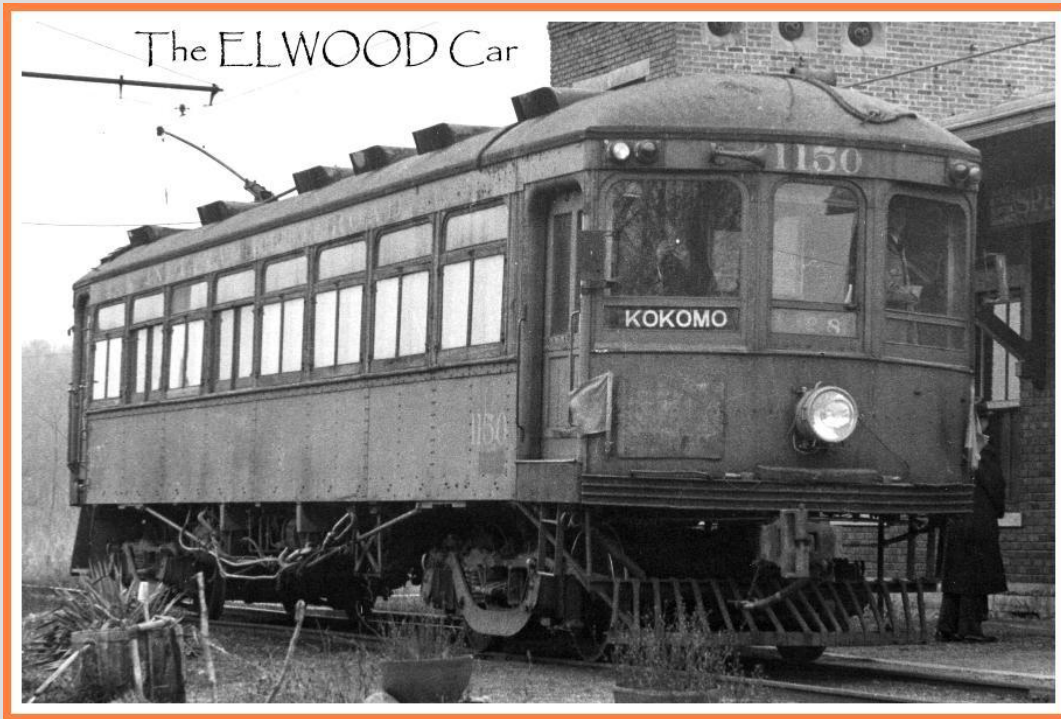


The Rail History of Elwood, Indiana

Elwood's Electric Rail Lines



Streetcars, Trolleys and Interurbans

Updated – 31 August 2021

Nov 6, 1893 -- Oct. 15, 1931

Elwood Electric Street Railway . . . 1893 – 1899 (sold to Union Traction Co. of Indiana **#1**)

Union Traction Company **#1** . . . 1897 - 1899

Union Traction Co. of Indiana **#2** . . . 6/28/1899 to 5/13/1912 (consolidated) 1897 June 27, 1899

Elwood & Alexandria Electric Railway Company . . . 1898 - 1901

Indiana Union Traction Company . . . 6/9/1903 to 5/13/1912 . . . merged into . . .

Union Traction Co. of Indiana **#3** . . . 5/13/1912 to 7/2/1930 (sold to the Indiana Railroad)

Indiana Railroad . . . 1930 – 1941

Elwood passenger service discontinued Monday, June 15, 1931

Elwood freight service discontinued on Thursday, October 15, 1931

Elwood Electric Street Railway November 6, 1893

Elwood & Alexandria Electric Rail Co formed May 4, 1898

Elwood & Alexandria Railway opened to Elwood June 26, 1899

UTC Alexandria-Elwood line starts construction to Tipton April 1902

UTC Elwood to Tipton line test run December 31, 1902

UTC Elwood-Tipton line opened between the two cities January 1, 1903

UTC Alexandria-Tipton line begins service February 10, 1903

Elwood Electric Street Railway (1893-1899)

The use of electricity to power public transportation was not new to Madison County citizens in 1897, but it took on a whole new meaning that year — one that would last for over four decades.

