

The next meeting of the Southwest chapter will be Wed., May 8, 2013, at Avila's Restaurant, 6032 N. Mesa St., at 6 pm. Visitors welcome.



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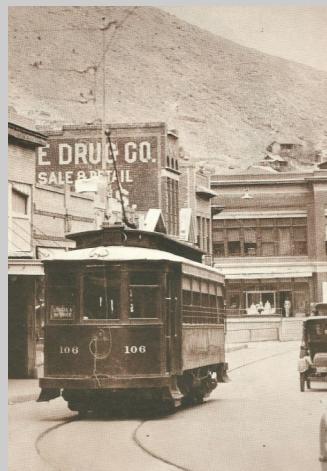
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El Paso & Southwestern Flyer

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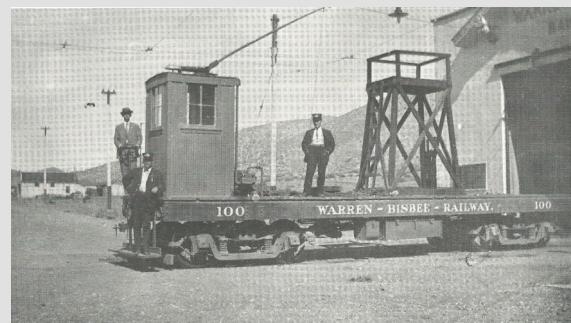
The Warren-Bisbee Railway

A High Desert Interurban



In 1907, a franchise was granted to the Warren-Bisbee Railway to provide a streetcar system between the mining towns of Warren, Upper Lowell, and Bisbee. It was not an easy engineering feat as Bisbee was situated around two narrow, twisting canyons. Warren was a company town, and a public transportation system would help miners get to and from work as well as helping the commerce of Bisbee, the oldest town in the region, other than Tombstone.

Construction began promptly and by mid-1908 Warren and Bisbee were connected by an electric line. An extension was built down to the Country Club area of Warren. A branch was constructed to Upper Lowell and Jigerville mining areas about the same time. A work car, No. 100, a flat with a control cab and tower for overhead line work, was received via a flat car over the El Paso & Southwestern Railroad. The electric line crossed the EP&SW three times, once on a trestle and twice under bridges as the EP&SW would not allow the line to cross at grade. Seven closed, double truck cars were acquired from the McGuire-Cummings Car Company of Illinois for the opening, numbered sequentially from 101 to 107. They were 42 feet in length with seating for 40 and standing room for 75 and were equipped with 40 hp motors necessary for the steep grades encountered. The line could be technically an interurban since it served different urban centers and had large MU-capable cars; however, it operated more like a streetcar line with little private right of way, and mostly street-running.



Later two convertible cars, single-truckers with monitor roofs, were acquired, one powered and one an unpowered trailer. These were frequently used on the Upper Lowell branch and on the Country Club branch. One of this type car was involved in the worst accident on the system in 1913, when, apparently due to operator error, the brake system was not properly set, and the car ran away down the hill colliding with car 103, causing fatal injuries for two men riding on the platform.



Car 103 crossing a washout over temporary trackage.

Despite the protestations of skeptics about the line being able to be built on the narrow Main Street, the car line did run up Main St. in Bisbee in a steep, twisting route. In 1909, the line was extended past downtown Bisbee up Tombstone Canyon past Castle Rock. The electric line eventually reached its maximum length of 12 miles, using 60 lb. rail and 80 lb rail on the steeper grades. The carbarn was located in Warren and reportedly contained only two tracks. The power generated was the standard 600 volts DC used by most streetcar lines.

There was a flood in 1910 that created havoc with the line. Portions of the right of way were completely washed out. However, repairs were made and the line kept running. Schedules often accommodated miners shifts and cars ran from 6 am to 2 am. Throughout the 1920s, copper production in the region declined and the streetcar line began to show losses. Late evening runs were cut back; cars were converted to one-man operation with the rear doors closed off. After twenty years of continual usage, the cars, the track, and the equipment showed considerable wear. A financial decision was made to not buy new equipment and not rebuild the track and overhead. In 1928, the company petitioned the city of Bisbee to abolish the electric line and substitute buses. The last run was on May 31, 1928, a little more than a year before the start of the Great Depression.

Resources and photos: Francaviglia, Richard V. : Mining Town Trolleys, A History of the Warren-Bisbee Railway, Copper Queen Publishing Co, Bisbee, AZ 1983.

Street Railway Journal, Vol. 31, 1908.

The Electric Interurban Railways in America: Hilton & Due, 1960



National Train Day will be celebrated this year on Saturday, May 11, 2013. Events that we know of will be in **El Paso** at the Union Depot hosted by Amtrak, the Railroad & Transportation Museum, and the Southwest Chapter of the R&LHS. In **Tucson**, it will be at the Amtrak Depot with the Southern Arizona Transportation Museum hosting. At **El Paso** Union Depot, the R&TM-EP and the Las Cruces Railroad Museums will be represented along with members of the Southwest Chapter, R&LHS. The Railroad Men of the El Paso & Southwestern Railroad and the Harvey Girls of El Paso will have displays. Historians will provide station tours and describe station operations. Railroad historians will describe passenger service and Amtrak operations.

The Railroad Model & Historical Association of El Paso will have an HO model layout in operation.

An Overview of Equipment Used on the Trains 13 and 14 Between Albuquerque and El Paso

In Santa Fe timetables, until 1953, these trains carried the name *Express*; after lightweight equipment was introduced in 1953, these trains became the *El Pasoan*, and kept that name until the end of service in 1968. In **1946**, this was a daylight train carrying:

RPO-Baggage; Baggage-Express; Coach (Partition); Coach. The partition coach was likely a smoker. Segregated coaches were not common on the Santa Fe in New Mexico. One source, the son of a Santa Fe conductor, said that his father was supposed to segregate the coach when the train crossed the New Mexico line into Texas. But his father indicated that since only a few miles were involved, he didn't bother.

By Summer of **1947**, it had switched from a daylight operation to an overnight train, adding a heavyweight sleeper listed as a 14 section car. It is believed that Southwest Chapter's *James Watt* and the *Isaac Newton* operated on this run. By 1949, the sleeper was listed as a 10 section, two drawing room car, the train departing Albuquerque at 10:45 pm and arriving at El Paso at 7 am.

"Daylight schedules reappeared in September, 1953, coinciding with the introduction of lightweight cars. One of them was coach 3153, a coach rebuilt to contain 32 chair seats, 9 lounge chairs and a large food vending machine." (*Fred W Frailey*)

Fall 1955;

RPO-Baggage LW (2107 assigned); Baggage-Express, LW;

Coach-Lounge-Automatic Buffet, LW (3153 assigned)

Coach-Observation, 60 seat (round end, 3240 assigned). 3240 carried a drumhead for the *El Pasoan*.

Ed. Note: (3240 believed to be Budd 1938, first served on the San Diegan.)

1965-1968: RDC-2, # 192, Baggage-Coach 36 seat; RDC-1, #191, 86 seat coach. (192 had been rebuilt from a RDC-1 to contain a baggage space. These were the RDC's involved in the 1956 Redondo Jet. wreck in California.

Reference: Frailey, Fred W; A Quarter century of Santa Fe Consists, RPC Publications, 1974.



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Railway & Locomotive Historical Society

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Looking up Oregon Street, there are no less than 5 streetcars seen, plus an EP&SW steam engine at the crossing. The Carnegie Library is on the left, the Hotel Linden and the old YMCA on the right. Not dated, but the Stone & Webster car in the scene arrived in 1914. Possibly late teens or early twenties.