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Sarnia Street Railway Jun 18, 2007 at 7:27pm

Post by Steve on Jun 18, 2007 at 7:27pm

[source: a typewritten page found at the Lambton Room. Author was Mr. Pettit.]

The **Sarnia Street Railway** was built in 1875. The first line ran via Front St. and Bayview Park to Point Edward. It was a horse car line operating one car for passengers and another for freight, mail and baggage.

Here are some key facts and dates in the history of Sarnia's first rapid transit system...

Aug. 20, 1875 - Horse cars on the street railway went into operation, one car being called "Sarnia" the other "Huron".

July, 1892 - The line to the tunnel depot was opened.

Steve

Administrator



Jan. 1901 - The system was electrified and tracks laid on George St. and North Christina St. An extension was made from Exmouth St. in 1904 to Lake Huron Park, where a pavilion was built in 1905. Another branch extended from Wellington St. via Vidal, Confederation and S. Christina to the Pere Marquette depot. (Later CSX)



The electric system consisted of ten passenger cars and one baggage car. The passenger cars were numbered from 1 to 10. Numbers 1 to 4 were much smaller cars than the remaining six. The larger cars would seat from 35-40 persons. The seats were on the two sides of the car, a continuous seat extending from one end of the car to the other. The cars were heated in winter by a stove situated on one side in the centre of the car.

Posts: 266

The street railway office was on the southwest corner of Front and Cromwell streets. The tracks were routed north on Front St. to George St., east on George to Christina, north on Christina to Exmouth, west on Exmouth to the Point Edward road, north to St. Clair St., continuing to Michigan Ave., west on Michigan to the end of the business district. (This was the Point Edward line.)

On the return trip, the line branched off at Derby Ln. and Christina going west to Front St. and south back to the street railway office. The cars going south were routed south on Front St. to Wellington, east on Wellington to Ontario, east on Ontario to Russell, south on Russell to the railway and west to the depot. (These were the tunnel cars.) At Wellington and Vidal there was a branch going to the Pere Marquette depot; south on Vidal to Confederation, west on Confederation to Christina, south on Christina to Clifford and west to the depot (These were the P.M. cars.)

The line going to the beach branched off at Exmouth going north on Christina to Errol Rd., east on Errol to Colbourne Rd., north on Colbourne over the Lakeshore Rd. for a short distance where it turned east and proceeded the the Lake Huron Park and from there the the Lake Huron Hotel. (These were the Beach cars.)

The line went out of operation in **Feb. 1931**

Here's a link to a **Google Map** I made of the old street car system... How cool would it have been to be able to get around town in this way!

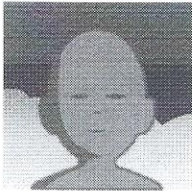
Please feel free to add any further info on the **Sarnia Street Railway** to this thread...

Questions

Are there any artifacts and/or photos from the street car system known to still be extant?

Last Edit: Dec 18, 2011 at 11:49am by Steve

Jeremy
Guest



Sarnia Street Railway Jun 11, 2010 at 7:37pm

Post by on Jun 11, 2010 at 7:37pm

There are a couple of Sarnia Street Railway photos on Flickr at www.flickr.com/search/?s=int&w=all&q=%22sarnia+street+railway%22&m=text

johnny5
Full Member
☆☆☆

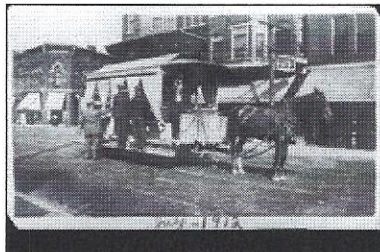


Sarnia Street Railway Jul 13, 2010 at 4:27pm

Post by johnny5 on Jul 13, 2010 at 4:27pm

In the summer of 1912, the Sarnia Hydro plant burned, leaving the then town without electricity for one month. As a result, the old horse-drawn street cars were put back into service, as shown here. The car pauses in it's southward journey on Front St. at Cromwell in front of the Vendome Hotel.

