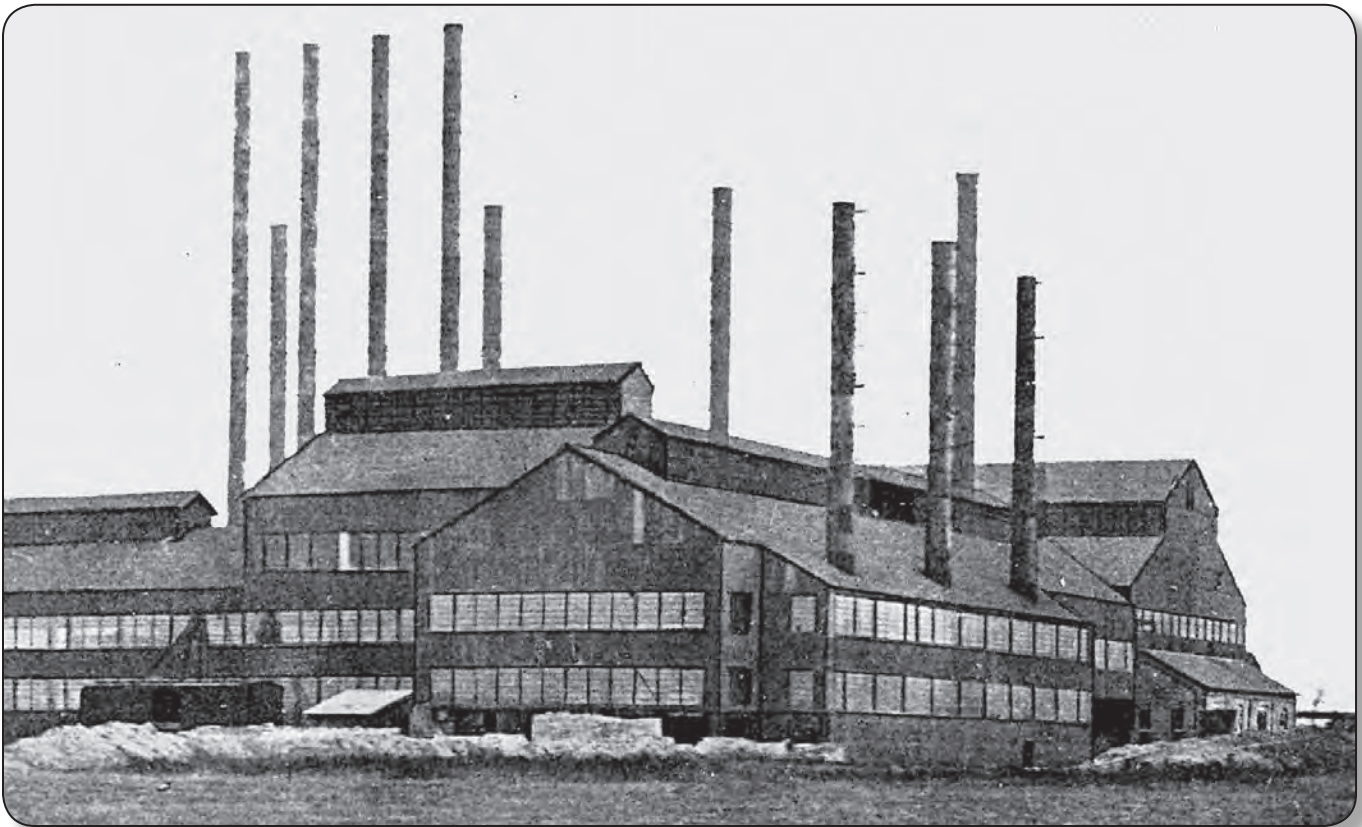


Cromwell Steel Company under construction, 1917; note railroad siding in foreground (Lorain Historical Society).



Cromwell Steel Company in operation, 1918 (Lorain Historical Society).

of farmland on the Black River, directly opposite the National Tube Company, for \$140,000. The location was considered ideal because shale deposits only a few feet below the surface provided an excellent foundation, the land was level and needed no grading, the river was a good docking place, and the site was well situated in respect to sources of iron ore and coal, as well as markets for steel.

Even before construction, Cromwell had secured enough orders to run the plant for six months. Construction was begun with 160 men working day and night. George Crehore, in charge of equipment, worked every day for 569 days until the plant was up and running. Because workers were hard to get during wartime, Cromwell offered high wages. With no streetcars operating on Colorado Avenue, the company bought 16 buses to

carry workmen from *The Loop* in downtown Lorain to the plant. The plant was modern in all details and could turn out 1,000 tons of finished steel in 24 hours. The plant opened with four 90-ton open hearth furnaces and plans to increase this number to 24, construct 12 blast furnaces, and build a dock on the river bank. The plant had acquired 3,000 feet of harbor frontage on the Black River.

Cromwell instituted a number of original ideas in the new plant. Instead of a blooming mill to roll metal into the desired size, he employed a 20-ton hammer to pound it into shape. This process consolidated the metal more compactly and welded any flaws. As a result, Cromwell's plant consistently produced metal testing satisfactorily at a 95% rate, while plants using rolls only averaged about 50%. He also charged the top of the open hearths with ore from a raised platform, letting gravity aid the mixing, rather than from the ground level as in other plants. Both of these innovations had some disadvantages too, and never came into universal use.

However, external and internal circumstances conspired to weaken the competitiveness of the plant. The road from downtown Lorain was never paved and when it rained the buses got stuck in the mud and at times workers that were paid from 7:00 a.m. didn't arrive until noon. Considerable waste and the high prices that Cromwell paid for material, coupled with the fact that the plant had to buy metal instead of smelting it, was in part responsible for the plant's eventual failure. The plant ran day and night to fill orders, but after the war there was no market for the plant's products, thus in a short time operations were suspended. A plan was developed to dismantle the plant and ship it west on 200 freight cars. It was to be reassembled in Kansas City to serve western markets, but failed when the western group went bankrupt. Later, the plant was torn down and sold piecemeal for what it would bring.

