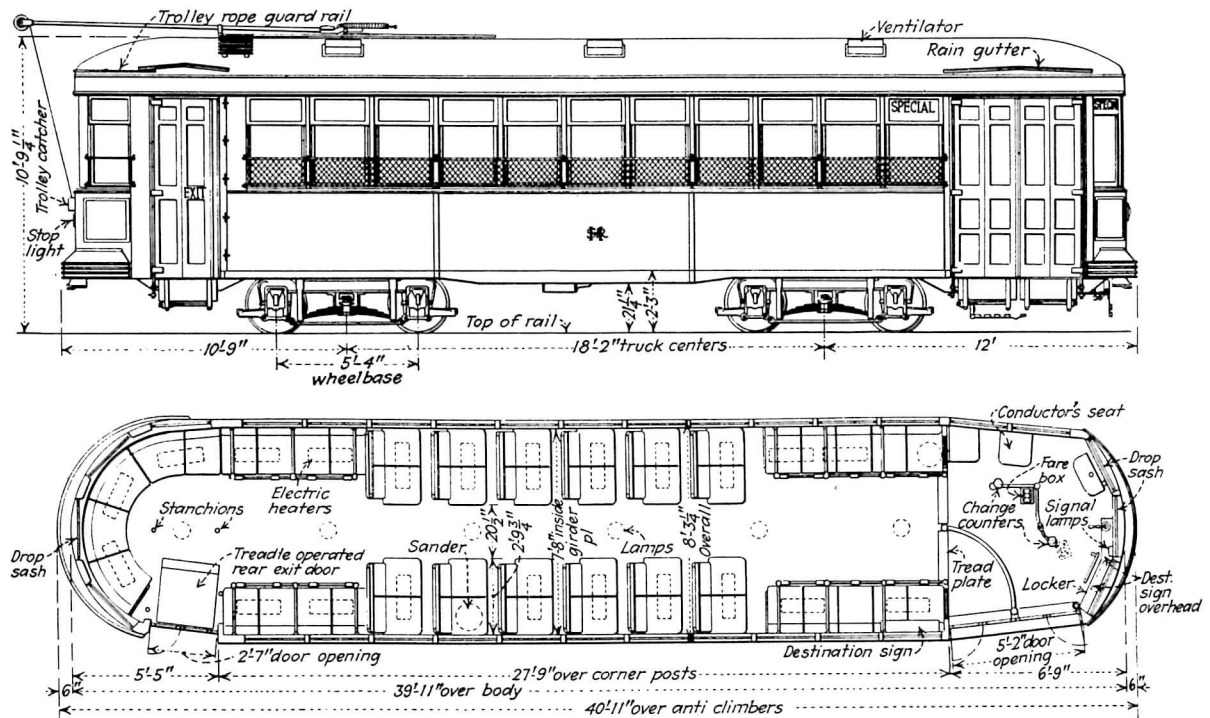


\$R 500-547 \$R



The 500 series cars of the Hamilton Street Railway, as the company's newest cars, were for many years the characteristic rolling stock of the "Ambitious City's" transit system. The 48 cars which comprised the series were constructed in three groups during the years 1926 to 1928.

In the year 1926, the City of Hamilton renewed the franchise of what was then a very decrepit Hamilton Street Railway, stipulating that various improvements to the physical property of the system be effected. Included in this was the construction of new general repair shops, the rehabilitation of much trackwork, the provision of certain bus routes, and the acquisition of new cars. The 500 series grew out of this franchise renewal, as an order was placed in 1926 with Hamilton's National Steel Car Co. for 24 modern steel lightweight single end cars. In many respects, these cars were characteristic of the era in which they were built, and resemble other cars constructed about the same time, such as the 1900 series of the Montreal Tramways. The first completed car was given a trial run on March 12, 1927, and was delivered to the H.S.R. via the Firestone line which connected the National Steel Car plant directly with H.S.R. Kenilworth Ave. trackage. Shortly afterwards, the car was placed on exhibition at the Terminal Station yard of the Dominion Power and Transmission Co. (of which the H.S.R. was at that time a subsidiary, along with three interurban lines). Delivery of the other 23 cars quickly followed the receipt of this first car. Later in 1927, a further 12 cars were ordered, and this was followed the next year by a final order for 12 more. Slight differences existed among the three groups, but they were identical in all major respects.

