

Lost LA

Food & Discovery

Photos: When the Red Car Rolled Through Orange County

By Nathan Masters

April 10, 2015



History & Society

Energy

History

By Nathan Masters

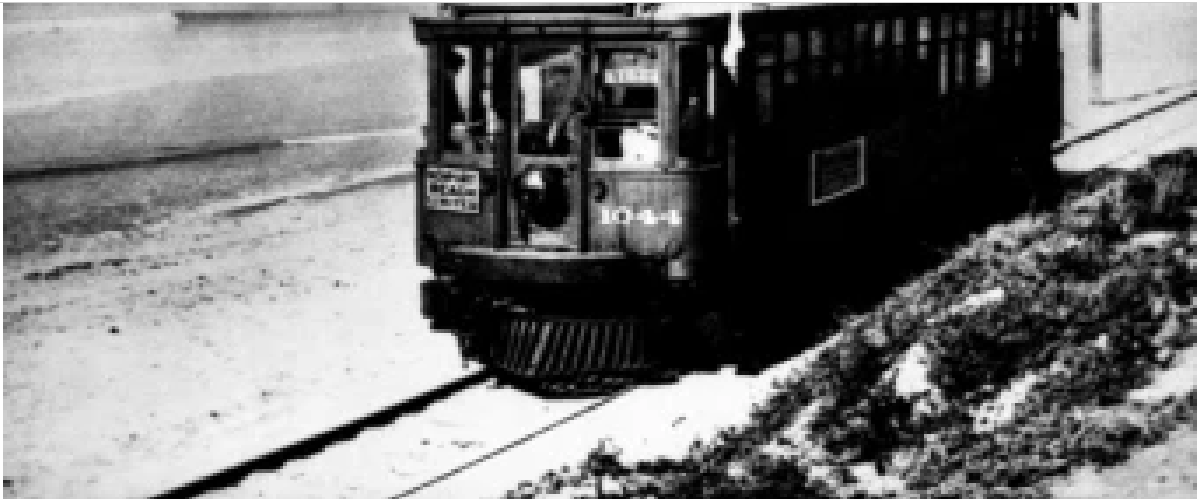
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History & Society

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A trolley car along the Pacific Electric's Newport-Balboa Line. Courtesy of the Orange County Archives

How important was the Pacific Electric's arrival to Orange County? When its red cars first rolled into **Pacific City** in 1904, a small beachside community renamed itself after the railway's owner. We know it today as Huntington Beach. But Henry Huntington's influence was felt far beyond the coastal settlements. His railway served as a catalyst for real estate development all along its three intra-county lines that pierced the Orange Curtain. A new line to the county seat, Santa Ana, gave rise to the towns of Stanton and Cypress. The extension of the Whittier line to Yorba Linda spurred the early growth of Brea (then known as Randolph). Later, the railway's **Santa Ana line** would become one of its most successful, as its straight, diagonal path across the Los Angeles Basin provided a more direct route between Los Angeles and Orange counties than the highways that meandered from town to town. Nearly 2.5 million passengers rode that line in 1945. But the **Orange County's red cars** ultimately suffered the same fate as the rest of the system, which after World War II suffered from aging equipment and a steep decline in ridership. Regular passenger rail service to Orange County ended in 1950.

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A 1925 map of the Pacific Electric interurban system. The railway also stretched into Riverside and San Bernardino counties. Courtesy of the Map Collection - Los Angeles Public Library

Pacific Electric trolley tracks through Huntington Beach, circa 1908. Courtesy of the Orange County Archives.

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A Pacific Electric trolley at Fourth and Main in downtown Santa Ana in 1910. Courtesy of the Orange County Archives.

A Santa Ana-bound car at the Pacific Electric's downtown L.A. terminal. Courtesy of the Metro Transportation Library and Archive.

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A Pacific Electric car in downtown Santa Ana, circa 1940s. Courtesy of the Orange County Archives.

A July 1927 train derailment along the branch line from Santa Ana to Orange. Courtesy of the Orange County Archives.

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The Pacific Electric's Newport Beach depot. The railroad's arrival in 1906 spurred the three towns of Balboa, Newport Beach, and East Newport to incorporate as the City of Newport Beach in 1906. Courtesy of the Orange County Archives.

A Pacific Electric red car in Santa Ana in 1948, shortly before rail service to Orange County ended. Courtesy of the Metro Transportation Library and Archive.

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Lost Cemeteries of Early L.A.: The Forgotten Burial Sites of the City's Earliest Settlers

The deaths of early Angelenos didn't always lead to eternal rest. When the first Catholic, Jewish and Protestant cemeteries in Los Angeles were abandoned by 1910, the displaced dead were scattered to other cemeteries — but not all were found and reburied.

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Garden and More

In November 1935, Los Angeles Times reporter Timothy Turner and staff artist Charles Owens began a year-long ramble through the historic core of downtown. The Times published more than 40 vignettes of the city's aging Victorian mansions, derelict theaters and other survivals of the 19th century.

How L.A.'s Little Manila Disappeared Without a Trace

L.A.'s Little Manila district (around what is now Little Tokyo) bustled in the 1920s and 1930s and was a hub for Filipinos who began migrating in large numbers to Los Angeles in the early 20th century, until it was erased by redevelopment.

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