Railroads in 1950

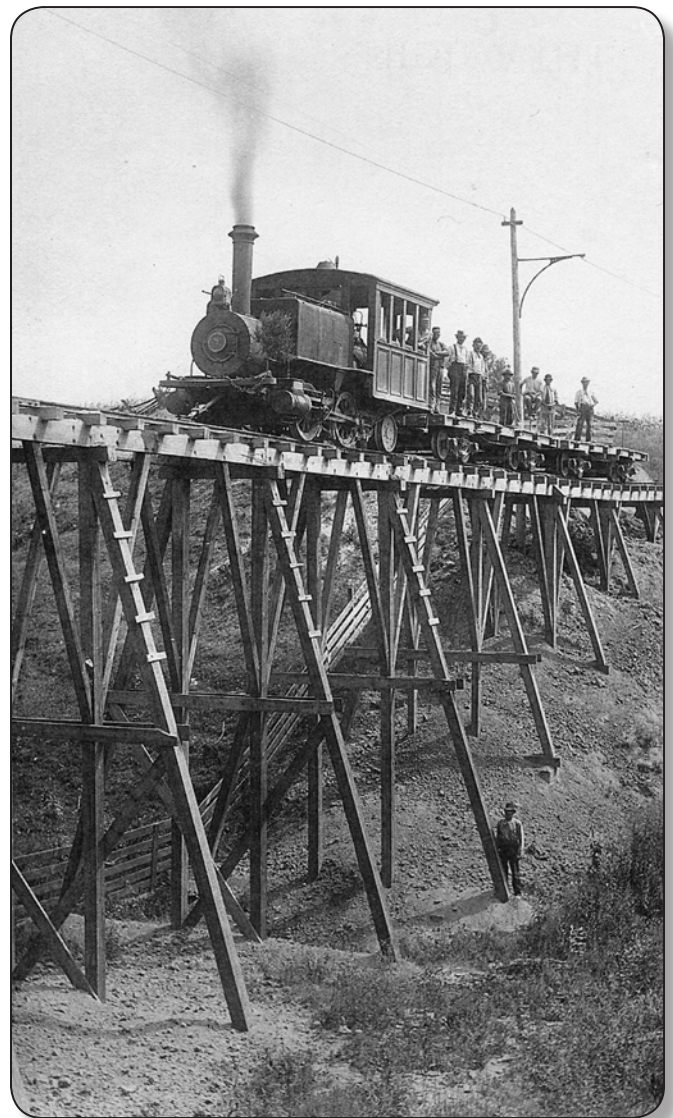
A 1950 *Map of Ohio Railroads* indicates there were five railroads operating within the borders of the original Sheffield Township that year: (1) Nickel Plate Road—east–west line at the northern portion of the township, (2) Baltimore & Ohio Railroad—north–south line at the southwestern corner of the township, (3) Lake Terminal Railroad—operating on the property of the National Tube Company, (4) Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway—north–south line at the eastern side of the township, and (5) New York Central Railroad—north–south line at the eastern edge of the township.

Railroads in 2015

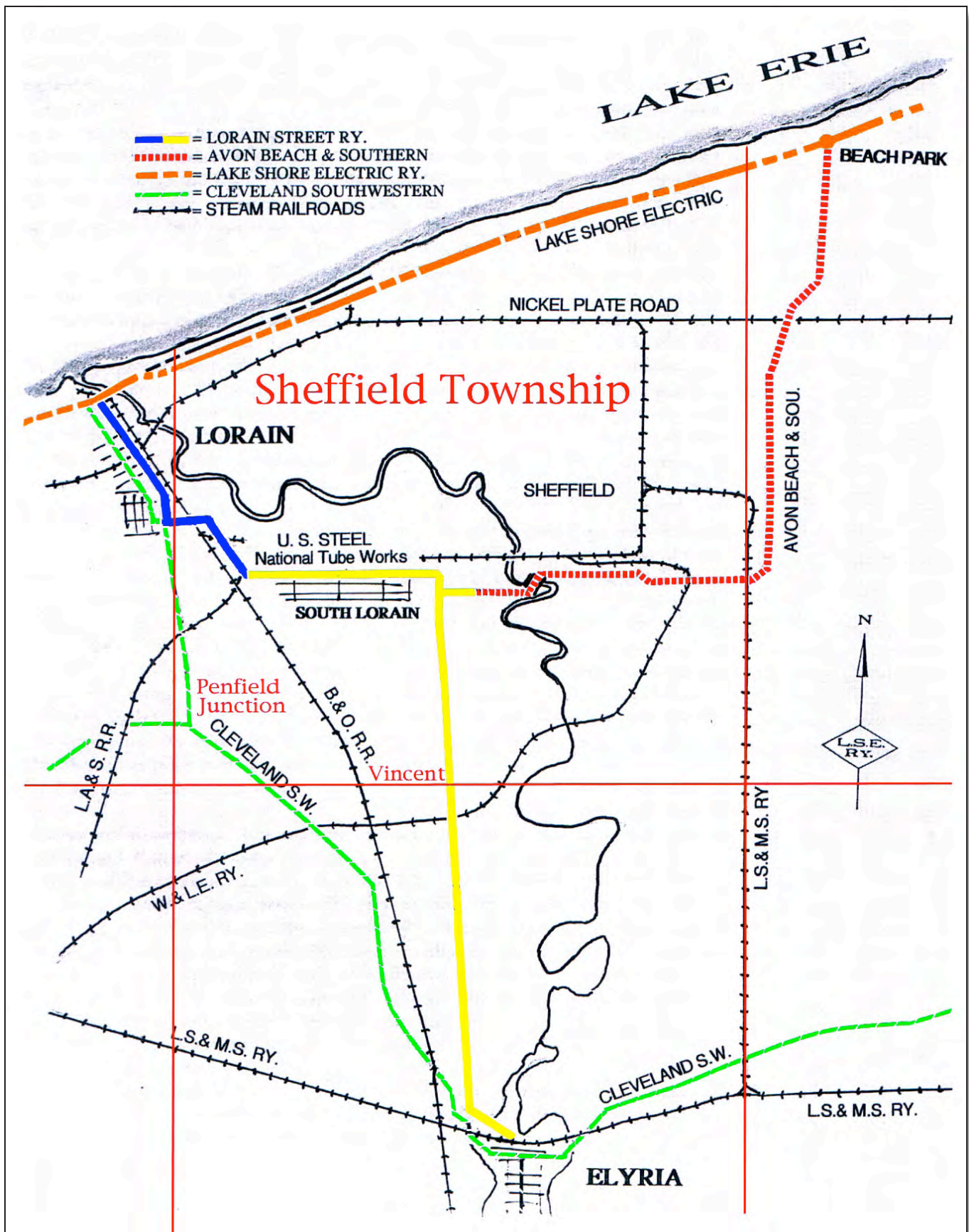
Currently there are only three railroads operating within the borders of the original Sheffield Township: (1) Norfolk Southern Railway—east–west line at the northern portion of the township with connection to Sheffield marshaling yard; north–south line at the eastern edge of the township (2) CSX Transportation—north–south line at the southwestern corner of the township, and (3) Lake Terminal Railroad—operating on the property of the United States Steel Company/Republic Steel Company property.

