicago Aurora and Elgin, the Lake Street EL voltage wise they were 600-volt systems, overheads. Chicago Aurora and Elgin could take the overhead wires over the 3rd rail. And when they got out of Forest Park, they switched over to the 3rd rail systems in there until all the way out to the Fox River. And then they would have to use their trolley lines there. But the west line over there at the metropolitan El. was both ways at 600 volts.

I: And when you talk about overhead, that's with lines strung up above the road..

ER: That's the old trolley wires that were overhead, yeah.

I: Right, and an actual sort of carriage apparatus that strung off the top of the roof and actually made contact with these things, right?

ER: Right just like on the streetcar line, that's how they picked them up.

I: When these things that followed the wire are you familiar with the apparatus that, did it run under the wire, did it loop over the wire?

ER: On the vehicles that drew electricity they had what they call the trolley pull. On the end of the pull that was in the upright position was just a wheel. So, whenever they would take it and they would take it and raise the pull, the wheel would touch the wire. So as the travelers proceeded along there the wheel was following the wire, it was a slotted wheel.

I: Would it ride above or below the wire?

ER: Below the wire.

I: Below the wire.

ER: Because the trolley pulls were sprung and from the springs that were in there they tried to automatically raise by itself-what it did was keep it tight and snug against the wire so it could pick it up in there

I: A spring loaded to keep contact.

ER: Yeah, yeah.

I: Interesting, interesting!

ER: Yeah. There's quite a few books out there the "Chicago Rapid Transit", "Chicago Surface Lines", I guess they're published by SCERA, Central Electric Railroad Association, and they tell you from the beginning all the metro from the Columbia exposition from about 1945 about the El's. then they have the 2nd book which is the modern version of all the El's from 1945 to the present day. And, they'll tell you just about anything you want to know about the systems.

I: Can you talk about the, just run down roughly, how the 3rd rail system operated on these electric commuters?

ER: Well, they picked up there; they followed the tracks and outside of the wheels where they call the undercarriage and on the side of it was the pick up shoe. What they call in there is just a flat piece of steel that was fluted also and it would follow the track, the 3rd rail. And, it would just follow it along there and as the train was going along there the train was turning so it was the 3rd rail it was just picking up in there. A good example would be Lake St. El right there.

I: But the 3rd rail was electrified.-that's where the power came from.

ER: Oh yeah. Just like the Lake Street El today that's a 3rd rail over there and over on the metra line that's a 3rd rail over there also.

I: Did you see any advantage between one system and the other?

ER: Not really, because there's pros and cons on both sides.

I: Are you familiar with the pros and cons? Would you talk about that?

ER: Yeah, in the winter time when there was sleet and snow they couldn't get the electricity because all the sleet was on the wires there and it had frozen over and it wasn't making contact.

I: This was with the overhead system?

ER: Yeah, the overhead system and then when he says no, no we have to put it on the ground on the 3rd rail then it was bumped over there because we always had snow over there and they couldn't get anybody out here to clean the 600 volts that was on the 3rd rail. So, each had it's pros and cons and advantages in there.

I: In other words you had to be very careful how you shoveled around a 600 volt iron rail. (Laughter)

RE: Yes, right!

I: Well I take it that they have plows that sort of ride in that area now and would clear it right?

ER: Ah, yeah. Usually they, the El like in the Eisenhower at nighttime they have what they call a service car in there and all it is it's like a brush in there, like a blower as it goes along the track and anything that's by the 3rd rail just gets blown away and that's it. And with the continual service out there, usually the tracks are kept clean. There are a couple times that well it was in 1963 that we had a big storm and the whole city shut down they couldn't get the snow off of there and everything. So they had to turn the

power off to get the snow off of there and everything else and do it the old fashioned way, but just by shovel, clear the tracks.

I: I'm sure that when you give your talk that there were certain things, specific things that you think that people ought to know just amazing facts. Do any of those come to mind that you'd like to leave on our little talk here, things that the common person would not know about this stuff that would just amaze them if they knew?

ER: Well, besides the amazement all I can say is that when they cut down, they cut down streetcar lines and commuter service I think it's time to say, which they are starting to do now is with the congestion on the expressways and one person, one car and no car pools that's one of the reasons why they built out the southwest of midway and why they extended the El all the way out to the Eisenhower to the airport, and to service all those people. So even though about 1940 when they discontinued all extensions and everything, now they're all coming back-really it's the ghost of the commuter service! Which I imagine a lot of people would like to take the old Aurora Elgin from downtown and going all the way out to Wheaton, Batavia, something like that instead of fighting with the Eisenhower over here. They used to have up to 8 cars at a time and each one carrying 80-90 people at a time at 6-minute intervals, so you really can make pretty good time as a commuter a commuter service.

I: Yeah, you know I'd like to ask some questions about the El line as well, just things about, I don't even know if they still have these anymore, do they have any kind of vending machines in these areas at all?

ER: At the terminals?

