



*Lorain-Elyria Line a short distance north of Elyria in 1937 (Albert C. Doane).*

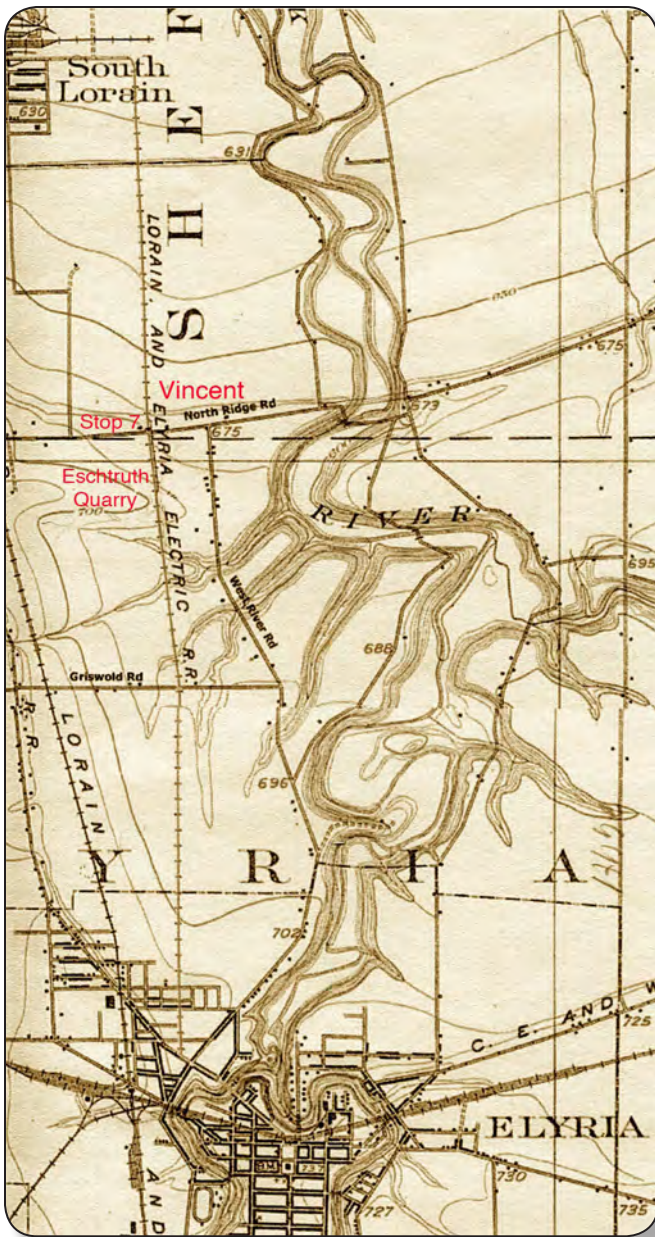


*Car No. 205 on the Lorain-Elyria Line arriving in Elyria, 1937; this St. Louis Car Company trolley was one of the heaviest streetcars on the line (Albert C. Doane).*

to Grove Avenue where it turned south and progressed to Elyria along what was destined to become SR 57. Some folks in the area still refer to the community of Vincent at the intersection of North Ridge Road and SR 57, as Stop 7, in reference to the trolley line stop number.

The Yellow Line also served an important industrial function. The Eschtruth sandstone quarry was located about 0.4 mile south of North Ridge Road on the west side of the interurban line. A spur was constructed into the quarry yard, which facilitated shipment of stone for the steel mill foundations and sidewalks throughout South Lorain.

In the same year, 1894, Lorain annexed 24 original lots in Sheffield Township west of the Black River. The lots were subdivided and the Johnson Steel Company bought 2,300 additional acres south of 28<sup>th</sup> Street through its Sheffield Land and Improvement Company. This newly annexed section of Lorain was laid out in orderly, rectangular city blocks, unlike the “hodge-podge growth” that characterized the northern part of the town, and soon became known as South Lorain with 70 acres of the tract of land set aside as Oakwood Park.



Topographic map illustrating the route of the Lorain-Elyria Railway in 1901 (U.S. Geological Survey).



