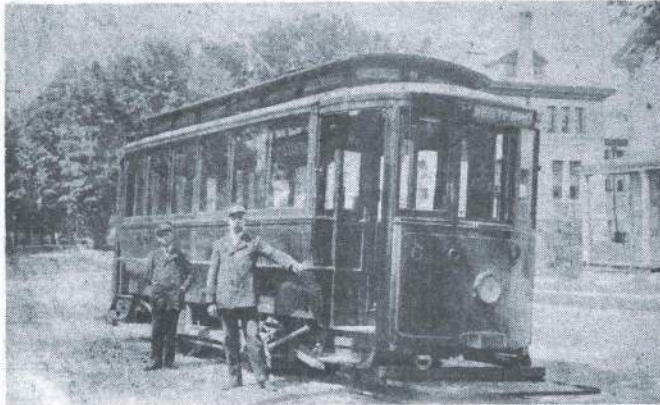
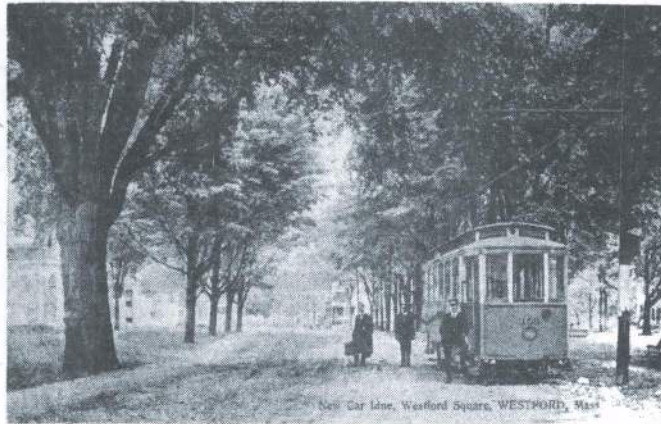


Westford Recollections



The trolley car came the long way 'round to reach the Center. (See story).

Photo courtesy Mr. Allister MacDougall



This trolley car served Westford. The year is 1910.

Photo courtesy Mr. Allister MacDougall

by Mrs. Charles Kennedy TROLLEY CARS AT WESTFORD COMMON

The street car line which ran from Ayer to North Chelmsford to Lowell was known as the Lowell and Fitchburg Street Railway. The line originated in Ayer, went to Forge Village and Graniteville where the line desired a private right of way on Graniteville Rd. through the fields to Forge Village Road, approximately where Cook Oil

Co. is located, and then straight on to Westford Center — Depot Street — Lowell Rd. — Brookside — Nabnassett — West Chelmsford — North Chelmsford. However, there was hard-headed objection to the many trees which would have had to have been cut, that in reality, the line went from Graniteville through the woodlands to Fletcher's Quarry and on to North Chelmsford. Consequently, the Branch line of this Lowell and Fitchburg St.

Railway headed from West Chelmsford to Brookside and then on to Westford Center via Lowell Rd., Cummings Rd., Depot St. and Main St. The trolley passed the Library and Church where it reversed at the tip of the Common nearest to the present Post Office. The following is an eyewitness account of the day the electric car came to Westford:

The First Electric Car

The first electric car came to Westford Thursday, May 23rd, 1907. When Mrs. Harriet Miller, teacher in the upper room of the Tadmuck School, grades 4 through 8 rang the bell to call the pupils in from morning recess, not a child was to be seen. Like the "Pied Piper of Hamelin" they had disappeared as if by magic. Going to the road and looking up the street to the Common and seeing the figures moving and hearing voices and laughter, the two teachers rushed up to see what was happening. There at the end of the car tracks just opposite the Unitarian Church, stood this wonderful new electric car and many of the children had never seen one. They were in and out of the doors, feeling of the outside, and in every way possible demonstrating their joy and approval. What a reception.

The next Saturday, May 23rd, 1907 the first car left the Common at 7 a.m. and there was so much noise that even the two school marms joined the happy group to see the first regular trip made to Lowell. Progress had come to Westford!

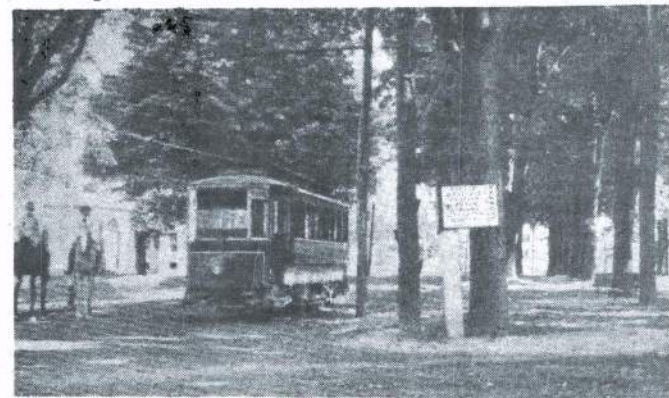
(related by

Elizabeth Cushing Taylor)

From its inception the car line never paid. It was subsidized by subscription by the people. The subscription contains such names as Abbotts, Cameron, Taylor, Balch and Captain Sherman Fletcher. Up until World War I the trolley did well, but with the coming of the automobile, the competition of the railroad which didn't make

a stop at every dooryard, and the busing which became so popular (School barges — a reo speed wagon, with truck body having longitudinal padded seats offered year round motorized transportation), its usefulness was diminished. In the annual Town Warrant dated March 1921 contains, in effect, the following concerning the electric car: —to see if the town would vote and appropriate the sum of \$11,000 for repairing rolling stock and track of branch line so called of the Lowell and Fitchburg St. Railway, if in the opinion of the Selectmen they shall see fit. This appears to be the final action according to the records and there is no account of a vote. Perhaps no action was ever taken. The end of an era! Mr. MacDougall related to me that he once travelled to Dracut to purchase the apple trees which now flourish in his back yard. Many Westford residents must have memories tucked away concerning the days of the trolley in Westford. Note from the photos that the Main Street was not paved.

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In those days, it was never certain whether the trolley or the horse would get you there faster. Note the mileage-road sign on the tree in the center of the picture.

Photo courtesy Mr. Allister MacDougall