

## Introduction

In October 1899, there were four street car companies in Columbus. That October, three companies were combined into a new streetcar company, the **Columbus Railway Company**. The three were the **Columbus Street Railway Co.**, the dominant company with the most lines; the **Columbus Central Railway Co.**, which owned the Columbus–Westerville line that included Minerva Park; and the **Crosstown Street Railway Co.**, which owned the West Broad Street line previously named the Glenwood & Greenlawn Railway Co.

The fourth line, the **Central Market Street Railway**, which provided the standard gauge interurban tracks into Columbus, joined the group in 1906.

The following Columbus Dispatch articles from 1899 describe the events and excitement associated with these changes. - AJC

## COMBINED Are Street Railways

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**The Deal Was Completed at Noon Today.**

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**All Local Lines Tied Over to New  
Columbus Railway Company.**

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**The Central, Columbus Street, and Crosstown Lines  
in a New Company – The Details for the Consolidation.**

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**(Columbus Dispatch, October 2, 1899)** – This morning the final steps were taken that [ put ] the street railway systems of Columbus under one management, with Mr. Robert E. Sheldon as president and Mr. P.V. Burington, secretary.

Although an election of the other officers will probably not take place until tomorrow, it is a safe proposition to make, that Mr. E.K. Stewart will be the general manager of the Columbus Railway Company.

This now consists of the lines of the Columbus Street Railway [Co.], those of the Columbus Central [Railway Co.], and the Crosstown [Street Railway Co.].

The headquarters and general offices will probably remain at the street railway office on High Street.

Mr. V.S. Rowe, cashier of the First National Bank of Cincinnati, and the man who bid in the Columbus Central Street Railway for \$1,300,000, dropped into town very quietly this morning and registered at the Chittenden.

[Land] Attorney Frank Merrick, master commissioner of the Central; Attorney Squires and President Moshier of the Guardian Trust company, of New York, dropped into the office of Watson, Burr & Livesay, in the King Building.

Following them came Mr. E.K. Stewart of the Columbus Street Railway; Mr. Burrington, Mr. Robert Sheldon, and others.

Rowe was here to pay for the property he had bid in at commissioner sale and Mr. Merrick, President[-cashier] and Attorney Squires were here to see that everything was shipshape.

The gentlemen from the Columbus Street railway and from Columbus railway were present to secure the property for the Columbus Street railway.

The first step was the transfer [of the] Columbus Central to the Columbus Railway company. A deed to this effect was passed by Master Commissioner Merrick. Mr. Rowe having signed his purchase over to the Columbus Railway company.

Then the Columbus Street Railway company gave a deed of its property to the new company, and finally the Crosstown company gave a deed of its property to the Columbus Railway company. This placed the urban street railways in the hands of the new company.

The final step was when Mr. Robert E. Sheldon, as secretary of the Columbus Railway company, executed a mortgage of \$7,000,000 to the Union Savings Bank and Trust company, of Cincinnati.

Mr. Henry A. Lanman, as president, and Mr. Nelson A. Sims, as secretary, executed the deed for the cross town road.

Matters pertaining to the car, schedule, minor offices, and matters of interest to the new company were being discussed late this afternoon and will be considered tomorrow.

People are wondering how the cars are going to be run; how many men are to be retained. They are also wondering when the central cars are to be painted yellow; who is going to be superintendent of that division and a thousand other questions are being asked.

The deeds were taken to the courthouse by Mr. Robert Sheldon and Mr. E.K. Stewart. It took \$4,500 in revenue stamps for the Columbus street railway's transfer and \$1,000 for the Columbus Central's.

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# INSPECTED

## The Street Railways,

### A Green Car Makes its First Trip on High Street.

### The Minerva Takes Officers and Reporters Over the Roads.

### Winter Schedule Now in Effect on the Central – No Changes at Present – Transfers and Other Matters.

**(Columbus Dispatch, October 3, 1899)** – This morning the green line car, Minerva, has the honor of breaking the High street blockade of years, and is the first car of that line to get on the coveted territory.