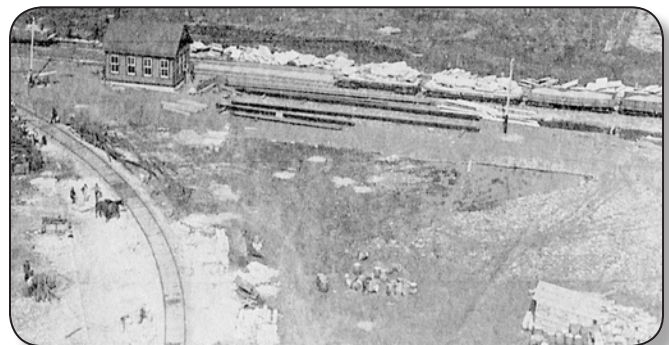
Eschruth sandstone quarry and mill, August 1894. This quarry was located on the Yellow Line a short distance south of the community of Vincent in southern Sheffield Township. (Albert C. Doane).



Eschruth quarry siding. As the demand for sandstone foundation material increased during the construction of the Johnson Steel Company and associated housing for mill workers in South Lorain, in 1894 a railroad spur was built to connect the quarry with the main track running between South Lorain and Elyria (Albert C. Doane).



Yellow Line streetcar No. 14 at Vincent, circa 1910 (Albert C. Doane).