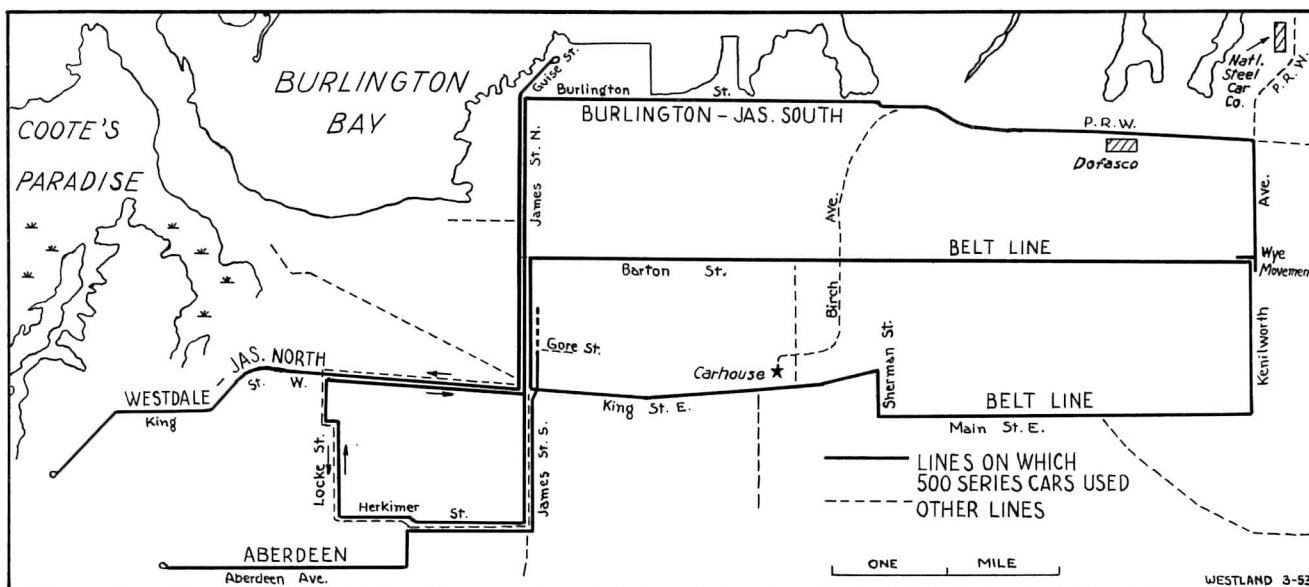
The 500's were constructed as one man - two man cars, and in early years were operated with a two man crew. The conductor had a seat in the front vestibule directly behind the motorman's enclosure; this seat folded back when not in use. When 100% one man operation was introduced about 1931, conversion on the 500's meant simply the removal of the conductor's stand; the Cleveland

fare box was then mounted close to the vestibule corner post, and was tripped by the motorman by means of a cord. Provision was made for trailer haulage in the construction of the 500's, but train operation, of course, never eventuated. The series was of very rugged construction, with the steel body acting as the interior lining of the car, while lighter gauge sheets formed the outer side plates. Steel window posts and brass sash were also features.

The Belt Line and Burlington-James South routes were the only ones on which 500's operated regularly for over ten years following their installation. However, a loop was built at the end of the Aberdeen Ave. route (at Longwood Rd.) to enable the operation of 500's on this line. Their use here was confined to rush hour extras, and because of extensive single track on Aberdeen Ave., operation of the 500's in convoys of two or three cars was necessary. The sale of this loop site about 1940 again restricted this line to 400 series cars only.

During the 1930's, the cars were operated in numerical order; 501-518 were assigned to Belt Line base runs with even numbered cars operating clockwise, while odd numbered cars ran counter-clockwise. Seven cars (521-527) were regulars on Burlington-James South, also running in numerical order. Thus mileage totals on the 500's must have been very uneven as must have been flange wear on the Belt Line cars. About 1939 500 series cars (530-533) were placed on the Westdale route, which caused its extension northerly from Gore St. to Guise St. so that cars could use the loop here. This unusual system of regular assignments in numerical order was abandoned during the war.

The 500's were changed very little structurally during their lifetime; nevertheless the paint scheme varied considerably through the years. The original design consisted of an olive green body colour, with cream from the belt rail up, and a silver roof; a hair-stripe was used on the body. Later, the letterboard also became olive green, and the hair stripe was restricted to



a single line under the belt rail. During a 1943 Victory Loan Drive, cars 525 and 546 were repainted red, white and blue with appropriate lettering. The lettering was removed after the Drive, but the cars continued in these colours for many months afterwards. During 1947 and 1948, the cars were painted in Canada Coach Lines two-tone green livery, with no cream. At this time car 500 had this colour scheme applied also to the interior, over the original maroon and natural wood colours. With the expectation of continued operation until 1954, a general repainting program was undertaken in 1950, which included the green interior colours. A complete set of new linen signs was applied to the 500's also during this year. However, this effort proved to have been largely wasted with the announcement of accelerated abandonment at the end of 1950. The repainting program was cut short, and a few cars ran right to the end with the old interior colours.

