Pacific Electric’s
Glendale Burbank Line

Matthew Barrett
Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Transportation Research Library, Archive & Records
March 13, 2013
Dorothy Peyton Gray
Transportation Research Library & Archive

**metro.net/library**

- Originally the library of the Los Angeles Railway (1895-1945), and intended to serve as both public outreach and an employee resource. Reintroduced to the public by SCRTD in 1971.

- Began computer cataloging into OCLC’s World Catalog using Library of Congress Subject Headings and honoring interlibrary loan requests from outside institutions in 1978.

- Archive of Los Angeles transit history from 1873-present.

- Transportation research library for employees, consultants, students, academics, other government agencies and the general public.

- Partner of the National Transportation Library, member of Transportation Knowledge Networks, and affiliate of the National Academies’ Transportation Research Board (TRB).


- Member of Getty/USC’s L.A. as Subject forum.
Transit’s Family Tree
Full version 1873-present online:
http://www.peopleplotr.com/plot/entry/10814/Los-Angeles-Transit-Agencies/

*When printing please make sure to set print properties to Landscape and use paper type 8.50 x14.00 in. for best results.*
Map of the Pacific Electric Railway
1925 – system peak - 1,110 miles & 2,700 runs daily
Pacific Electric – Glendale Burbank Line’s Start

• Considered by many to be Pacific Electric’s finest example of suburban rail service.

• Pioneered in 1902 by L.C. Brand who received a rail franchise agreement from Los Angeles in 1903.

• Line originally began at 5th & Central in Downtown LA, up Figueroa, across Sunset to Glendale Blvd, up newly created Brand Blvd with a branch line across Broadway in Glendale to a restored adobe home converted to a restaurant.

• Sold to a Pacific Electric affiliate company in 1904. Rail Service began on April 6, 1904, with a grand opening celebration held on July 2, 1904 when great crowds gathered for a Mexican barbeque.

• Station erected in Glendale on the corner of Brand & Broadway. Advertised by developers as ‘From 6th & Main Station to Glendale in 23 minutes’.

• Burbank extension built in 1911, across Glenoaks to Cypress Ave (a block north of today’s Ikea/Burbank Town Center Mall), opening on September 6, 1911 with a large celebration and a station at Orange Grove.
First instance of running 3, 4 & 5 car trains. Downtown LA terminus moved from 6th/Main to the Subway Terminal Building at 4th/Hill in 1925 to save travel time.

During the Great Depression, buses partially substituted rail service on the line starting in 1936. It irritated the public immensely and resulted in the California State Railroad Commission (now the Public Utilities Commission) to order Pacific Electric to restore full-time rail service in 1939. Avg. Weekly Ridership = 79,500 passengers.

Pacific Electric sold its passenger service to Metropolitan Coach Lines in 1953 which announced its intention to convert the line to buses.

After much public outcry, rail service on the Glendale Burbank line ended on June 19, 1955.
Pacific Electric Subway Terminal Building 4th/Hill
Subway Terminal Building
4th/Hill St. to Beverly/Glendale Blvd.
Up Glendale Blvd past Echo Park
Heading North on Glendale Blvd under Sunset Blvd
Atwater Village
circa 1955
Glendale Burbank Line - Crossing LA River
Glendale Burbank Line - Crossing LA River
At 735 S. Brand Blvd / Windsor Road
(now a Nissan dealership)
Glendale Station at Brand and Broadway
E. Broadway Branch
Temporary shuttle bus upset residents

E. Broadway Branch
Line terminated at Chevy Chase
Glendale/Burbank Line known for using most modern equipment & longer train consists

Mayor Lawson of Glendale at controls. Brand Blvd. & Broadway Looking south, 6-19-55

First three car train
Outbound from Glendale to Burbank via W. Glenoaks Blvd
1943 Burbank to Los Angeles Timetable

North Glendale Terminus at Mountain St.

Restored the 100 year old ruins of Casa Verdugo in 1904, turning it into a popular restaurant destination.
August, 1951

Costs of pavement maintenance, track improvements & double tracking shared by Pacific Electric & Glendale

Pacific Electric $420,000

Glendale/Burbank $80,000

Two years later, Pacific Electric sells its passenger services to Metropolitan Coach Lines in 1953. MCL converts line to buses in 1955.
Glendale City Lines absorbed into Los Angeles MTA (1958-1964) in 1962
Studies and References:


Burbank Glendale Los Angeles Rail Transit Project Final Supplemental EIR. Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority. May 1994.


Pacific Electric Railway Historical Society: [http://www.PERyHS.org](http://www.PERyHS.org)  
LACMTA Transportation Research Library/Archive Photo Collection on [Flickr](https://www.flickr.com)  
LACMTA Transportation Research Library/Archive – [Transit History Timeline](http://www.PERyHS.org)  
LACMTA Transportation Research Library/Archive – [Transit Family Tree](http://www.PERyHS.org)  
LACMTA Transportation Research Library/Archive – [Digitized Transit Newsmagazines](http://www.PERyHS.org)
Current Los Angeles County Metro Rail System including Metrolink
Current Metro Rail and fixed guideway System

including Metrolink

Watch the system grow - [Blooming Map Link]
First large diesel bus order placed in 1940. First smog alert called in 1943.

In 139 years of mass transit in greater Los Angeles, there was only a 27 year period without rail rapid transit, 1963-1990.

Buses have been a vital part of the transit system for 90 years, since 1923.
Why did rail service go away?

- Same basic business issues both pre and post WWII - huge capital costs to replace aging power substations, catenary wire and rail cars. Buses become the economical alternative, rail-to-bus conversions begin in 1925, rapidly accelerate in 1950’s.
- Public Utilities Commission held back fare increases – 5 cents from 1877 to 1927, 7 cents from 1928 to 1945, 10 cents from 1946 to 1951, 15 cents from 1952 to 1956.
- No public subsidies for capital or operating costs available from local, state or federal governments.
- Cultural changes - automobile reliability improves, status symbol marketing, and women & minorities enter the industrial workforce.
- Modal improvements - brand new un-crowded highways and freeways.
- Transit service operators believed that the freeway system would accommodate and speed transit buses as a high speed backbone, thereby increasing their attractiveness to passengers.
- GM perfects and markets the 45 seat transit bus; air conditioning and air suspension become options.
- Diesel is not yet considered to be a component of a new phenomenon called “smog”.