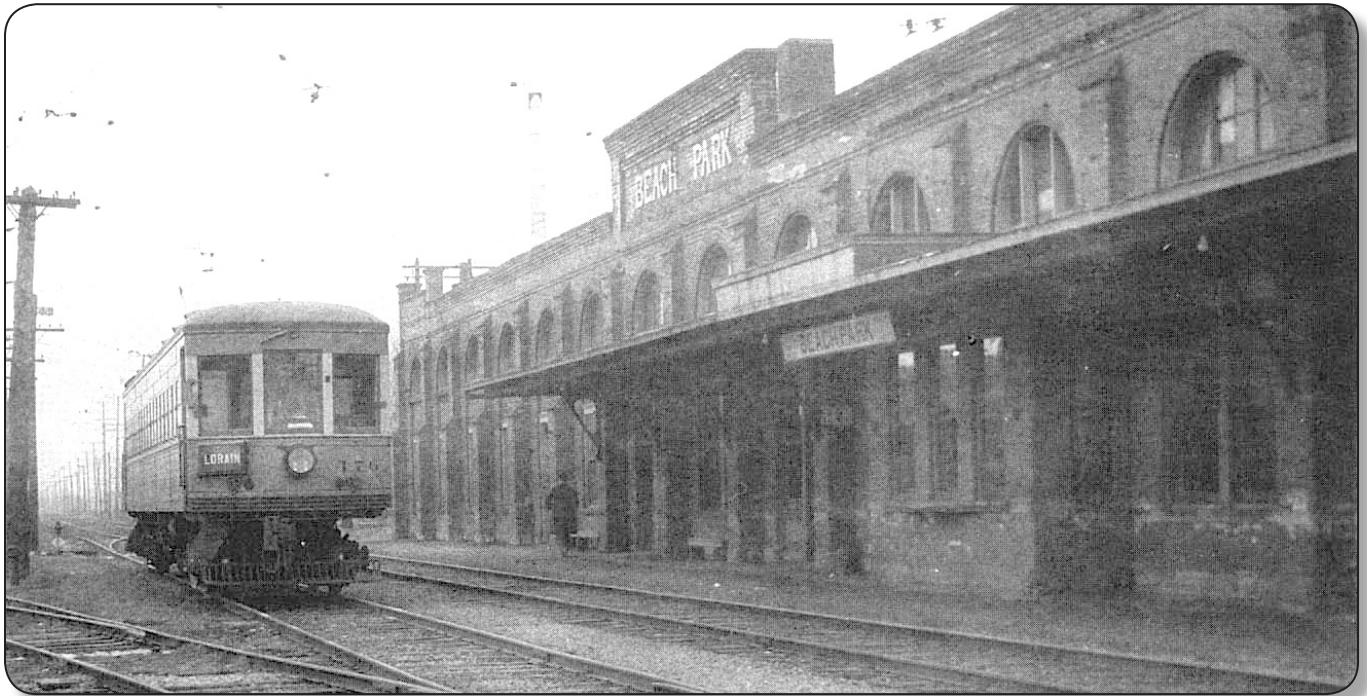


Aerial view Lorain-Elyria Railway's spur to Eschruth quarry. Starting in 1894, this quarry supplied sandstone and crushed aggregate for foundations, sidewalks, and concrete; note the flat-bed cars at upper right loaded with slabs of sandstone (Albert C. Doane).

**Avon Beach & Southern Line.** Also known as the Beach Park-South Lorain Line, the Avon Beach & Southern interurban was built in 1905 and branched off the main Cleveland-Toledo line at Beach Park in Avon Lake (near the future Cleveland Electric Illuminating power plant). It rambled through Avon and Sheffield, crossing the Black River into South Lorain at 31<sup>st</sup> Street, and finally joining the Lorain-Elyria line at Grove Avenue. One could transfer here to the Yellow Line for a connection to Elyria or board the Lorain Street Railroad to complete a 12-mile loop to the lakeshore at the foot of Broadway—a place once known as *The Loop*, where streetcars would circle and reverse direction.

Heading south from the lake at Beach Park the line roughly followed present-day Walker Road, crossing Colorado Avenue where the City of Avon is now constructing

a recreational park. Just south of French Creek Road, the tracks turned abruptly west into Sheffield and crossed the Black River about 100 feet upstream of the present 31<sup>st</sup> Street Bridge. The river crossing was accomplished with a 1,200-foot-long, viaduct-type trestle bridge that extended across the 60-foot deep ravine with steep shale cliffs. From here the line followed 31<sup>st</sup> Street to the Grove Avenue junction.



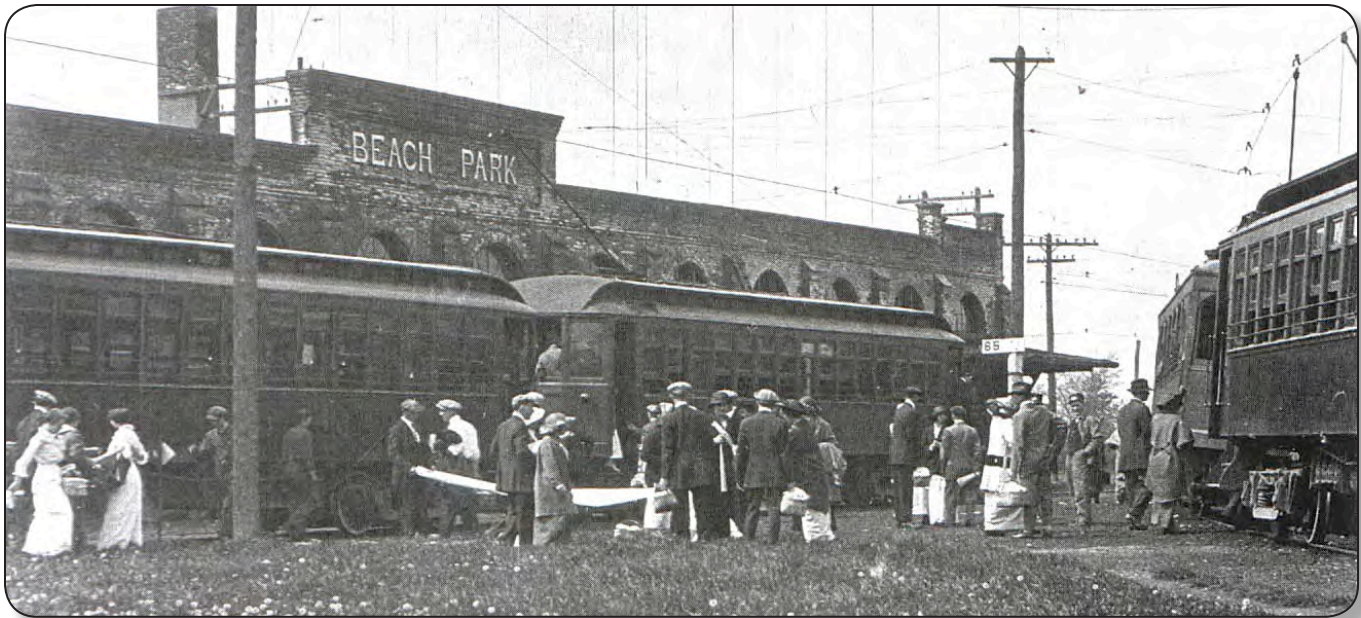
Lake Shore Electric Railway's Beach Park station in Avon Lake, built in 1897; car 176 is shown here heading west toward Lorain, circa 1936. Stop 65 on the Lake Shore Electric Railway was the transfer point to the Avon Beach & Southern interurban, which ran through Avon and Sheffield on its way to South Lorain. The station building would later become the Saddle Inn (Albert C. Doane).