Attachments:



I have been studying Sarnia, ON history for more than 30 years. I'm now 'Retired' due to illness.
Posts: 161

johnny5
Full Member
☆☆☆



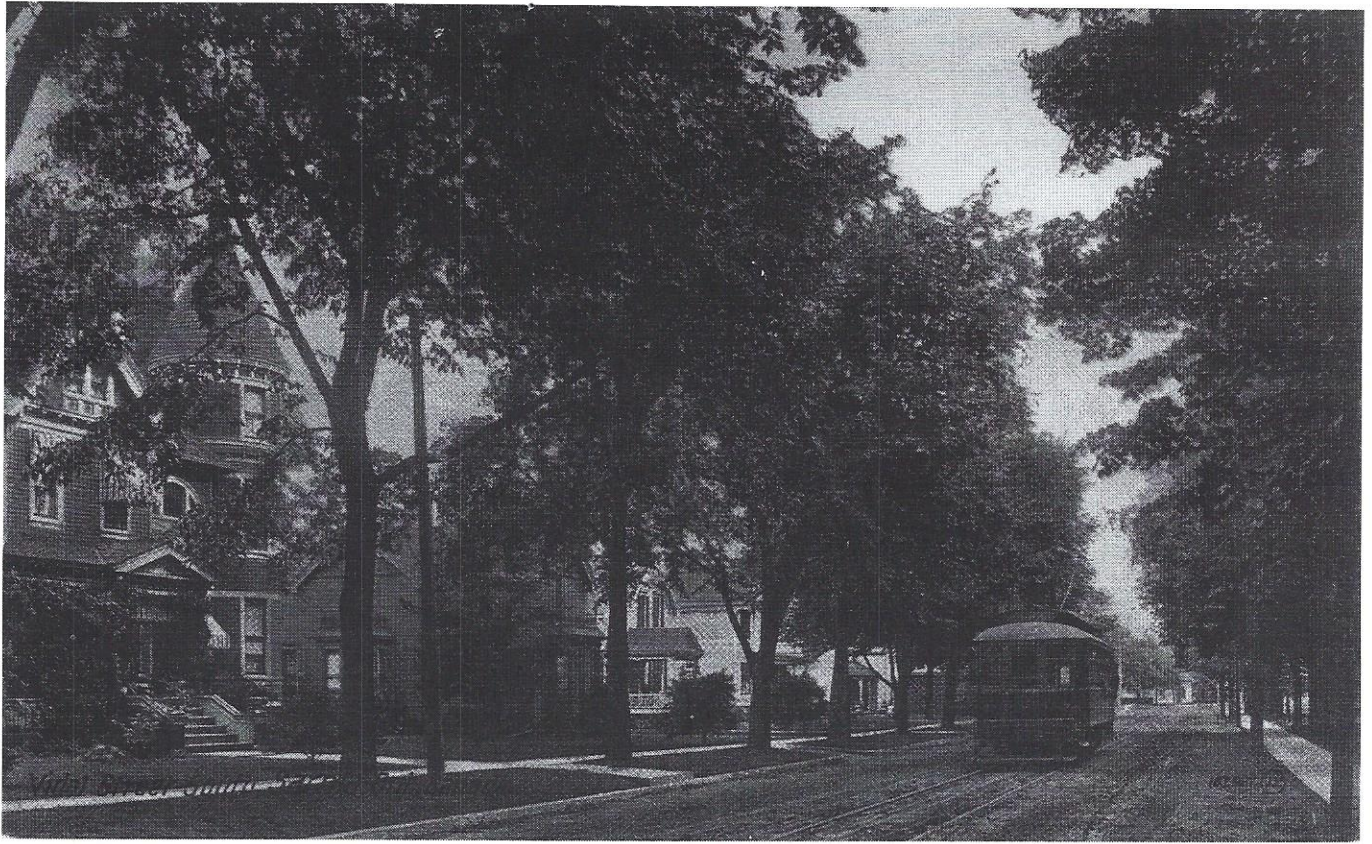
Sarnia Street Railway Jul 13, 2010 at 4:33pm

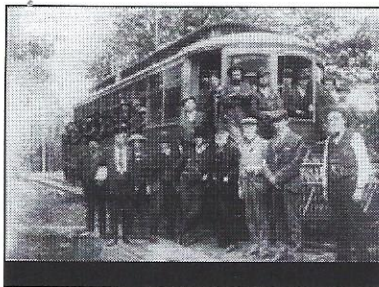
Post by johnny5 on Jul 13, 2010 at 4:33pm

One of my favourite photos from my collection, this shows the happy gang on the electric Sarnia Street Railway car, probably headed for Lake Huron Park.