At 10:30 this morning this magnificent car, carrying a lot of the officials of the new company, and newspaper men started from the offices on High near Broad and made a trip over part of High street and then out the power plant of the former Central road at Milo.

The deal which was consummated yesterday at noon was the talk of the town last night, and when the businessmen and others along the route traversed by the Minerva, saw the green car going along they cheered.

Now the new company will have many anxious weeks of figuring, for it will take action by council to change the grants so that the green line cars which are to be painted yellow as fast as they can be sent to the shops, can get onto High street and other lines. The franchises granted by the city council to the various lines will have to be changed in conformity with the demands of the enlarged system, and to figure this out so there will not have to be embarrassing changes and delays, will take possibly months of hard work.

It is said that a scheme is on foot to belt the High street line north of the barn with the Central's line, and that the matter of getting through the university grounds will take a lot of figuring.

Just how the consolidated, Columbus street, the Crosstown, and the Central lines are to be operated under one big system, is a matter of conjecture, and it will take a "heap" of figuring to straighten out. In the meantime the patrons of the several lines are wondering "where they are at" and the suburban lines are figuring where they will have to change their schedules, if at all. There are hundreds of businessmen who live out on these suburban lines and they are anxiously awaiting the verdict of the new company.

The change of a few minutes in the running time of the cars as operated at present may make from 30 minutes to an hour's difference in the getting to business of hundreds of men.

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**ON THE MINERVA**  
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**The Party Rode Over Part of Both Lines.**  
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Promptly at 10:30 the magnificent special of the Central, "Minerva," under the charge of Charles McIntyre, motorman, H.B. Welch, conductor, and M.S. Hopkins, general superintendent and superintendent of transportation G.R. Whisner, pulled up in front of the general offices and the following gentlemen, together with newspaper men (who were also gentlemen) stepped aboard. President Robert E. Sheldon, Howard C. Park, William T. McClure, J.M. Bennett, Frank W. Merrick, Vice President E.K. Stewart, Hon. Emmett Tompkins, N.B. Abbott, John Joyce, D.S. Gray, Emerson McMillin, C.D. Firestone, and Theodore Rhoads.

Down High street to the courthouse the car ran and then reversing went to the viaduct. Here the car was again sent south to Chestnut and out to the barracks, where the Central's line was struck and the party was taken to the big car shed and powerhouse at Milo. Mr. McMillin and others were greatly interested in the new hydro-carbon motor that Messrs. F.E. and W.E. Wells were building at the plant and Mr. McMillin explained how it was possible to blow through a grindstone.

After viewing the entire plant, the party was brought to Cleveland and Mt. Vernon avenues, where the Cleveland avenue line was taken to Long Street and thence the car sped to High.

It was the first trip of a green line car on "hostile" territory.

All the gentlemen who made up the party smoked good cigars and were greatly pleased over the trip.

The question of transfers came up while the trip was being made and President Sheldon said that it was too early yet to say anything about this matter, but the new company would do as well in the future as they had in the past. It will take a long time to get schedules that will be satisfactory or lines laid out that will do the most good to the most people.

He was asked how the roads would "belt" and replied that that point was for future decision. Already orders have been placed for some heavy guaranteed work at the corners of Spruce and High, State and High, Town and High, and Fulton and High, so these corners may expect a heavy travel. The Spruce and High line might connect with the Harrison avenue line. At State and High, a half dozen combinations could be made; at Town and High and at Fulton and High the Central would be tapped.

It may be that a belt will be thrown out Woodward avenue west, connecting with the Central.

The winter schedule has now gone into effect on the Central road, and at present there will be no further change either in men or officers. Both roads will be run for a time as if nothing had occurred. Meanwhile, there is a deal of studying of maps by the powers that be.

The directors of the new company are R.E. Sheldon, J.M. Bennett, W.S. McClure, H.S. Waite, and Hartford Tolan.