Beach Park car barn and passenger station at Avon Lake, Stop 65 on the Lake Shore Electric Railway, circa 1902 (Albert C. Doane).

Part of the Lake Shore Electric System, but separately incorporated, the Avon Beach & Southern Line followed a peculiar route that seemed to avoid any population centers. However, its purpose was not to service communities along

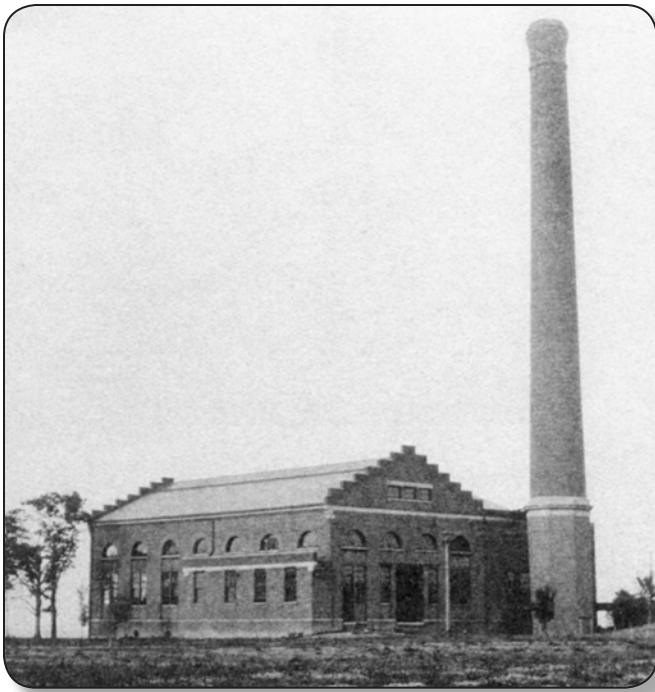
the route, but to provide an alternative Cleveland-Elyria route in competition with the Cleveland, Southwestern & Columbus Railway, which already had a direct line between these two municipal centers.



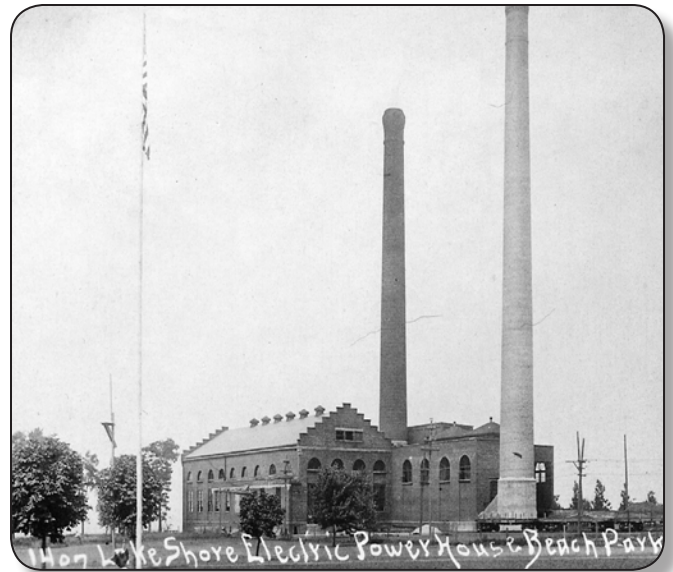
*Beach Park at Avon Lake, a 30-acre beach, picnic, and pavilion facility owned by the Lake Shore Electric Railway. Passengers are disembarking the trolleys with picnic baskets at the Beach Park Station (Stop 65), circa 1920. The pavilion was torn down in 1923 when the property was sold to the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company for the Avon Lake power plant (John Rehor).*