Attachments:

I have been studying Sarnia, ON history for more than 30 years. I'm now 'Retired' due to illness.
Posts: 161





johnny5
Full Member
☆☆☆



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Sarnia, ON history for more
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'Retired' due to illness.
Posts: 161

Sarnia Street Railway Jul 13, 2010 at 4:40pm

Post by johnny5 on Jul 13, 2010 at 4:40pm

For anyone interested in Street Railway souvenirs, the old tracks that were pulled up in 1997, along with the old wood-block street pavers are all thrown in a heap (now overgrown with weeds) on the old CN land along the waterfront just south of Wellington St. The wooden blocks were soaked in creosote, so they are in great shape. A person I talked to once said that his father-in-law took a small piece of streetcar track and made a pair of book-ends out of them! Neat idea, if only I had the tools...

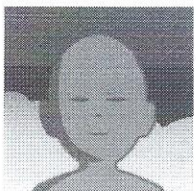
Last Edit: Jul 13, 2010 at 4:41pm by johnny5

Sarnia Street Railway Jul 13, 2010 at 9:50pm

Post by johnny5 on Jul 13, 2010 at 9:50pm

According to Charlotte (Vidal) Nisbet, grand-daughter of Richard Vidal, this photo was taken in 1875. I have the particulars around here somewhere (I REALLY need to get organized!!) and will post them when I find them.

johnny5
Full Member
☆☆☆

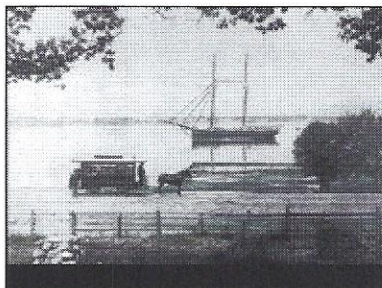


UPDATE - 22 July:

I finally found the article written by Mrs. Nisbet regarding this photo. According to the late Charlotte (Vidal) Nisbet, this photo was sent to her by a Mr. Ben Wolhaupter. The photo was taken from the old Salter house at the top of the hill and shows George Carmen (uncle of Mr. Wolhaupter) who has just stepped from the rear of the car on his way to visit his sister, Mrs. Adams, who lived in the Salter house. The gentleman leaning out of the window is Charles Fisher, who was on his way to Point Edward on Post Office business. He was a son of Dr. Fisher, a former Sarnia Postmaster.

Attachments:

I have been studying
Sarnia, ON history for
more than 30 years. I'm
now 'Retired' due to
illness.
Posts: 161



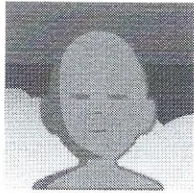
Last Edit: Jul 22, 2010 at 10:05pm by johnny5

Sarnia Street Railway Oct 5, 2010 at 1:56pm

Post by on Oct 5, 2010 at 1:56pm

Interesting photo - the image of the streetcar appears to be identical to one in a collection at the

Jeremy
Guest



University of Manitoba (see home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~wyatt/streetcar-list.html) and search for "Sarnia".

edit: fixed link S.L.

Last Edit: Oct 5, 2010 at 4:45pm by Steve

johnny5
Full Member
☆☆☆

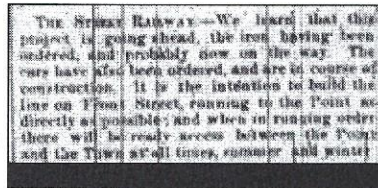


Sarnia Street Railway Jan 5, 2011 at 5:03pm

Post by johnny5 on Jan 5, 2011 at 5:03pm

Article from the Sarnia Observer of 28 Aug 1874 tells of the preparations for the new street railway between Sarnia and Point Edward.

Attachments:



I have been studying Sarnia, ON history for more than 30 years. I'm now 'Retired' due to illness.

Posts: 161

Sarnia Street Railway Jan 5, 2011 at 5:09pm

Post by johnny5 on Jan 5, 2011 at 5:09pm

Sarnia Observer article re: the closing of the Sarnia Street Railway - 26 Feb. 1931 p5.

Attachments:



johnny5
Full Member
☆☆☆

I have been studying Sarnia, ON history for more than 30 years. I'm now 'Retired' due to illness.

