

Record Group 49
Detroit United Railway (Interurban)
1898-2005
1 half manuscript box

Plymouth Historical Museum, Plymouth, MI

Finding Aid Written by Lena Packer, 30 March 2006

Updated by Jennifer Meekhof, 14 December 2011

- Creator:** Detroit United Railway
- Acquisition:** The Detroit United Railway (Interurban) records were deposited in the archives at various dates from 1976 through 1994.
- Language:** Materials in English
- Access:** Records are open for research
- Use:** Refer to Archives Reading Room Guidelines
- Notes:** Citation Style: "Detroit United Railway (Interurban)," Record Group 49, Archives, Plymouth Historical Museum

Abstract

Detroit United Railway was a transport company in southeastern Michigan that operated numerous streetcar and interurban lines. The company incorporated on December 31, 1900, and continued to expand into the early 1920s. The Detroit United Railway operated interurban railway routes in seven directions from downtown Detroit: West Jefferson Corridor, Fort Street Corridor, Michigan Avenue Corridor, Grand River Corridor, Woodward Corridor, Gratiot Corridor, and the East Jefferson Corridor. When the Detroit United Railway sold the Detroit streetcar system to the city in 1922, the system began to decline. In 1928, railway company was sold to Eastern Michigan Railways. Then in 1934, the last of the interurban railway lines was replaced with buses.

Scope and Content

The Detroit United Railway (Interurban) record group consists of materials regarding the Railway as it related to transportation in Plymouth and the history of the railway system. The collection includes maps of the railways, photographs, articles and pamphlets. Some student essays are also included in the record group.

Entries

[Entry 1:](#) Newspaper and Magazine Articles

[Entry 2:](#) Student Essays

[Entry 3:](#) Pamphlets

[Entry 4:](#) Photographs

[Entry 5:](#) Rail Line Maps

[Entry 6:](#) Early History of Detroit, Plymouth, Northville, Ry. (later part of D.U.R.)

Important Subjects

Detroit United Railway

Local History—Plymouth, MI

Transportation—Plymouth, MI

Box 1 Shelf 8

Entry 1: Newspaper and magazine articles

“Travel: Michigan’s Interurbans,” *Chronicle*, September-October, 1986

“Remember Suburban Street Cars?”

“Era of trains and trolleys,” *Ann Arbor News*, October 2, 2005

“Two Streetcar Lines Provide Northville-to-Detroit Service,” *Northville Record*,
June 25, 1975

“Here Lies the Streetcar (1863-1956),” *Detroit Free Press Roto Magazine*, April 8, 1956
(Acc. #82.70.8L)

“Do You Remember When Plymouth Had Trolleys?” April 1968 (Acc. #94.32.17)

“End of the Line,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 8, 1956 (Acc. #82.70.7L)

“Plymouth’s trolley car,” *Plymouth Observer*, June 17, 1974

“Cheap Tracks Now to Carry the Little Cars,” *Electric Railway Service*, October 8, 1920

“When Plymouth and Canton rode the rails,” *Observer & Eccentric*, December 15, 1988

“Area Histoians Keep Track of Railroading’s Past,” *Observer & Eccentric*, September
20, 1990

“The Lying Evening News Still Continues to Lie,” *Electric Railway Service*, April 17,
1914

“Detroit’s Suburban Buses,” *Motor Coach Age 53*, October-December 2002

“Track ‘N’ Trolley,” reprint from *The Dearborn Historian* 11, Winter 1971

“Karl Starkweather Tell of Early Days of Trolley Car in Plymouth,” *The Plymouth Mail*,
Oct. 3, 1947

Entry 2: Student essays

“Plymouth’s Transportation from 1899–1928: The Interurban Railway”

“Plymouth Transportation: The Interurban”

“The Inter-Urban Trolley”

Entry 3: Pamphlets

“Detroit –its Trolleys and Interurbans” (3 copies) (Acc. #80.1.9L & #2007.100.01)

Entry 4: Photographs

Train plowing through snow (Acc. #93.104.11)

Phoenix and Interurban bridges (Acc. #89.86.2L)

Interurban on Main St. (Acc. #99.126.40)

DUR station at Newburg (Acc. #76.229.6)

Employees standing outside train (Acc. #89.97.20L)

Train on unpaved road (Acc. #89.97.21L)
Train on Main and Penniman (Acc. #89.97.10L)
Trolley on Ice House Curve between Plymouth and Northville (4 copies)
(Acc. #97.72, # 96.82.1N, #77.70.8,#89.97.8L)
Train on bridge with horse and buggy (4 copies) (Acc. #89.97.13L)
Scene on the Northville branch of the Detroit, Jackson, and Chicago Ry.
89.97.4L)
Train approaching River Rouge trestle south of Northville (Acc. #89.97.1L)
Train near park (Acc. #89.97.12L)
Phoenix Tunnel (6 copies) (Acc. #75.200.6, #91.63.2L, #89.97.9L)
Main Street, Northville (#89.97.2L)
Train on bridge entering Northville (Acc. #89.97.6L)
Interurban on Main and Penniman, 1905 (3 copies) (Acc. #89.97.11L)
Trestle over Rouge River heading toward Northville with passengers and motorman and
conductor, circa 1900 (3 copies)
Men on back of train going over bridge (3 copies)
Trolleys that went to Detroit (4 copies)

Larger photos

Shelf 39

Interurban #1000X-129

Map Case 2- Drawer 5

Pencil sketch of Detroit Interurban in 1898
Pencil sketch of interurban in Detroit on Woodward in 1930's (Acc. #76.105.1)
Pencil sketch of family standing in front of train (Acc. #76.105.3)
Pencil sketch of interurban in the city in 1930's (Acc. #76.105.2)

Entry 5: Miscellaneous

Map of Detroit Interurban routes
Map of Detroit United Lines and Interurban connections
Handout about Detroit Interurban from Wayne Historical Museum, May, 1968
Time card of Detroit, Plymouth, Northville Ry. 1899

Entry 6: Early History of Detroit, Plymouth, Northville, Ry. (later part of D.U.R.)

Franchise agreement with Village of Plymouth, 1900
Memo to Martin Vrooman, April, 1898
Petition to Plymouth Council for railway, Aug. 31, 1898
Printer's ad for the railway, Dec. 1901
Petition to Plymouth Common Council, Aug. 22, 1898
Petition to Plymouth Council to grant freight privileges, Dec., 1900
Petition to Plymouth Common Council Nov., 1096
Document issuing an ordinance granting the incorporation of the Detroit, Plymouth, Ann
Arbor Railway, June, 1900

Letter from railway to Village of Plymouth Clerk accepting the grant to incorporate the
Railway, May, 1898

Petition from property owners regarding the location of the line for the railway, Aug. 1
1898