SHEFFIELD'S INTERURBAN ELECTRIC RAILWAYS

At one time, Ohio had 9,000 miles of interurban and streetcar rails. Passengers were transported in a track-mounted trolley car—vehicle powered by electricity obtained from an overhead cable by means of a trolley wheel. The longest interurban line in America was the Cincinnati & Lake Erie Railroad. One could get on the *Red Devil* at Cincinnati and in a little over eight hours step off the car in Detroit. Northern Ohio has the distinction of being home to the second oldest interurban line in the country—an 18-mile line from Sandusky to Milan to Norwalk, built in September 1893 by the Sandusky, Milan & Huron Railway [a 6-mile interurban line in Portland, Oregon opened seven months earlier]. The next year, the Johnson Steel Company initiated the Yellow Line streetcar service from Lorain to Elyria to bring workers to the mill. This line passed through Sheffield Township and within a decade four additional interurban lines transited the township.



Construction of a trestle for the Sandusky, Milan & Huron Railway in September 1893, Ohio's first interurban railway (Albert C. Doane).



Map of Interurban Trolley Railways operating in the vicinity of Sheffield Township between 1894 and 1938 (modified from a drawing by Harwood and Korach, 2000).

Lake Shore Electric Railway (LSE)

The Lake Shore Electric Railway was an interurban passenger service that operated between Cleveland and Toledo, Ohio from 1901 to 1938. Within what was once Sheffield Township [the original 1824 township boundaries], the Lake Shore Electric System included the main line which ran along the lakeshore, and three branch lines—(1) The Lorain Street Railway, a 2-mile downtown line on Broadway, (2) an 8-mile Lorain-Elyria interurban (known as the Yellow Line) on the west side of the Black River, and (3) a 7-mile southern loop, known as the Avon Beach & Southern, from Beach Park in present-day Avon Lake to South Lorain (via Sheffield) where it merged with the Lorain-Elyria line at 31st Street and Grove Avenue. In competition, the Cleveland, Southwestern & Columbus Railway (known as the Green Line) offered trolley service from Elyria to Lorain via Penfield Junction in Sheffield Township until 1931.

In 1901 the Everett-Moore Syndicate (Henry A. Everett and Edward W. Moore of Cleveland) created the Lake Shore Electric Railway by consolidating several interurban rail lines that had been established in the last decade of the 19th century. The syndicate eventually acquired the Lorain & Cleveland Railway, the Sandusky & Interurban Electric Railway, and the Toledo, Fremont & Norwalk Railway. On September 24, 1901, the Lake Shore Electric Railway was officially chartered. Only a few miles remained to be built, connecting Lorain and Vermilion, and on December 7, 1901 through tickets were first sold from Cleveland to Toledo via Norwalk. In the interurban's early years the swing bridge over the Black River at Erie Avenue was deemed to be too weak to safely carry the weight of the trolley cars. Thus, through passengers were obliged to walk across the bridge and board another trolley on the opposite side of the river to continue their

journey. Between Cleveland and Lorain the Lake Shore Electric Railway serviced 105 numbered stops, getting progressively higher in number in a westerly direction.