Posts: 161



Sarnia Street Railway Feb 16, 2011 at 10:29pm

Post by jeremy on Feb 16, 2011 at 10:29pm

jeremy
Junior Member
☆☆

Here is a clipping from the famous map of Lambton County, focussing solely on Sarnia. Dating from ~1880, it shows the line of the Sarnia Street Railway stretching from Wellington rather than Cromwell, along Front, then St Clair and Michigan (or the "New Road") to end up at the Grand Trunk Railway terminal in Point Edward.



Of course, the fact that the map shows the line taking this route doesn't necessarily mean that the route is actually correct - the Lambton County map does seem to make a number of simplifications in various places, and this could be one of them.

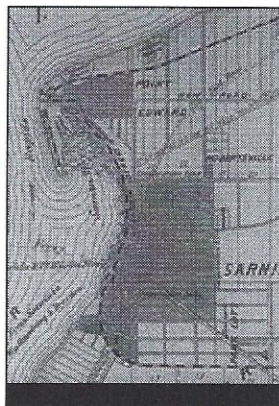
Posts: 50

It occurs to me, however, that there *must* be reliable maps of the Sarnia Street Railway somewhere. Surely, the city plans prepared in the 20th century would be more accurate, and would include details like all the routes of the Street Railway to the date of their preparation. Does anyone have such a city plan, say, from the late 1920's, when the system had reached its largest extent? I found a 1927 plan available online, but the image was poor, meant only to advertise the

hard copy for sale. At \$30, I am very tempted, but I don't have the capability of producing a high quality scan of the sheet (this is a large fold-out map, and I only have a letter sized scanner!) Ideas?

(Update: I just had a look at a segment of the 1927 plan that was photographed sufficiently well that I could make out enough detail to show part of the path of the Street Railway, and realised that the route shown was the one Steve describes above. Clearly my idea was not original! I would still like to see a high resolution scan of the entire map...)

Attachments:



Last Edit: Feb 17, 2011 at 11:39am by [jeremy](#)
[Sarnia Street Railway Feb 16, 2011 at 11:26pm](#)

Post by [jeremy](#) on Feb 16, 2011 at 11:26pm

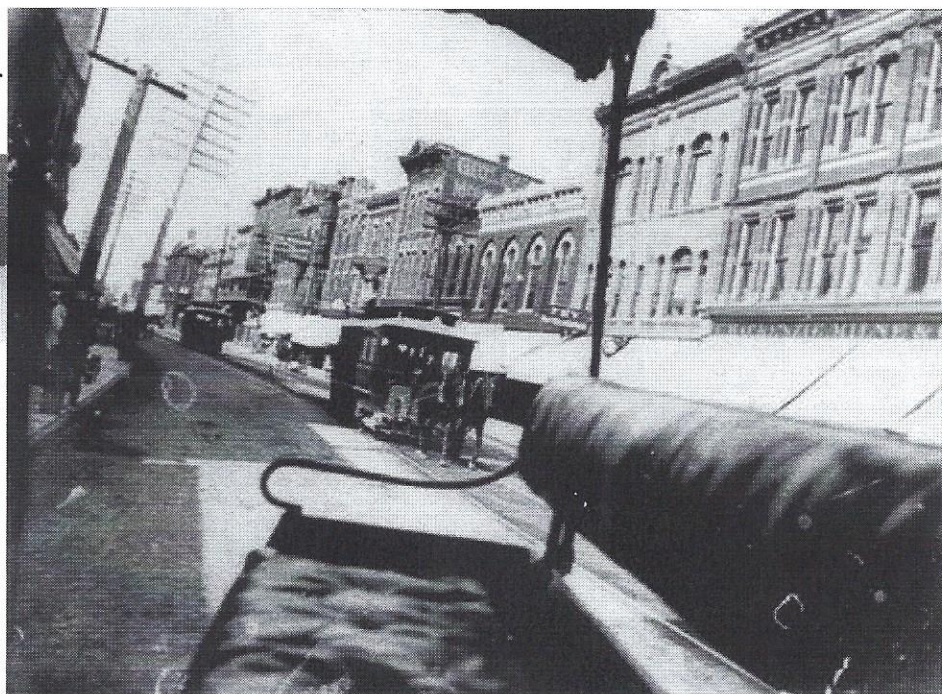
Here is a shot of two horse-drawn street rail cars on Front Street Looking North from Ferry Dock Hill. This picture dates to between 1881 (when Mackenzie Milne adopted the name Chas. Mackenzie Milne & Co for its store on the right) and 1901, when the Street Railway switched to electric cars.