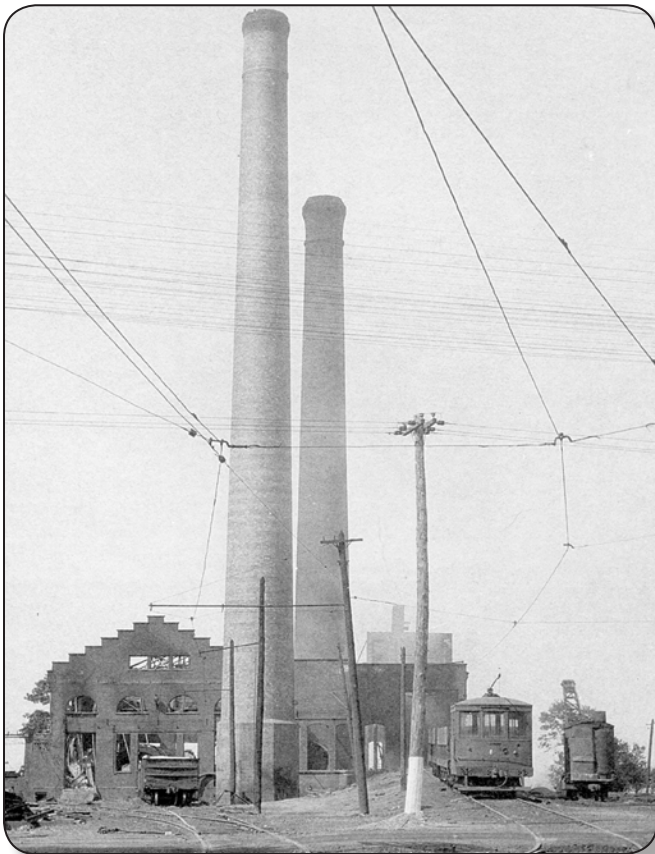
*Beach Park shore of Lake Erie at Avon Lake, circa 1900. Smock stacks at left are the Beach Park Powerhouse that exploded and burned on August 23, 1925. This plant provided power for the Lake Shore Electric Railway between Lorain and Cleveland. It was later replaced by the Cleveland Electric Illuminating plant (Lorain County Historical Society).*



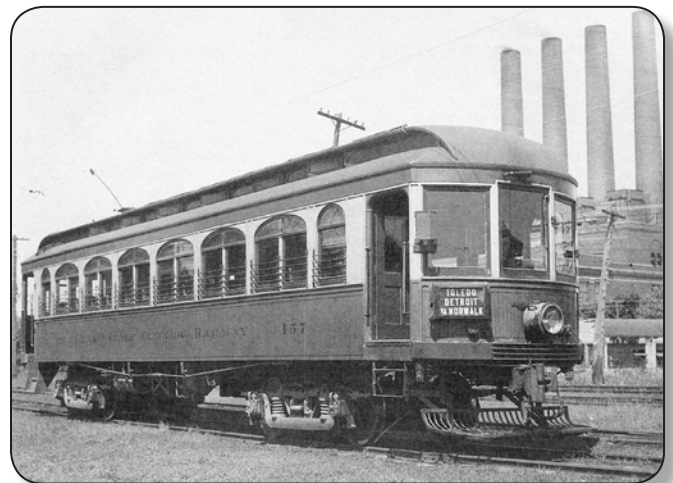
Beach Park power station (Avon Lake), originally built by the Lorain & Cleveland Railway in 1897 and acquired by the Lake Shore Electric Railway in 1901, supplied power to the eastern lines until 1925 when it was destroyed by fire, circa 1902 (Gilbert Hodges).