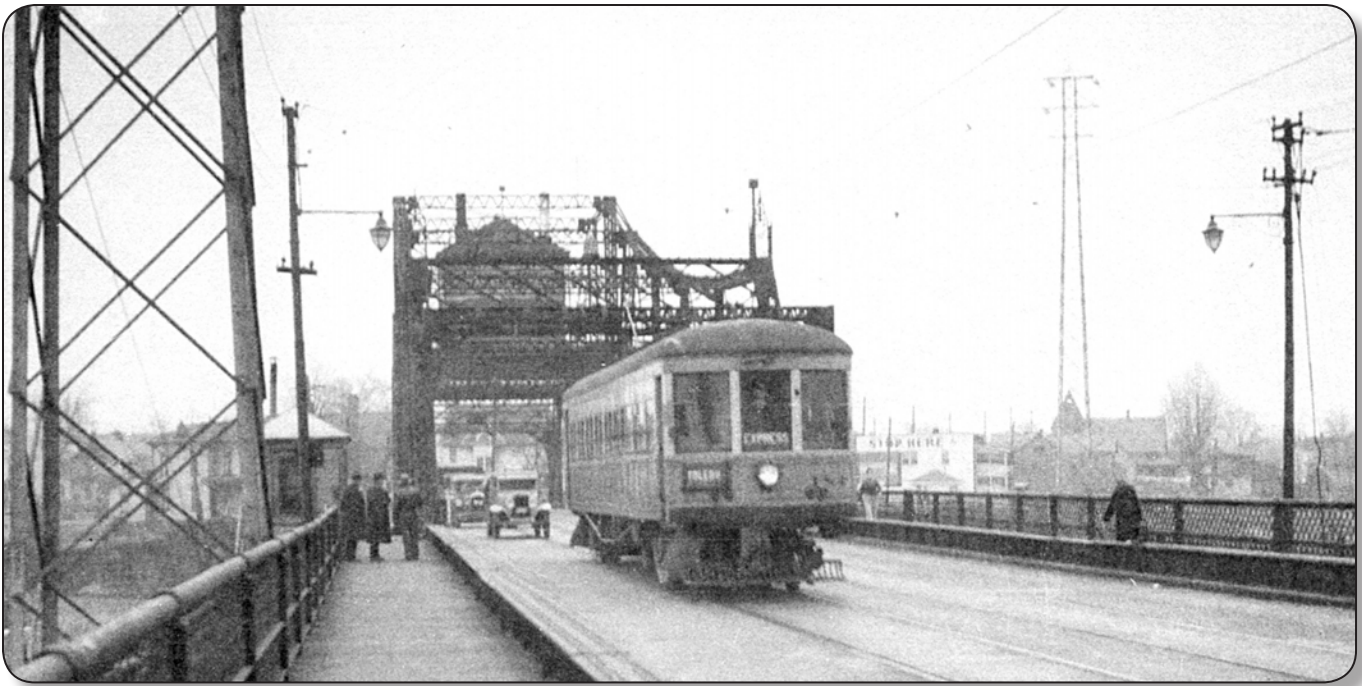
The interurban trolley cars were an imposing sight as they sped across the countryside at up to 69 mph. The car's exteriors were painted bright orange, while inside many sported deep plush seats and ornate wooden furnishings. By 1915 the Lake Shore Electric Railway had 180 miles of track, 84 closed passenger cars, 18 freight cars, 5 baggage cars, and 3 snowplows for a total estimated investment of \$16.5 million—transporting 5.2 million passengers, paying a fare of 2¢ per mile.



Interior of Lake Shore Electric Railway's Jewett car No. 178, circa 1927 (Karel Liebenauer).



Lorain, Ohio's downtown electric railway terminal on West Erie Avenue a shore distance west of Broadway; the terminal was shared by competitors Lake Shore Electric (trolley on right) and Cleveland Southwestern (trolley on left), circa 1906 (Lorain Historical Society).



Erie Avenue bridge over the Black River at Lorain, Ohio, showing Lake Shore Electric Railway's car No. 182 heading west toward Toledo, November 1934; the earlier Black River bridge had been replaced so that streetcars could safely cross and through passengers no longer needed to walk across the bridge (Albert C. Doane).



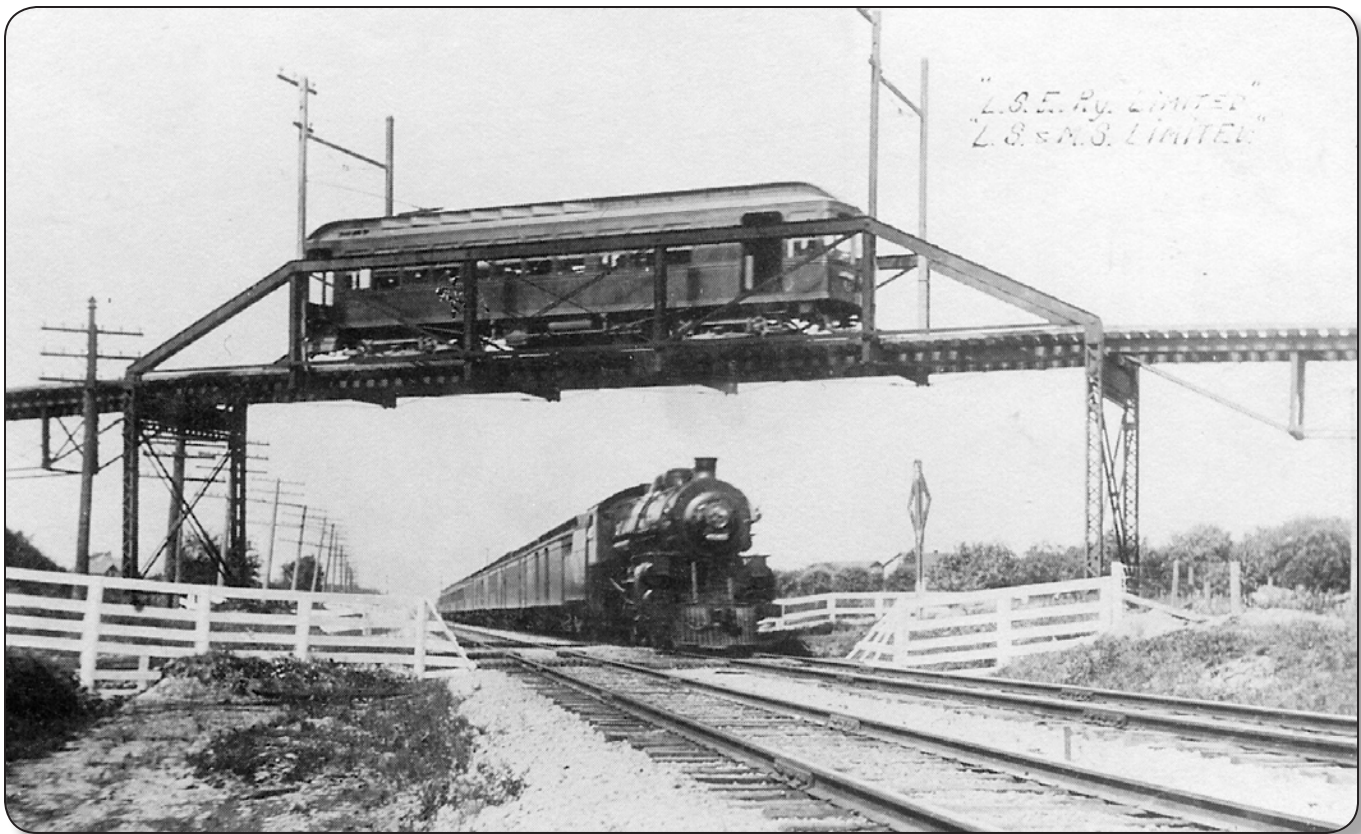
Lake Shore Electric Railway's Jewett car No. 172 at Stop 105, just west of the Black River bridge (Albert C. Doane).



