



OLD STREET CARS

Horse and Cable Cars at the Museum of Science and Industry, postcard view c.1942 (publisher unknown). Believed to be, at least in part, replicas, probably built for the 1933 Century of Progress, these are on permanent display at the museum.

Grove from 39th Street and then swinging around to 55th Street east to what is now Lake Park Avenue. This is, however, the only then contemporary source found so far that suggests that a horse-drawn streetcar rail line ever existed along 55th Street. This line would have been part of the expansion arising from that 1868 authorizing resolution. The CCR built tracks in Chicago further south primarily along State Street and Cottage Grove Avenue to then unstated terminal points. In ensuing years, lines were built on other streets both east and west of Cottage Grove with 47th and 63rd Streets becoming the major east-west routes to southwest Chicago. All of these new CCR streetcar lines were powered solely by horses. Thus was established the early outlines of the course public transportation would ultimately take on the South Side of Chicago.

THE STEAM DUMMY

The reference to steam driven rail cars on city streets in the CCHDRC incorporation papers indicate that replacing horse drawn street cars with an alternative system of motive power was already a possibility in the minds of the CCR's management at least as early as 1867. The usefulness of steam driven technology in manufacturing and, especially, in interurban rail transport was already well established throughout the country. In fact, a steam driven streetcar is said to have operated along Broadway on Chicago's north side as early as 1864. At some point after 1867 the CCR and its affiliate decided to introduce them in their system, not in the city itself

but in and around Hyde Park. Assuming that a horse drawn line initially ran along Cottage Grove and down 55th Street, this steam dummy would have been the second phase in the development of public streetcar transportation in the community.

While there is no question that steam driven streetcars chugged down Cottage Grove and 55th Street, there remains much that is unclear about their actual history. No picture of one, for example, has yet surfaced. The Hyde Park-Kenwood National Bank published a booklet in 1929 with a photograph purportedly that of Hyde Park's steam dummy. Research, however, has revealed that the photograph is actually of an engine from an entirely different Chicago streetcar company. While the exact dimensions of the Cottage Grove/Hyde Park steam dummy are not known, information about similar vehicles from that period suggests what the one used in Hyde Park probably was like.

Commonly, to minimize terrorizing horses along the street, these small locomotives were built within frames that resembled a shortened version of a regular horse drawn trailer. The car would have run on four wheels with probably no more than seven feet from the middle of the front wheels to the middle of the ones in the rear. Likely, it was operated by a two-cycle engine powered by steam from a vertical boiler heated by burning anthracite coal or coke to minimize smoke and soot. The engine carriage was designed ostensibly to muffle the noise of escaping steam and engine operation by means of shielding and roof top steam condensers. It was this latter characteristic, the

◀③ reduction of noise, as well as the horse car appearance, that provided the underlying meaning to the name "dummy engine," that is, silent or "dumb," as in "unable to speak." These small locomotives pulled no more than one or two passenger trailers along the three miles of stronger steel track installed on Cottage Grove from 39th Street to 55th Street and east to Lake Park Avenue. When not in use, these engines and their trailers were probably stored in a car barn at 38th Street and Cottage, adjacent to the stables where the horses were kept. It is not known how many steam dummies operated on the Hyde Park line nor how their return runs were accomplished, that is, by reversing gears or being turned on a platform.

Also in question is the date when steam dummies were actually introduced into Hyde Park. Block (1977) offers the date of 1869 for that event and cites as her source Pierce (1940). Pierce, in turn, makes reference only to the governing legal authorizations and to Weber (1936). Weber, however, fudges on the date by noting those 1868 actions by the Village Board permitting the building of street rails in Hyde Park but not when the actual construction took place. As was earlier suggested, operating on that Cottage Grove/55th Street line in 1869 may have been a horse line rather than a steam dummy, two very different forms of power. At another extreme is a photograph from a 1943 collection at the Chicago Historical

Society with a caption stating that a steam driven street car began running in Hyde Park in 1881. Indeed, a map dated 1881 in Bluestone (1991) clearly denotes a steam line running down Cottage Grove and turning east at 55th Street to Lake Park but this does not preclude the possibility that steam dummies were running there before 1881. Moreover, this would have been precisely the time that CCR officials were already planning to replace horse cars and steam dummies with cable cars. A more persuasive date emerges from an unpublished street transportation chronology developed in 1933 now in the collection of the Chicago Transit Authority. It places the introduction of the Hyde Park steam dummy in the year 1874. This date seems in reasonable accord with the state of Hyde Park's development and the known history of the CCR. It would also fit with the presumption that a horse car line preceded the steam dummy in time. Uncovering more substantial corroborating information in support of any one of these dates remains a challenge.

Usually overlooked in the few references to this steam car is that of the almost 46 miles of Chicago City Railway Company track existing in 1881, only those three miles of track along Cottage and 55th, the Hyde Park line, were used for steam driven streetcars. These steam dummies may have been an attempt by the CCR to compete ~~directly with the Illinois~~



**CHICAGO CITY RAILWAY COTTAGE GROVE LINE
CABLE CAR AND TRAILERS**

View is on Wabash Avenue during a summer day.
The trailers were originally horse drawn cars.
During the winter, closed cars with small stoves for heat were used to carry passengers.