Lake Shore Electric Railway's power plant at Beach Park (Avon Lake), circa 1910; built in 1897 and enlarged with a second smoke in 1907 (Willis Leiter).



Beach Park power station damaged by an explosion on August 21, 1925, crippling east half of the Lake Shore Electric Railway; the small switcher car at the far right moved coal cars at the plant (Ralph Sayles).



Lake Shore Electric Railway's Niles coach at Beach Park in 1937; new Illuminating power plant in the right background (Albert C. Doane).



Aerial view of Cleveland Electric Illuminating power plant, Avon Lake (August 1935).



*Postcard of a work engine crossing the Avon Beach and Southern electric railway trestle over the Black River, circa 1905. The trestle was located just upstream (south) of the current 31<sup>st</sup> Street bridge (Garfield Farms Landmark Foundation).*



*Causeway construction for the East 31<sup>st</sup> Street bridge in 1913 showing timber supports for 1905 Avon Beach and Southern electric railway trestle (Black River Historical Society).*



*Abandoned concrete pillars of the 1905 Avon Beach and Southern electric railway Black River trestle.*

**Tornado**—on Saturday afternoon, June 28, 1924, a devastating tornado struck northern Lorain County, killing 78 people and injuring some 1,000 more. The City of Lorain was in shambles. In Sheffield one infant perished and at least 15 homes and barns were destroyed. The newly constructed Brookside School was severely damaged.

Two Lake Shore Electric Railway cars were overturned by the fierce winds and the freight station roof was blown toward the lake. Most of the poles, trolley wires, high-tension supports, and transmission lines were uprooted—sparking and sizzling on the ground. Half of the Lorain segments of the rail line were destroyed, including the Beach Park-South Lorain Line that passed through Sheffield.

About two weeks after the tornado service was restored, but the damage financially crippled the railway. Thus, the marginally profitable Beach Park-South Lorain segment of the Lake Shore Electric system was officially abandoned on April 1, 1925.



*Wreckage on interurban tracks following the passage of the Lorain tornado on June 28, 1924 (Lorain County Historical Society).*



*Destruction of downtown Lorain by June 28, 1924 tornado, showing damaged power lines and disabled trolley cars on Lorain Street Railroad's mainline; view to the north on Broadway with Lake Erie in the distance (Albert C. Doane).*



*Wreckage of overturned streetcar following the passage of the Lorain tornado on June 28, 1924 (Lorain County Historical Society).*



### ***Cleveland, Southwestern & Columbus Railway***

***Green Line.*** Green was the color of the trolley cars of the sprawling Cleveland, Southwestern & Columbus Railway (CSC)—known by the nicknames, Green Line or simply Southwestern. Because the cars blended into the field and forests through which they sped, in 1927 the entire fleet was painted orange to reduce grade-crossing accidents. This line provided interurban service from Cleveland to Elyria starting in December 1895. The journey by rail only required two hours rather than a half-day stagecoach ride. Later a connection to Lorain was completed that followed Lake Avenue, crossing into southwestern Sheffield Township, and progressing northwest

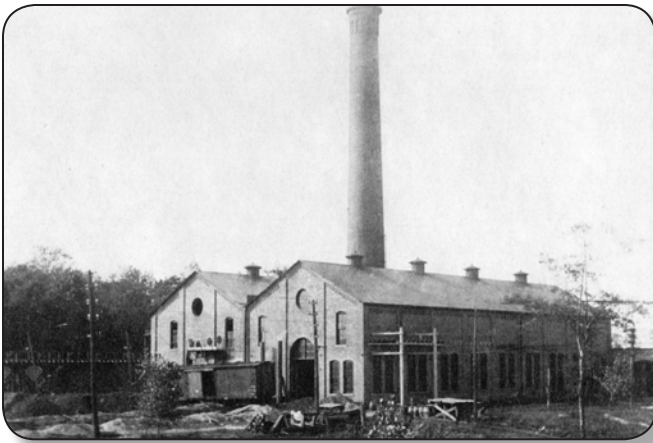
to Penfield Junction near present-day Clearview High School. From the junction a spur line ran southwest along North Ridge Road ending at a wye in North Amherst. From Penfield Junction the main line ran north into downtown Lorain, via Reid Avenue, where it shared a terminal with Lake Shore Electric Railway on West Erie Avenue. During World War I, travel on the interurban lines reached its peak. Norman Muller, who was a maintenance engineer for one of CSC's electric substations at that time, recalls passengers hanging on the steps, the back ledge of cars, and even some on the roof, as the interurbans had difficulty getting new cars during wartime. The 1929 Depression hit this railway hard, causing abandonment of the line in 1931.



