

The street railway system which you are inspecting today is a remnant - a sizable one, to be sure - of a far flung rail network built in large part by Henry C. Huntington and the Los Angeles Railway Corporation.

In the shadow of the vast and impressive Pacific Electric system the LARy yellow cars have received scant attention from many railfans. For after all, who would ride a Huntington Standard street car when he could board a red interurban for Venice or El Monte or the Catalina Terminal? Who would photograph a trolley on a city street when nearby there was a four track main with a three car train? This, in truth, was not fair. LARy was more than a prosaic street railway and it was much more than a system with a run of the mill car running on a paved street. Ira Swett found more than enough LARy material to fill three fat issues of his "Interurbans." And the Orange Empire Trolley Museum deemed it desirable to acquire a representative collection of LARy equipment. Many a Los Angeles area railfan and a club or two have been passionately devoted to the yellow cars.

Trolleys have included the Huntington Standards, Birneys, PCCs and steel cars which could and did run MU. The sowbellies were particularly unique and many of the cars were constructed in company shops. It was a three foot six gauge system and in some streets the yellow cars shared a common rail and overhead with the standard gauge red cars. Much private right-of-way was included in the system until fairly recent times and even today a small portion remains.

In its early days LARy almost moved into interurban operation, but in 1911 Henry E. Huntington divided his lines into interurban Pacific Electric and trolley Los Angeles Railway. Even so, some of LARy's lines were almost interurban in character and many lines did and do operate into neighboring cities.

LARy, PE and predecessor companies shared a heritage which included well known traction folk and much common history. LARy is steeped in history. Pico Blvd., traveled in part today, was the site of Los Angeles' - and the West Coast's - first or at least one of the first - electric traction lines. The 1st and Chicago loop, also on the P line, was the site of a cable car power house.

The 5, or E, line claimed much unique and varied private right-of-way. There were numerous Birney shuttles even in comparatively recent times. Today on the east side (P and R lines) one can still spot rail once traveled by the shuttle cars. There were experimental cars, funeral cars and work trains.

Today's Vernon Yard is only one small portion of a once vast and complex yard facility. South Park Shops, now reduced to one half size, have become an all-bus facility. Track on Hill, Spring, Main and many numbered streets in the downtown area are largely buried under pavement. All but one of the several car barns have been converted to bus operation. And a large and almost puzzling rail network has dwindled into what remains today.

Today's street railway system includes five street car lines (there are also two trolley coach lines), four of which operate respectively from an outer terminus through the downtown business district to another outer terminus. P is the sole remaining line on Broadway; R, S and J travel on Seventh Street. A belt line, the V line, half encircles the central city as its cars travel on Vermont and Vernon. LAMTA, successor company to Los Angeles Transit Lines, Pacific Electric and predecessor companies, has its own downtown office skyscraper at 11th and Broadway. Street car operation is exclusively out of Division 20 on Georgia Street. Vernon is now a storage area and a terminus for the V line. In recent weeks dead storage cars have been transferred from South Park Shops to Vernon, leaving the former facility all-bus. The three work cars have been leased and moved to O.E.T.'s museum in Perris. Mobile LW equipment is stored at off-track Pepper Yard. After March all cars will go into dead storage at Vernon and reportedly Georgia Street will be sold.

Some private right-of-way remains on the J line and a few employees flag cars at railroad crossings. Cars and track continue to be well maintained and service could continue. However, a soon-to-be-abandoned rail system is in need of capital expenditures so LAMTA officials decided to close down all trolley coach and street car service sooner than planned. Enjoy your ride! March 31 is drawing nigh.