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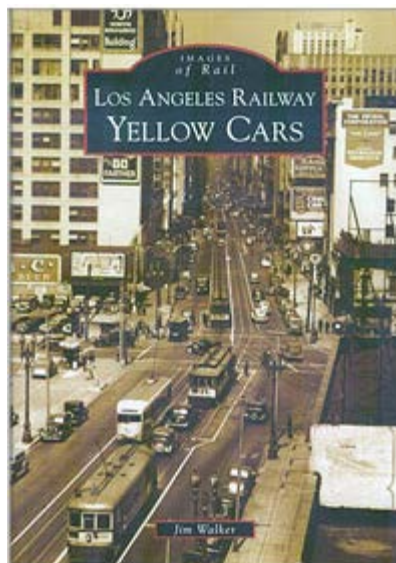
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Metro's Own Publishes Historical Book on LA's Yellow Cars

By JIMMY STROUP



Book Signing Thursday at Metro Store

Metro Archivist Jim Walker is scheduled to sign copies of his new book, *Images of Rail – Los Angeles Railway Yellow Cars*, on Thursday, Oct. 25 from 1:30 to 3 p.m. in the Metro Store on the Plaza Level. The Metro Store will offer the book at a reduced price of \$17 for Metro employees. Major chains such as Barnes & Noble and Amazon.com also will carry the book.



Author Jim Walker
Metro Archivist Jim Walker's latest book – *Images of Rail – Los Angeles Railway Yellow Cars* – is a photographic history of the railway system that ran until 1945. Walker uses Metro resources for research and donates the proceeds of his labor to the agency.

(Oct. 24, 2007) Metro Archivist Jim Walker spends his days gathering information on transportation systems that no longer run, and has done so at Metro for a decade.

But in the last year, Walker's been doing more than simply gathering dusty records and old photos – he just published his second book about Los Angeles Rail transportation since February.

The most recent effort, *Images of Rail – Los Angeles Railway Yellow Cars*, recounts the oft-forgotten Yellow Car system, which ran alongside the Pacific Electric Red Car system and complimented it for nearly 50 years.

"The Yellow Cars were the urban workhorse of the transit system linking the Metrolink-like service of the interurban Red Cars with local neighborhoods just north, south, east, and west of the central business district of Los Angeles," said Matt Barrett, Metro's library service administrator. "[It had] a fleet of 742 streetcars running more than 400 route miles in the center of city streets."

This latest book is a sequel to his last, *Images of Rail – Pacific Electric Red Cars*. That book details the history, scope and operation of the Los Angeles-spanning Red Car system that provided the bulk of public transportation in the city for the early 20th century.

For Walker, who's been interested in rail-based transportation his entire life, the work of pulling the photographic history of the Yellow Car was an extension of a previous book he published in 1977, called *The Yellow Cars of Los Angeles*.

'Before it was gone'

"I just wanted to publish this so people would understand it and how important it was to the city," Walker said. "I grew up with it here, and I wanted to write about it before it was completely gone."

The project entailed a comprehensive search of the Metro archives for appropriate photos. As historical photos can be scarce – and despite Metro's vast collection – Walker had to resort to contacting some private collectors to fill in gaps in his book.

This passion to explain the rail systems he used as a child is what Walker called a "hobby kind of run wild." The publication of two full-length books on Los Angeles rail transit between 1900 and 1960 speaks to that passion.

"A lot of the history here just needs to be explained," he said. "In these cases, pictures [combined with a] summary of how it came to be and how it was run is the way I'm best able to tell the story."

Walker's book details the genesis of rail car transit in the early 1900s by real estate magnate Henry E. Huntington (after whom Huntington Beach and the Huntington Library are named). He consolidated several independent lines into one, selling off the bulk of it in 1910 to Southern Pacific Railroad.

Huntington kept the Yellow Car system, though, and ran it until his death in 1927. His estate ran it until 1945, after which it was disbanded.

Like with his *Red Car* book, this one is published by Arcadia Publishing in their "Images of Rail" series, which has 87 titles detailing rail transit in every corner of America.