*Cleveland, Southwestern & Columbus Railway's Penfield Junction in southwestern Sheffield Township; the electric railway car on the right is bound for Lorain and the one on the left is heading for Elyria from Amherst, circa 1900 (Albert C. Doane).*

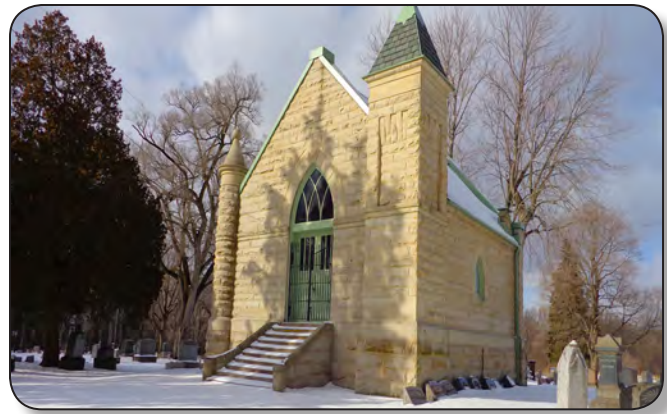


*Cleveland, Southwestern & Columbus Railway interurban car in downtown Ashland, Ohio, circa 1915 (Ashland Drug Company).*



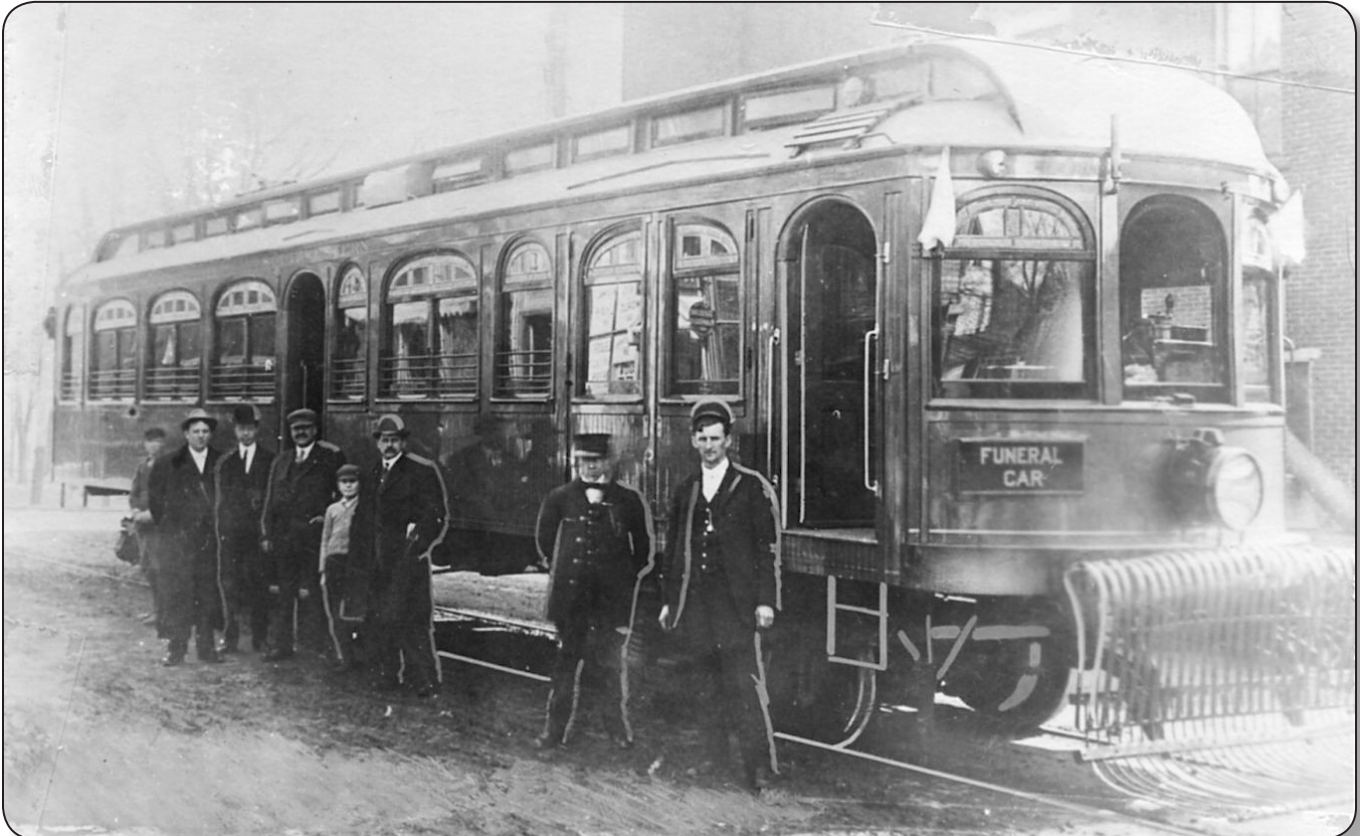
*Cleveland Southwest & Columbus Railway powerhouse at Oberlin Road, Elyria, Ohio, circa 1910 (Lorain County Historical Society).*