Thanks for the picture John! Where do you get them all?

[jeremy](#)
 Junior Member
 ★★



Posts: 50

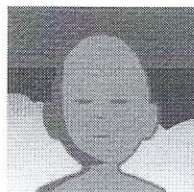


Last Edit: Feb 16, 2011 at 11:32pm by [jeremy](#)

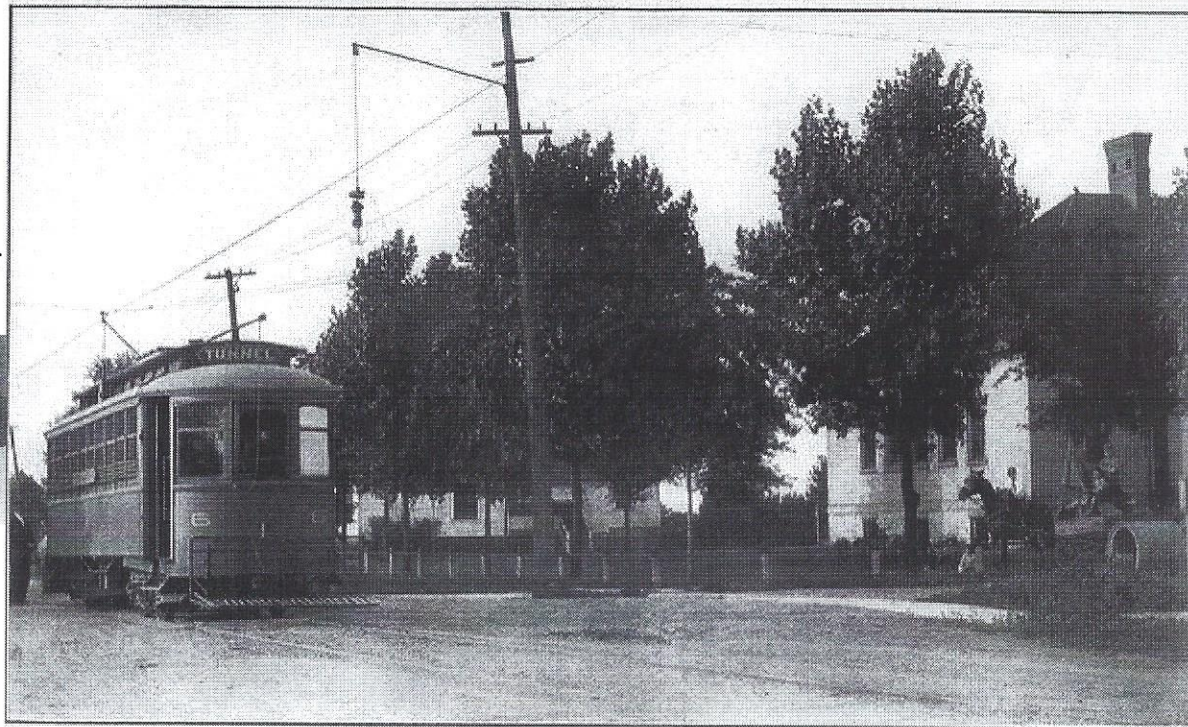
Sarnia Street Railway May 21, 2011 at 10:42pm

Post by jeremy on May 21, 2011 at 10:42pm

jeremy
Junior Member



Posts: 50



The Street Car System of Sarnia is positively magnificent
The main street car line runs right past our property The right hand corner of this picture shows where our property commences
Note the school, the street car and the excellent condition of the road This corner is less than three minutes
from the G.T.R. station and the street car will take you to the heart of the city in five minutes

Streetcar and Confederation St. school by snap-happy1, on Flickr

Last Edit: May 21, 2011 at 10:50pm by jeremy

johnny5
Full Member



Sarnia Street Railway May 23, 2011 at 8:12am

Post by johnny5 on May 23, 2011 at 8:12am

I'm glad you enjoy the photos Jeremy - I'm just happy to be able to share them with everyone. I pick them up here and there - I'm always on the lookout for Sarnia pics.