The **Elwood Electric Street Railway** was chartered on **October 19, 1892**, at a cost of \$100,000. Rails were laid on Main Street, South Anderson Street, North 9th and North 16th Streets and as far as North J Street. The brick car barns were located on what is now known as South 31st Street near the railroad right-of-way.

The first local streetcars, however, didn't appear in Elwood until service began on **November 6, 1893**. By 1897, the company was operating five passenger cars on six miles of tracks in the city. The railway became part of the larger **Union Traction Co. of Indiana** on June 27, 1899.

Elwood & Alexandria Electric Rail Company (1899 – 1901)

The **Elwood & Alexandria Railway Co.** was formed **May 4, 1898**, as an independent company with a bankroll of \$225,000. Members of the Board of Directors were: Dee Allen, Battle Creek, Michigan; Loren N. Downs, Kalamazoo, Michigan; Sherman B. Harting Rensselaer, Indiana; and **Cassius M. Greenen of Elwood, Indiana**. Two interurbans were employed between Elwood and Alexandria on nine miles of mostly straight tracks. Service began on **June 26, 1899**, with two passenger cars running over nine miles of tracks between Alexandria and Elwood.

The **Elwood & Alexandria Railway Co.** was acquired by the **Union Traction Company of Indiana** on **September 21, 1901**.

On the afternoon of Sept. 3, 1897, five men met and organized the Union Traction Co. of Indiana. From that simple beginning on the second floor of the Durbin-McCullough Block building in Anderson, Indiana, came a transportation system network that would change the face of intercity travel for years.

The UTC was growing, and soon consolidations took place. On June 27, 1899, the Union Traction Co. of Indiana, the successor to the Union Traction Co. was formed. It included the former UTC and the Citizens Street Railway Co. of Muncie, the **Elwood Electric Street Railway**, and the Muncie, Anderson and Indianapolis Street Railroad Co.

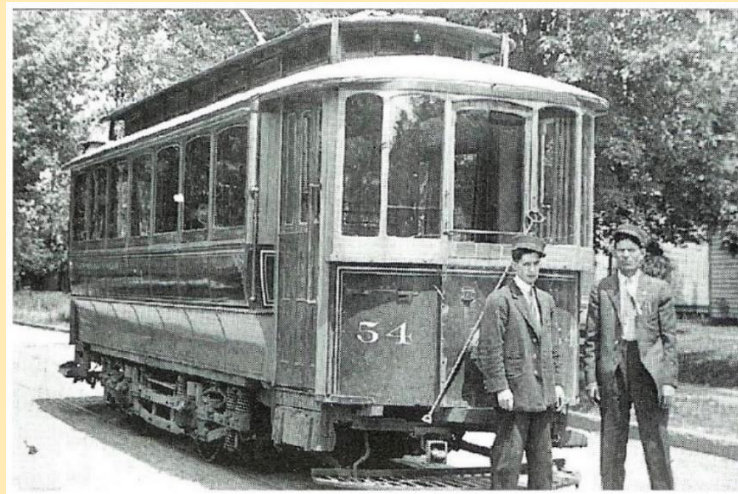
The Union Traction Company had constructed an interurban line which first run to Alexandria January 18, 1898, and began to connect many sizeable cities and towns throughout Central Indiana. The independent Elwood & Alexandria Railway started operation June 26, 1899, and brought a convenient method of delivering vegetables to local markets.

Union Traction (UTC) was the largest interurban system in Indiana with 410 miles (660 km) of interurban trackage and 44 miles (71 km) of streetcar lines in Anderson, Elwood, Marion and Muncie. UTC was created in **1897** to operate an initial line between Anderson and Alexandria. UTC purchased or leased several neighboring interurban lines in short order: the Elwood and Alexandria was bought in 1903.