The Cleveland, Southwestern & Columbus Railway operated a lavender colored funeral car known as *The Dolores*. The deceased's relatives sat in the front of the car and friends in the back. There was room for two caskets in the back of the motorman's vestibule. For large funerals, the plush car No. 140 ran as a second car. The funeral car would depart from downtown Lorain churches, where services were held, travel south along Reid Avenue to Penfield Junction, then west on North Ridge Road to the Cemetery Stop. Elmwood Cemetery was located to the north and Calvary Cemetery to the south. Normally, pallbearers would place the casket on a cart that was wheeled to



*Elmwood Cemetery Chapel (Lorain); Cleveland, Southwestern & Columbus Railway's funeral car carried caskets to this sandstone chapel in the early 1900s.*

the gravesite for burial. In winter, with the ground too frozen to dig, the cart would be wheeled to the back of the chapel and the casket carried down a cellar way for storage until a grave could be prepared. Once weather permitted, a burial service was then held in the chapel. As the mourners looked on, a special wench was employed to raise the casket through an opening in the chapel's floor. Pallbearers carried the casket down the front steps of the chapel and placed it onto a waiting cart for transport to the gravesite. During the World War I flu epidemic, *The Dolores* serviced two or three funerals a day and church bells were said to have "never stopped tolling."



*Cleveland, Southwestern & Columbus Railway's lavender colored funeral car, The Dolores, 1916 (Albert C. Doane).*

### *End of an Era*

The Lake Shore Electric Railway ceased operation in May 1938. The Cleveland-Lorain section of the system and Lorain Street Railway were quickly dismantled and by the end of 1939 virtually all of the tracks and electric lines were gone. All that remains today are elevated railway grades that mark the once vibrant lines and abandoned bridge abutments at former stream

crossings. A number of factors conspired to end interurban service in northern Ohio. The Great Depression of the 1930s created an almost insurmountable financial strain. But the real death knell was the advent of private automobiles and passenger bus service along the same routes traveled by the interurbans. Abandonment of electric railway service and liquidation of assets were the only options for the bankrupt line.



*After the demise of the interurbans, many of the old trolley cars saw service as dwellings, diners, and other businesses. This former street car became Serbu's Tavern on French Creek Road in Sheffield Village, circa 1940s (Drew Penfield).*



*Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial, Put-in-Bay, Ohio.*