I have been studying Sarnia, ON history for more than 30 years. I'm now 'Retired' due to illness.

Posts: 161

Sarnia Street Railway Aug 14, 2011 at 10:29pm

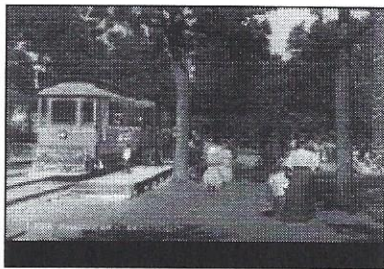
Post by jeremy on Aug 14, 2011 at 10:29pm



Another view of a streetcar at Lake Huron Park, from the McCord Museum Collection

Attachments:

Posts: 50



Last Edit: Aug 14, 2011 at 10:33pm by [jeremy](#)
 Sarnia Street Railway Sep 8, 2011 at 10:10pm
Post by [jeremy](#) on Sep 8, 2011 at 10:10pm
 Found this postcard showing a car on Vidal

[jeremy](#)
 Junior Member
 ★★



Posts: 50



Vidal Trolley by [Jeremy Trolley](#), on Flickr
 Last Edit: Sep 8, 2011 at 10:12pm by [jeremy](#)
 Sarnia Street Railway Dec 18, 2011 at 12:15pm
Post by [Steve](#) on Dec 18, 2011 at 12:15pm

Here is a transcript (which allows it to be machine readable/searchable) of the entire document referenced in the original post of this thread. It was compiled by **John Pettit** and found in the **Lambton Room**. An image of the original is attached below...

[Steve](#)
 Administrator



[document start]

The first meeting of shareholders of the Sarnia Street Railway Company was held September 29, 1874 in the offices of Mackenzie & Gurd. Joshua Adams was elected president, with J. G. McCrae, vice-president, W. P. Edison, secretary and William Stewart, treasurer. Other directors were T. D. Carleton, P. M. Edison of Port Huron and James A. Smith of Sarnia.



The line was built in 1875 via Front Street and Bayview Park to Point Edward. It was a horse car line operating one car for passengers and another for freight, mail and baggage.

Posts: 266

August 20, 1875 - Horse cars on the street railway went into operation, one car being called "Sarnia" the other "Huron".

In April, 1879 the company was reorganized with J. F. Lister as president and Thomas Symington, secretary.

July 1892 the line to the tunnel depot was opened.

In 1889 J. S. Symington became president and in the same year H. W. Mills was named manager

and secretary, continuing until his death in 1912, being succeeded by G. E. Wadland. Col. Robert Mackenzie succeeded as president with R. Kenny as vice-president.

January 1901, the system was electrified and tracks laid on George and North Christina streets. An extension was made from Exmouth Street in 1904 to Lake Huron Park, where a Pavilion was built in 1905. Another branch extended from Wellington Street via Vidal, Confederation and south Christina to the Pere Marquette depot. (Later C&O Railway).

The Electric System consisted of 10 passenger cars and one Baggage car. The passenger cars were numbered from 1 to 10. Numbers 1 to 4 were much smaller cars than the remaining six. The larger cars would seat from thirty five to forty persons. The seats were on the two sides of the car, a continuous seat extending from one end of the car to the other. The cars were heated in winter by a stove situated on one side, in the centre of the car.

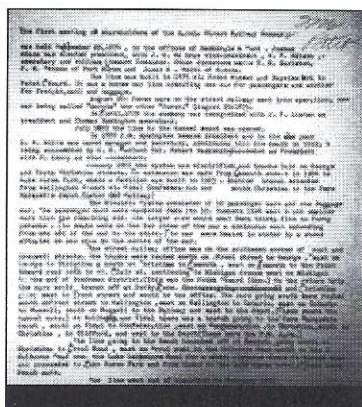
The street railway office was on the southwest corner of Front and Cromwell streets. The tracks were routed north on Front Street to George, east on George to Christina and north on Christina to Exmouth, west on Exmouth to the Point Edward road, north to St. Clair St., continuing to Michigan Avenue, west on Michigan to the end of [the] business district. (This was the Point Edward line.) On the return trip the cars would branch off at Derby Lane and Christina, going west to Front Street and south to the office. The cars going south were routed south on Front Street to Wellington, east on Wellington to Ontario, east on Ontario to Russell, south on Russell to the Railway [GTR] and east to the depot. (These were the tunnel cars.) At Wellington and Vidal there was a branch going to the Pere Marquette Depot, south on Vidal to Confederation, west on Confederation to Christina, south on Christina to Clifford and west to the Depot *[a map at the J.R. of this area shows the line running west on St. Clair Street, not Clifford. - S. L.]* (These were the P. M. cars.)