Lorain & Cleveland Railway's high-speed (sustained 50-plus mph), single-track route along Sheffield Township's lakeshore, circa 1900; later acquired by the Lake Shore Electric Railway, a double-track route was constructed in 1906 (John Rehor).



Interurban trolley car on the Lake Shore Electric Railway near Stop 86 at Lake Breeze Road. The trolley line offered passenger service between Cleveland and Lorain on a frequent schedule from 1901 to 1938 (Dennis Lamont).



Lake Shore Electric Railway trolley on bridge passing over the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern Limited of the New York Central system at "Slate Cut" between Huron and Sandusky, circa 1915. Electric trolleys could negotiate a much steeper incline than steam engines, thus bridges over railroad tracks were a common way to avoid collisions (Willis Leiter).



Lake Shore Electric Railway trolley at a storefront depot (Station No. 88) in Huron, Ohio, circa 1910. Used primarily for passenger service, but because the interurban tracks often used downtown streets trolleys did carry some commercial cargo (Willis Leiter).

Tragedy. In 1923, a Lake Shore Electric Railway interurban streetcar struck a Sheffield Lake Village school bus traveling north from Brookside School at the Harris Road crossing, killing 4 children, including the son of the bus driver, Elmer Owen. Sixteen years later, the school bus tragedy was indirectly blamed for the death of Owen, who took his life at his Sheffield

Lake home on April 16, 1939. The *Elyria Chronicle-Telegram* reported that Owen shot himself with a shotgun during a brief period while his wife, Frances, was out of the house to go to the mailbox. Family members stated that he was in ill health ever since the 1923 school bus tragedy. Elmer Owens is buried in Garfield Cemetery.



Brookside School buses, 1923. A school bus from this fleet was struck by a Lake Shore Electric Railway interurban car at the Abbe Road crossing on October 23, 1923 killing four students and seriously injuring 17 others, all first and second grade pupils (Sheffield Village Historical Society).



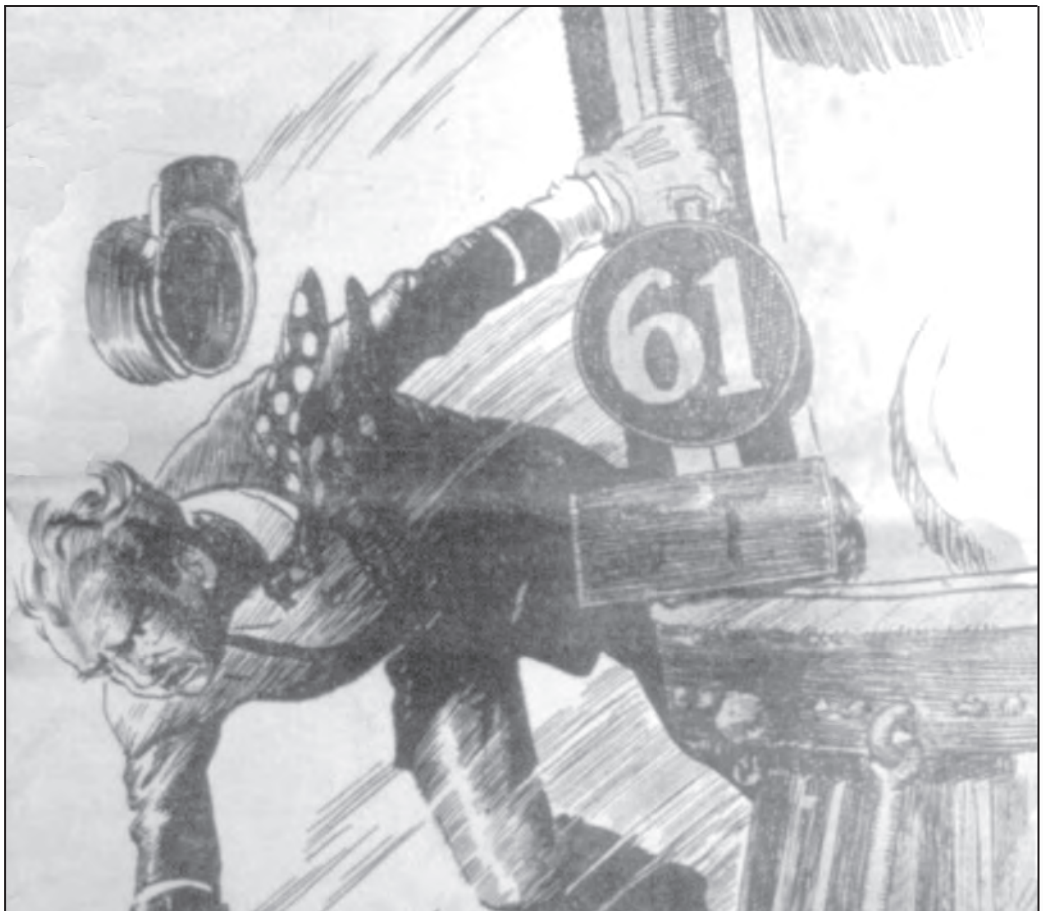
Brookside school bus after the tragic crash on October 23, 1924 (Mike Rumancik).