I: Yeah, I mean, in the old days you used to be able to get like pieces of Wrigley's gum, Spanish peanuts..

ER: Not really. They have penny vending machines that they used to have for the old chiclet gum or peanuts or something like that but nowadays the vendors are usually at the terminal where the ticket office is at when you are getting on at Lake Street El there's a guy who sells newspapers, candy bars and everything else.

I: No longer any vending machines like there used to be in the old days?

ER: No.

I: Yeah, I guess it's not very practical in this day and age.

ER: No, its' not economical.

I: How about advertising? Who, do you have any knowledge of who handles the advertising that goes on the commuter lines anymore? I mean do they even still do that? It's been a long time since I've ridden the El.

ER: Yeah. Most of them are each individually handled by the advertisement company. The CTA you have to call downtown by the Merchandise Mart if you want an ad on there and also to the specially painted buses in there for your commercial parts and so forth, that would be the CTA. If you wanted to put an advertisement in the railroads, you contact the MTA, or the RTA and see them about it. So there is, they're still doing advertising and everything but each company has it's own individual systems.

I: I see, I see. Anything else that you'd like to add here?

ER: Not really. Yeah, I'll add one more thing. Usually people ask me questions and I found in history books and so on and so forth I usually found the answer and I ended up

with 2 more questions that were unanswered and I have to go back in there, so the more I learn the dumber I got. (Laughter)

I: OK.

ER: As I say, it was since the 1880's the Els, the streetcars, Chicago Westowns, they bought up so many smaller companies that became the Westowns, and the present day rapid transit system they were all in existence now for over 100-110 years because they first started out with the Columbian Exhibition in 1893. Lake Street El was still steam up to Cicero Ave. up till 1893 then they switched over and they converted to electricity in 1895. Supposedly it was more economical and for other reasons there plus people that lived along there weren't confronted with the soot and everything else, cinders, steam and everything else that was there. They tried to make it as a clean, clean system and converted it to electricity in there.

I: And maybe you can refresh me one more time, you probably mentioned it earlier, which line was first, the Lake St. El or the Congress line? Which one was in first of the electric commuters?

ER: Well, I can't give credit to either one because the Chicago Harlem Batavia streetcar line was the one that was originated in '88 1890 and there were streetcars in '88 and in 1890 they were on Madison Street. So, we had electrical service out here before we had the El's out here. As I say, it wasn't until turn of the century when the Lake St. El got up to about Lathrop and it was around 1902-1903 before the present day Eisenhower El got all the way out here.

I: I see, OK.

ER: We did have the Aurora and Elgin was out there around 1895-1900 when they bought it the old Insol, the owner of the old suburban line there and he would, like some of the other guys they would just conglomerate the 2 or 3 streetcar lines and make it one company like, just like Chicago Westown and try and get the do the best line there. So, they've been around a long time trying to develop, redevelop, recommit, reservice, other than that I guess it's about it for general outline on there.

I: OK, and let me ask, did any, we talked about steam, we talked about electric, did horse trolley's come into this in any way shape or form?

ER: Yes, 1880's. In fact before they electrified Chicago Ave. streetcar line in the 1880's that was horse drawn. In fact one of the old horse drawn street car lines on Roosevelt Road was a gentleman who lived out here in Forest Park, he happened to be a conductor, but he was a conductor and motorman for the old U. S. Mail cars. And they would come all the way out here to Forest Park, or Harlem, go East on Harlem, or East on Roosevelt through the city all the way up to about Albany there and that's all they did was stop about every 3-4 blocks and they would pick up the mail put it on the car. It wasn't passenger service, strictly mail. And, like present day trucks that we have now for local pickups and everything. But, they were doing that on streetcar lines. They did that on the horse drawn lines and until about 1920 they had those special services.

I: Interesting.

ER: So they had a use for that even in those days. One of the older horse drawn cars and some of the old mail cars they are on display in Union Illinois they call it the Illinois Traction Museum. They've got close to 200 pieces of equipment out there from old El

steam engines, streetcar lines and so on and so forth. And, it's only about an hour drive from here.

I: Union?

ER: Union.

I: Well they have '78 auction at least once a year the old phonograph exhibition and the '78 auction so I've been out there a few times going broke. (Laughter)

ER: Yeah, but they're there and that's from May until Sept. after Labor Day usually Sunday they have a live steam engine pull 2 or 3 cars and the kids can ride on it and the grandchildren take rides. Usually Saturdays is, they have the electrified overhead system for the wires and you can take an old wooden Lake Street El, all the old equipment there or the steel cars, or the old street cars, just like the old red, they call them red rockets, you can take the streetcar ride out there with the kids there too. So, they've got a cool 6 ½ miles of track out there now that's operable either with steam or electricity, and it's one of the largest in the United States.

I: Interesting, interesting. Well thank you very much for coming over and I'm sorry for the being in the sauna here. Thank you very much for taking the time...Fade....

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