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**TOLAN TESTIFIES**  
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**Tells About His Connection With the New Company.**  
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Attorney E.M. Patterson took one deposition this morning from Harford Tolan, in the matter of the motion to enjoin the carrying out of the consolidation. Mr. Tolan says that he became an incorporator in the new company at the request of E.K. Stewart; that he went to the office of Watson, Burr, and Livesay, and subscribed for stock and signed a notice for a meeting of the stockholders. He said he had never held a previous conference with any other stockholder or director of the company relative to the formation of the street car company.

He said he supposed that Watson, Burr & Livesay were acting for the old company, and subscribed for one share of the new stock, and gave a demand note in payment for it, which he has not paid. Yesterday the stockholders met and William McClure, president of the new company, resigned, and R.E. Sheldon was elected to that office; Mr. Waite, treasurer of the new company, resigned, and E.K. Stewart was elected in his stead; John M. Bennett, secretary of the new company, resigned and P.V. Burington was elected to that office.

He testified that the new company accepted the deed conveying all the property of the Columbus Street Railway company to the new company, and also conveying the Central road to the new company; also that a resolution was adopted authorizing the execution of a mortgage of seven millions of dollars on all the property of the Columbus Railway company.

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**What They Got.**  
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Including the right of way and the plant at Milo the Columbus Railway company acquired from the Central, 40 motor cars, 10 trailers, and 10 large double cars. Then they got a water car, not now used; a sweeper, snow plow, and a baggage car that has been netting the Central \$10 a day. The water car may be fitted up as a street sprinkler and the new company may go into the street sprinkling business as is done at Colorado Springs and in Toronto.

## AS TWO SYSTEMS

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**Will the Two Street Railways Be Run for the Present – Developments.**  
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**(Columbus Dispatch, October 4, 1899)** – There were no new developments in the consolidation of the two electric lines in the Columbus Railway Co. today. Of course, the interweaving of the two lines which will eventually take place, is at present impossible owing to the nature of the franchises, and the two companies are being operated for the time as separate systems under one management, a state of affairs which will probably exist for some time.

With the exception of Mr. Robert Sheldon and Mr. E.K. Stewart, made president and treasurer respectively of the new controlling company, all the officials remain as they were before the consolidation, and the working staff of each line also remains intact. It is understood that when the process of bringing the two systems together into one commences, that the employees of both, or as many as possible of them, will be left undisturbed in the status which they now occupy.

Neither has anything new developed today in the proceedings instituted by Messrs. Patterson, Ryan, and Kinkead to restrain the consolidation. The taking of depositions is to be continued, however. The proposed quo warranto proceedings also are still in statu quo.

## A FIGHT ON FRANCHISES

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WILL NOW BE ON IN THE CITY COUNCIL.  
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**What the Central Pays the City and What the Other Road Does Not.**  
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**(Columbus Dispatch, October 12, 1899)** – It now looks as if it would be a long time before the Columbus Railway company gets their blanket franchise through council.

Several of the councilmen, it is said, have been looking up the question of franchises and what the city gets out of the street railways anyway

It is known that the Central pays \$450 per year for the privilege of running across the Front street bridge, and it is said that the councilmen who are looking up such matters are going to see to it that the new company pays for running across the viaduct, the Fourth street viaduct and the Broad street bridge over the Scioto.

It is said that the Columbus Street railway never paid for the privilege of running over the bridges, while the Central had to “cough up” for using the Fourth street bridge.

The city will get \$2,000 per year out of the Central, as some of its cars run on high street and the people in council are going to see if there is not more in it for the city when it comes to the granting of valuable street railway franchises for long periods of time.

The intention of the new street company seems to be to get a blanket franchise that will cover everything. Then, too, it will take special councillor action before the connection can be made at State, Town, Fulton, and Spruce streets. It looks as if there would be a long and a warm time of it before the franchise gets through the city legislative body.

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### **Not the End of the Story**

Combining the three companies into one company did not end the story. The new arrangement required a new franchise agreement from the City Council. That took until April 1901, eighteen months, to resolve. – AJC