Rescue of Baby Leila

Artist's drawing of Bill Lang's rescue of a baby girl playing on the Lake Shore Electric Railway interurban tracks near Stop 86 at Lake Breeze Road in Sheffield Lake, Ohio, August 24, 1932 (Drew Penfield).



Carnegie Medal awarded to Bill Lang for his heroism.



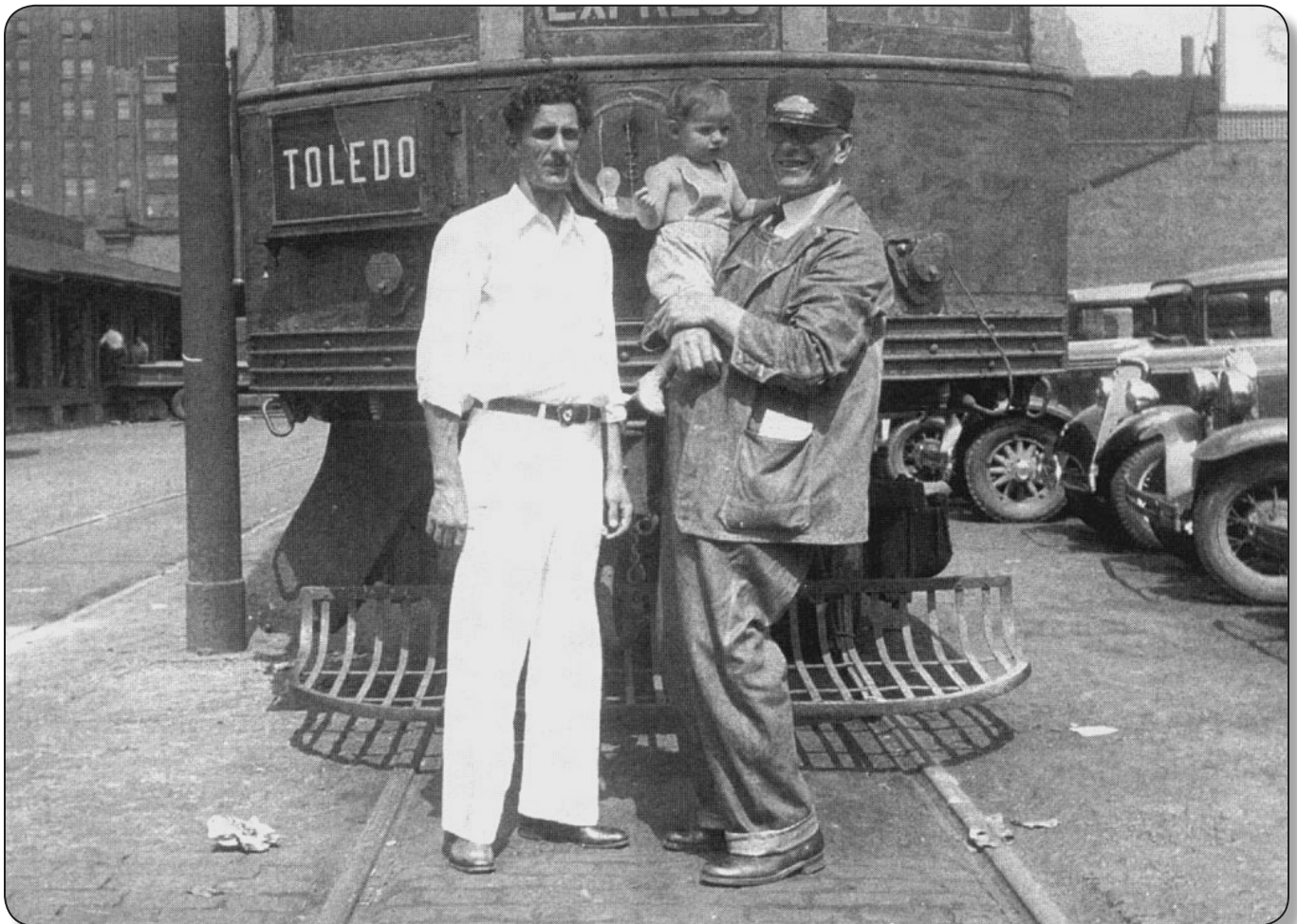
Heroism. On a brighter note, outstanding heroism was displayed aboard car No. 61 of the Lake Shore Electric Railway on August 24, 1932, when motorman William “Bill” G. Lang rescued a child from the tracks near Stop 86 [Lake Breeze Road] in Sheffield Lake. In the early morning light Lang was horrified to see “a baby” in the tracks not 700 feet ahead of the trolley. Traveling at 55 mph he reversed the motors, but knew he couldn’t stop in time. Only 400 feet from the baby, he scrambled out of the cab and onto the car’s front fender. Still moving at 25 mph, somehow he was able to twist down and snatch the 22-month-old girl before the trolley crushed her. His heroism won him the Carnegie Medal and a special Interstate Commerce Commission Award presented by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The young girl, Leila Jean Smith, survived with minor injuries and remained a friend to Lang for the rest of his life.



Bill Lang, motorman on the Lake Shore Electric Railway, demonstrates how he rescued Baby Leila (Drew Penfield).