The line going to the Beach branched off at Exmouth going north on Christina to Errol Road, east on Errol Road to the Colborne Road, north on the Colborne Road over the Lakeshore Road for a short distance where it turned east and proceeded to Lake Huron Park and from there to the Lake Huron Hotel. (These were the Beach cars.)

The line went out of operation in February 1931.

[document end]

Attachments:



Last Edit: Sep 30, 2012 at 6:52pm by Steve
Sarnia Street Railway Dec 31, 2011 at 10:40am

jeremy

Junior Member



Post by jeremy on Dec 31, 2011 at 10:40am

I had never thought of postcards as a historical resource until I started looking for pictures of rail systems around Lambton County. If you stop to think about it though, the pictures they contain are usually scrupulously labelled, unlike those in family snapshots, and frequently dated as well. So, here are a couple of historical records of streetcars running along Front Street around 1910.

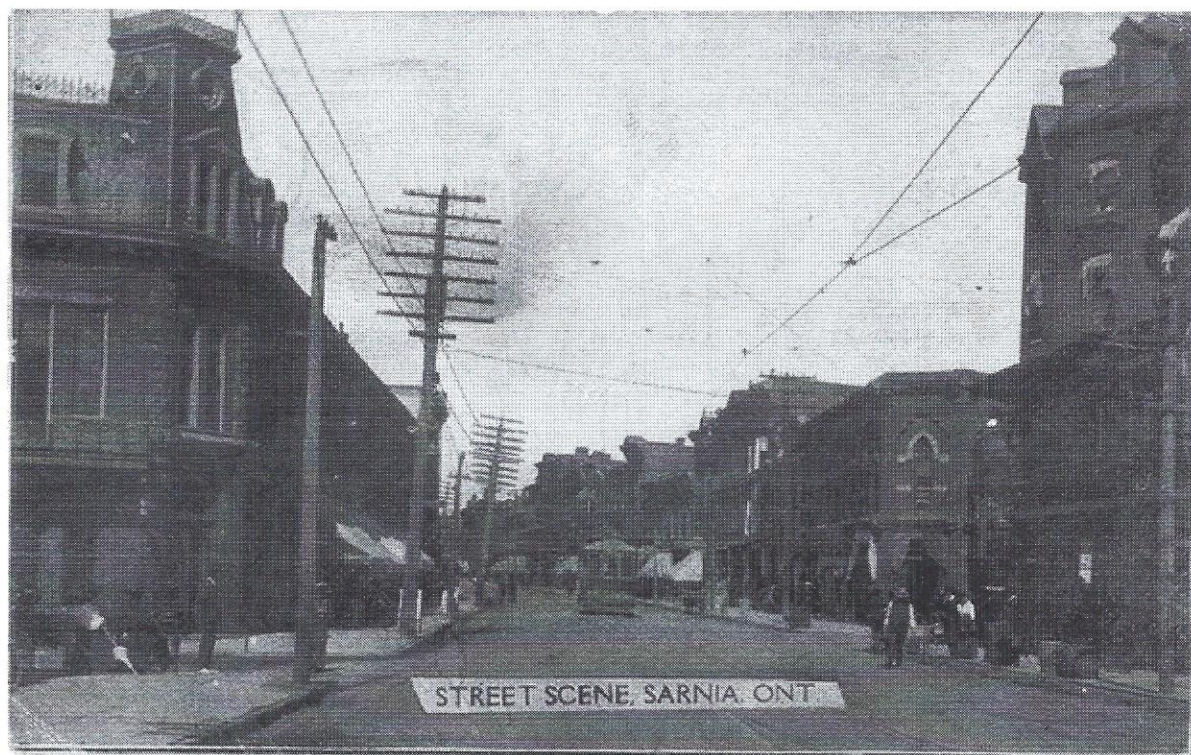
The first card is one of the Valentine & Sons postcards Steve has referred to elsewhere. Specifically, as you can see from the small numbers printed in the lower right hand corner, it is card no.107,685. It is a colourised view looking south along Front Street; in the distance, the post office (with the flag and clock) is visible; on the left (east side) in the foreground is the Sarnia Woollen Mills Store and Rita Stock Co.; further along the sign of Lyons Tailoring can be seen; also the Vendome Hotel on the southeast corner of Front St. and Cromwell St.