The 500's were not without their share of spectacular accidents. About 1937, cars 525 and 527 met head on as one car ran through a facing crossover on the Burlington private right-of-way. 539 hit a freight car at a level crossing and never looked right afterwards; another car ran into Barton St. jail on one occasion. In February, 1948, Steel Co. of Canada 0-6-0 no. 12 knocked 503 off of the track at the Stelco crossing, and on June 24, 1950, 523 was struck by a gondola car at the Dofasco crossing. 523 was

carted away for scrap right from the scene of this accident; it was the only 500 to be retired prior to final abandonment.

The sale of the Hamilton Street Railway to Canada Coach Lines in 1946 undoubtedly hastened the demise of the 500's. Car 504 made the last run to Westdale on August 4, 1949; car 529 wrote finis to the Burlington route with its long stretch of open track on December 8, 1950, and car 519 made the last complete circuit of the Belt Line (with several U.C.R.S. members) in the early hours of April 6, 1951. Two decorated cars, 515 and 529, participated in the final conversion ceremony at 11:00 A.M. the same day.

After the final abandonment, all 47 remaining 500's were stored on Birch Ave. open track for several months while the company made a concerted effort to sell them as operating equipment. In the summer of 1951, they were finally sold for scrap to the International Metal Company of Hamilton. This company appears to have been interested in the trucks and electrical equipment only, as it sold the bodies of about eight of the cars for temporary housing, one of them (530) having gone as far distant as Port Colborne. The rest of the bodies were resold for scrap to Dominion Foundries and Steel Company, who trucked them to a field near the Dofasco plant. They were stored here for some months, and during 1952 were finally cut up.

SPECIFICATIONS

Type of unit... One-man, two-man, motor, passenger, city, single end, double truck
Number of seats... 53
Builder of car body, National Steel Car Corporation.
Weights: Hamilton, Ontario
Car body... 24,300 lb.
Trucks... 12,700 lb.
Total... 37,000 lb.
Bolster centers... 18 ft. 2 in.
Length over all... 40 ft. 11 in.
Length over body posts... 39 ft. 11 in.
Truck wheelbase... 5 ft. 4 in.
Width over all... 8 ft. 3 1/2 in.
Height, rail to trolley base... 10 ft. 9 1/2 in.
Window post spacing... 27 in.
Body... Semi-steel
Roof... Arch
Air brakes... Westinghouse single end safety control with variable load device
Armature bearings... Roller
Axles... O.H.S. 3 1/2 x 7 in.

Car signal system... Consolid. Car Htg. Co. buzzer equipment
Compressor... West. 600 V., D.H.-16, motor driven
Conduit... Metal
Control... West. k-35-XB
Destination signs... E. & E. spiral drive
Door mechanism... National Pneumatic Co.'s
Doors... End, folding
Fare boxes... Cleveland Model 5
Finish... Lacquer
Floor covering... Painted
Gears and pinions... Solid forged B. P. Helical
Glass... Windows—plate; doors—wired
Hand brakes... Peacock staffless type
Hand straps... Sanitary rigid retrieving type
Heat insulating material... One-ply Salamander
Heaters... Consol. Car Htg. Co.'s C-12331-G2, with thermostatic control
Headlights... Golden Glow R.M.L.-96, 600 volt
Headlining... Haselkote
Interior trim... Birch—stained mahogany

Journal bearings... A.R.A. 3 1/2 x 7 in.
Journal boxes... 3 1/2 x 7-in. pedestal type, Symington Co.
Lamp fixtures... Automatic compensating E.S.S. Co. type "L"
Motors... West. No. 510-A No. 4
Painting scheme... Green below belt, cream above belt
Roof material... Haselkote and canvas
Safety car devices... H. & B. life guards
Sash fixtures... Edwards brass sash, complete
Seating material... Spanish leather
Slack adjusters... West., Form E-1
Steps... Folding
Step treads... "Visabledeg" Safkar treads
Trolley catchers... O.B. No. 13141
Trolley base... U. S. No. 13
Trolley wheels... U. S. No. 31
Trucks... C. S. side frame
Ventilators... Nichols-Lintner type C
Wheels... Solid forged, diameter 26 in.
Special devices... Meissner No. 267 Sanders, automatic tail lights (red and green), rear treadle exit door

The Publications Committee is grateful to the Hamilton Street Railway for the loan of the blocks of car 540, and to William Malcolm of Hamilton, who supplied much of the information in the text of this bulletin.



Upper Canada Railway Society

BOX 122, TERMINAL "A"

TORONTO, CANADA

Bulletin 36- April, 1953