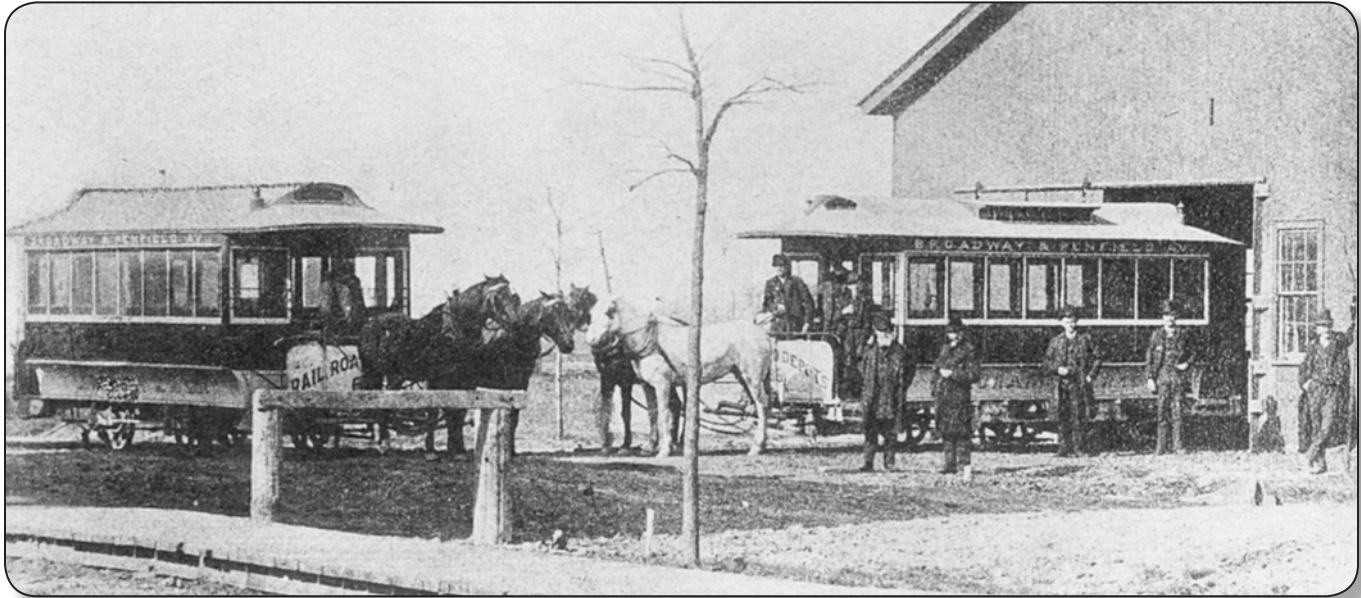
Happy reunion of 19-year-old Leila Smith with Bill Lang, the man who saved her life when she was a baby (Drew Penfield).



Motorman William G. Lang holding Leila Jean Smith, the little girl he rescued from the Lake Shore Electric tracks by climbing on the front fender of a speeding trolley and snatching her from a certain death. Leila’s grateful father stands at the left (Albert C. Doane).

Lorain Street Railroad. Although primarily an interurban system, the Lake Shore Electric Railway operated extensive local city routes in Lorain and the surrounding communities. In

fact, the busiest line in the entire system was the Lorain Street Railroad, consisting of several city and suburban components as well as the interurban line to Elyria.



The original Lorain Street Railway's car barn and stable at Penfield Junction, circa 1887; until 1894, this rail line utilized horse-drawn cars from downtown Lorain to Penfield Junction (Albert C. Doane).

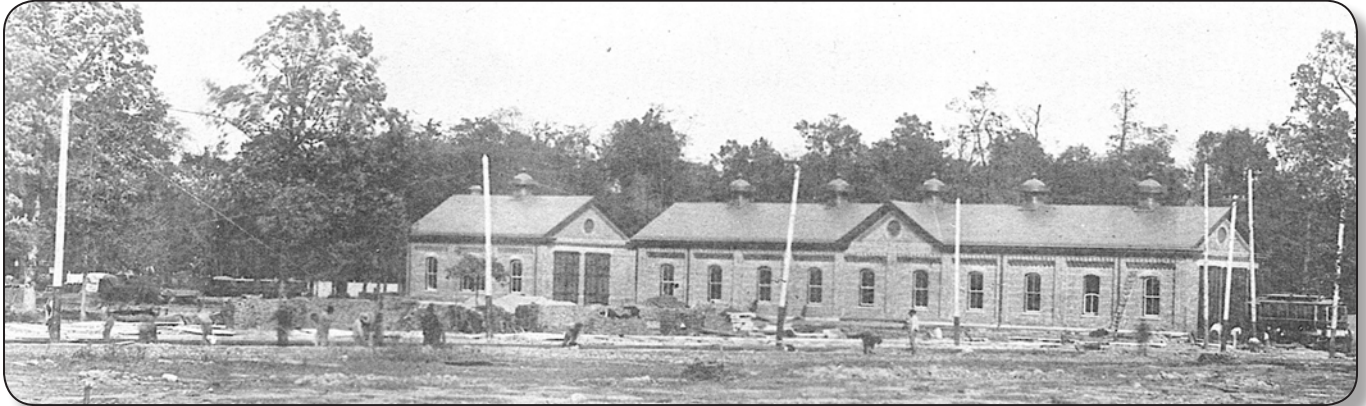


Lorain Street Railway tracks running down the center of unpaved Broadway, circa 1890s; note the streetcar at the upper left and the band on parade at center (Sheffield Village Historical Society).

The original Lorain Street Railroad was a horsecar line that served the sleepy little community of Lorain, described as a “... nondescript backwater village on Lake Erie,” during the period from 1885 to 1894. At its fullest extent the railway was 1.5 miles long and serviced by nine horses, two closed cars, and two open cars. The line ran down Broadway [then known as Penfield Avenue] from Erie Avenue to 19th Street and later to 21st Street when St. Joseph Hospital opened there in 1892. The primary purpose of the line was to provide public transportation from the center of town to the Hayden Brass Works at 19th Street. With some 400 employees, the brass works was Lorain’s leading industry at the time. Hayden Brass Works was forced to close

during the financial panic of 1893 and the always-unprofitable horsecar company lapsed into receivership.