Construction on the extension to Tipton started **April 2, 1902**. The service was ready to be extended but an unexpected quandary occurred. A few hundred yards into Tipton County the new extension gradually elevated some 35 to 40 feet and crossed the Lake Erie & Western Railroad on a trestle constructed with dirt and concrete. Although the Panhandle Railroad offered no resistance to the crossing in downtown Elwood, the Lake Erie & Western Railroad Company demanded that the Union Traction Company provide a watchman even though the trains never physically connected. Their defense was an Indiana Statute stating that: if it becomes necessary for the track of one railroad company to cross the track of another railroad company, the company owning the road last constructed at such crossing shall unless otherwise agreed to between such companies, be at the exclusive expense of constructing such crossing in a manner to be convenient and safe for both companies.

This set off events in December 1902 that necessitated intense proceedings combined with a franchising dispute with the Union Traction Company, the city of Elwood and the railway. The Elwood & Alexandria Railway Company sold out to the Union Traction Company. One car made a test run **December 31, 1902** and service between Elwood and Tipton was opened the next day. Service between Alexandria and Tipton was then opened on **February 10, 1903**.

The company had another comparable experience later that year. Another new section was to be completed from Anderson to Frankton and then proceed to Elwood. A bit of grading was done but the line was never a major priority and the line was never completed.



"Red" Maley, motorman, and Clarence Powell, conductor, were two regulars who helped the Elwood line operate almost 24 hours a day.

The Indiana Railroad (1930 - 1941)

The **Indiana Railroad (IR)** was the last of the typical Midwestern United States interurban lines. It was formed in 1930-31 by combining the operations of the five major interurban systems in central Indiana into one entity. Although the IR faced bankruptcy in 1933, the system was virtually held intact for four years. The IR operated about 600 miles (970 km) of interurban lines throughout Indiana during this period. During the late 1930s, the routes were abandoned one by one until a 1941 wreck with fatalities south of Indianapolis put an abrupt end to the last operation of interurbans in Indiana.

Elwood

1893 -1899 - Elwood Electric Street Railway

1899 -1930 - Union Traction Co. of Indiana

1924 – City streetcars discontinued August 1

1930 - 1941- Indiana Railroad

Private bus co. in 1952 - Elwood Transit

The End

The Elwood Call Leader

Elwood, Indiana, Tuesday, Oct. 13, 1931

TRACTION TO END SERVICE

Freight Transportation to End Thursday (*Oct. 15, 1931*)

CITY RECEIVES PROPERTY

Freight service on the Tipton-Elwood-Alexandria division of the Indiana Railroad System will be discontinued Thursday and will mark the passing of traction service in this city.

The Indiana Railroad System, which purchased the Indiana Railroad Company a months ago filed a petition with the Public Service Commission to discontinue service on the local division

Revenue Not Sufficient

The company alleged in its petition that neither the freight nor passenger service brought sufficient revenue for the operation of cars on the local division.

The Commission granted the company permission to discontinue its passenger service of **June 15**, last, but instructed that freight service be maintained until **October 15** because of the work on State Road No. 28.

Paving of the state highway has been completed and the Indiana Railroad System is said to be ready for the discontinuing of the service.

Bus Service Inaugurated

Since the passenger service was discontinued, a bus service has been opened between Indianapolis and Elwood by the B. and B Transit Lines, of Elwood.

With the Indiana Railroad System discontinuing its freight service on Thursday, the rails will become the property of the city as will the station and its site at Main and Sixteenth Streets. *

City to Repair Street

The city will probably use an asphalt preparation in making repairs to Main Street. No definite announcement has been made relative to the disposal of the station and its site, but rumors have it that the property may be purchased by the school city, which is in urgent need of a gymnasium.

*Elwood's Public Library now occupies the same address at Main and 16th Street.

Marvin Crim

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