Sarnia - Front Street - ca. 1910 by Jeremy Trolley, on Flickr

Posts: 50

The second postcard is looking north from just south of Cromwell St. Again, the Vendome Hotel appears in the right foreground.



Sarnia - Front Street - looking north by Jeremy Trolley, on Flickr

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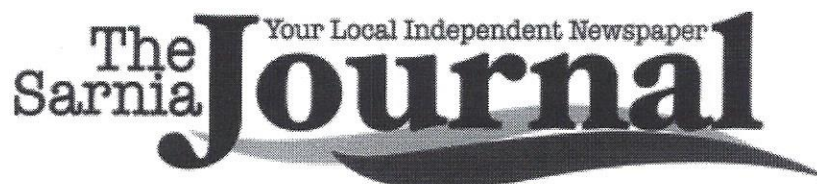


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in your cottage?"

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Relax we've got you
covered!



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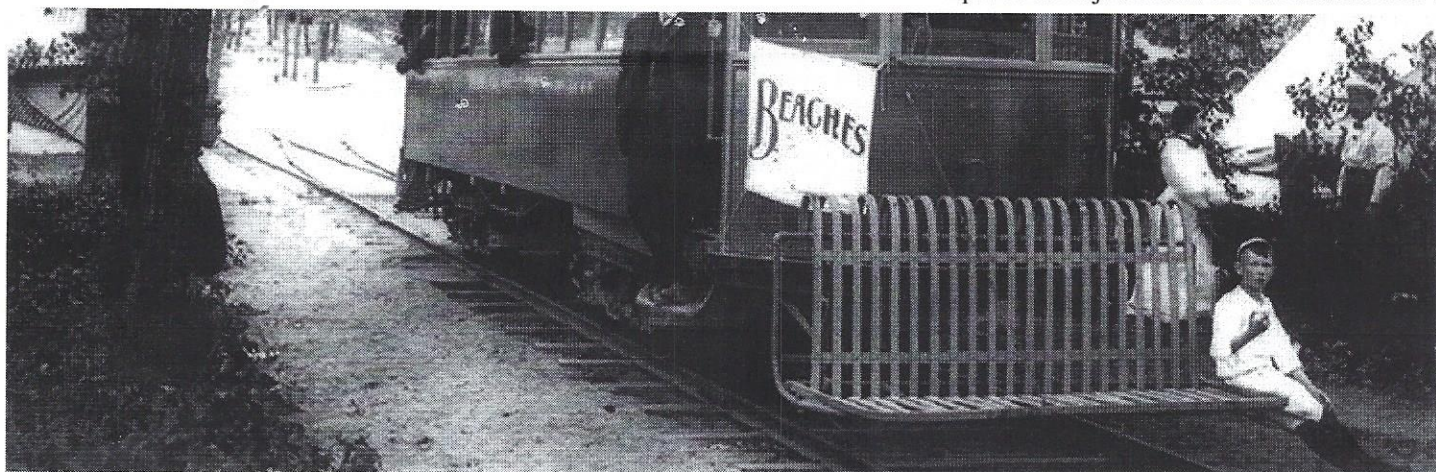
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The old "Beaches" line trolley

Posted January 17, 2017 in Front Page (<http://thesarniajournal.ca/category/frontpage/>) | News (<http://thesarniajournal.ca/category/news/>)





Reader Virginia Anderson provided this photo showing her grandfather, conductor William James Sisson, standing in the doorway of a Sarnia Street Railway car.

The "Beaches" line was laid in 1904 and brought residents by trolley to the Lake Huron dance pavilion and park on the sandy shores of Lake Huron, near the foot of Colborne Road.

Children could take free streetcar rides to the beach on Sundays courtesy of philanthropist Maud Hanna, who also created a hospital children's ward, a boy scout hall and gave \$10,000 toward the purchase of Canatara Park, ensuring kids had a safe place to enjoy the waterfront.

Photo courtesy, Virginia Anderson

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