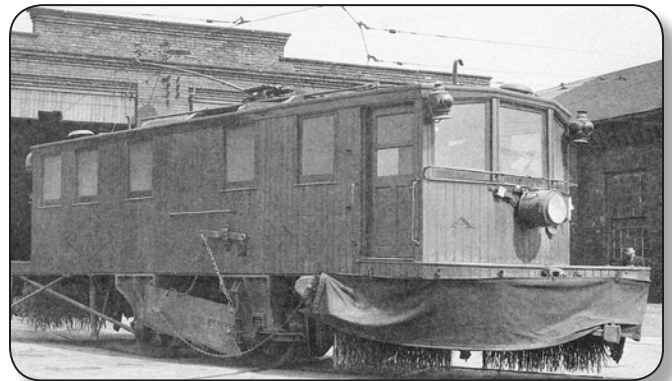
Everything changed when Tom Johnson decided to locate a steel mill on the Black River in Sheffield Township. He bought the Lorain Street Railroad and in June 1894 work was begun on a powerhouse for an electrification of the old horsecar line. The tracks of the street railroad were extended to 28th Street [then known as 10th Avenue] where the steel mill was under construction on 4,000 acres of undeveloped farmland. Adjacent to the mill, Johnson built a set of streetcar barns to service the trolleys and a coal-fired electric power plant to supply energy for them.



Lorain Street Railway’s South Lorain streetcar barn, built by Tom Johnson in 1894 on 28th Street at foot of Seneca Avenue (Albert C. Doane).



Lorain Street Railway’s South Lorain streetcar barns (left) and power plant (right), built by Tom Johnson in 1894 on 28th Street at foot of Seneca Avenue; note the notches above the door openings to accommodate the trolley wheels (Albert C. Doane).



Lake Shore Electric Railway’s 1904 snow sweeper “A” at Lorain Street Railroad’s 28th Street car barn in 1937 (Bruce Triplett).



Lorain Street Railway’s South Lorain streetcar barns and power plant on 28th Street (2011).



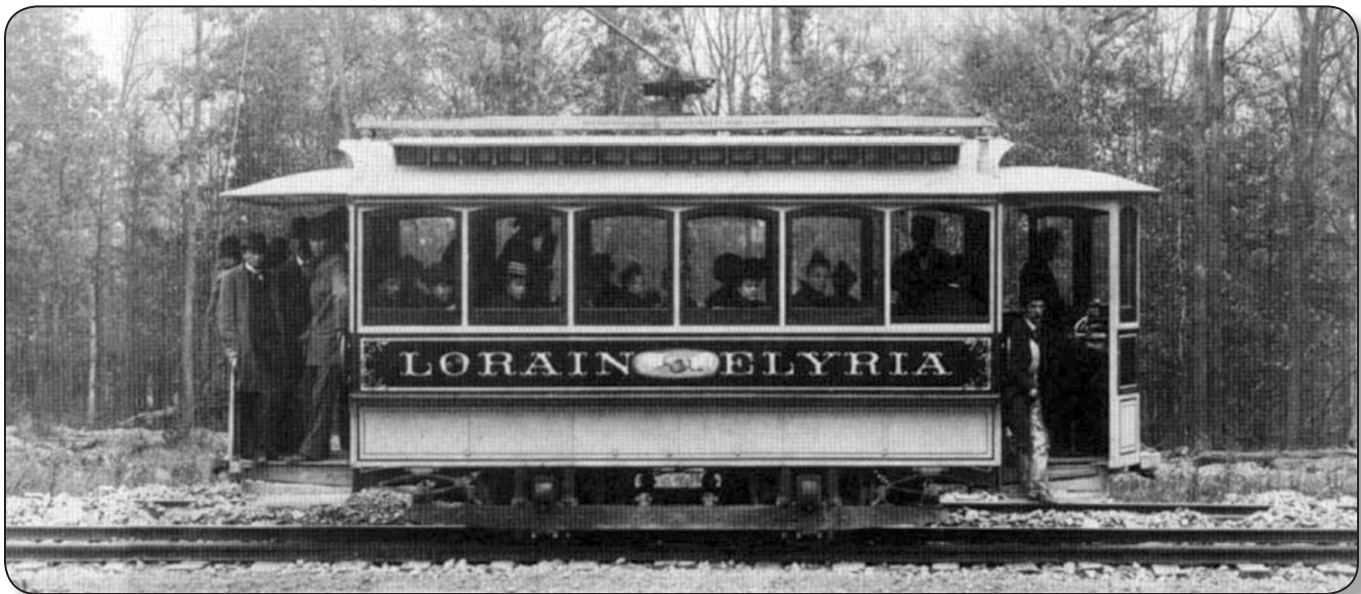
Lorain Street Railway’s South Lorain power plant on 28th Street; note streetcar barns to left.



Lorain Street Railway streetcar at *The Loop* in downtown Lorain heading south, circa 1906; note: Broadway is paved with brick. Lake Shore Electric Railway's main line east-west tracks crossed Broadway in the center of *The Loop* (Albert C. Doane).

Yellow Line. Next, in September 1894, came the Yellow Line streetcars, which provided service from Lorain to Elyria, via Sheffield Township in brightly colored trolleys from which the line's name was derived. Tom Johnson, founder of the Johnson Steel Company (forerunner of the National Tube Company),

built the line principally to carry workers from Lorain and Elyria to his new steel plant in South Lorain. Incorporating the Lorain Street Railroad, the line began at *The Loop*—intersection of Broadway and Erie Avenue. The line followed Broadway south to 28th Street, turned west along the south side of the steel plant



Lorain-Elyria Railway "Yellow Line" streetcar passing through the wilderness of Sheffield Township near Stop 7 (Vincent), circa 1895. Tom Johnson built the Yellow Line electric railway in 1894 between Lorain and Elyria to transport workers to his new steel mill in South Lorain. The clasped hands painted on the side of the car represent the joining of the two cities by the interurban railway (Lorain County Historical Society).