

# STREET RAILWAY HISTORY IN NELSON

## NELSON ELECTRIC TRAMWAY COMPANY LTD (1898 - 1908)

- Private company with British Capital began regular service on Dec. 27, 1899.
- Developed Lakeside Park in 1900 on leased land to act as a revenue generator for the Company.
- To avoid a 15% grade on upper portion of Kootenay St., tracks moved to Stanley St. in 1901.
- Due to financial difficulties, City takes over in 1904.
- Fire destroys carbarn and the complete fleet of 2 cars on April 27, 1908.

## NELSON STREET RAILWAY COMPANY (1909 - 1913)

- Local businessmen take control. Replacement streetcars ordered from Ottawa Car Company. Tracks extended in Uphill area to form a large clock-wise loop.
- After a 2½ year absence, service recommences on Nov. 8, 1910.
- 6 weeks after restart, a runaway shuts down system for 6 months to allow installation of air brakes and 3 safety switches. Grade was also reduced from 11% to 8% on Cedar St. at Carbonate St.
- Financial problems in 1913 forces City to once again take over the operation.

## NELSON STREET RAILWAY (1913 - 1949)

- In June 1921, Car #2 pushes the sweeper through end wall of carbarn and into ravine.
- Operation of Birney Cars rejected as they did not have the braking power of double truck cars.
- Car #3 (built 1906) purchased in 1924 from Cleveland Ohio for use as a backup or extra.
- In 1933-34, Cars 1, 2 and 3 were renumbered 21, 22, 23 to make fleet appear larger.  
[Nelson had the smallest streetcar system in the entire British Empire.]
- Citizens voted “No” to replace streetcars with buses in 1939. System was overhauled in 1939-40.
- Despite another citizen vote in 1949 to retain the system, last streetcar (#21) ran June 20, 1949.

## NELSON ELECTRIC TRAMWAY SOCIETY (1988 - )

- Car 23’s body restored by students at Selkirk College with Federal funding 1982-88.
- Society formed in 1988 to have Car 23 “Back on Track”. Work started immediately. Trucks and Motors sourced from Brussels Belgium, Controller and Compressor from Edmonton.
- Rail donated by CPR from its historic Rosebery to Nakusp line.
- “Last Spike” ceremony on Aug. 24, 1991 (no overhead). Regular service began on June 15, 1992.

## ALL-TIME NELSON STREETCAR ROSTER

<u>Number</u>	<u>Built</u>	<u>Builder</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1, 2	1899	Cdn. General Elec.	Due to austerity, sold to BC Elec. Ry. in 1902 & 1904.
3	1899	Briggs Carriage	Convertible car. Destroyed in carbarn fire of 1908.
4?	1899	Cdn. General Elec.	Replacement for Cars 1 & 2. Destroyed by fire, 1908
-----	No service	April 27, 1908 to November 8, 1910	-----
1, 2 (21, 22)	1910	Ottawa Car Co.	Air Brakes installed after accident on Dec. 21, 1910.
3 (23)	1906	Stephenson Car Co.	ex. Cleveland 3334 & 934. To Nelson in 1924
Sweeper	1911	Ottawa Car. Co.	Retired 1949. Used at a camp before being burned
400	1922	Preston Car & Coach	Victoria 1922-46. To Nelson in 1990. In-service 2011

SUGGESTED READING: “Streetcars in the Kootenays” by Douglas Parker [ISBN 0-920805-02-7]