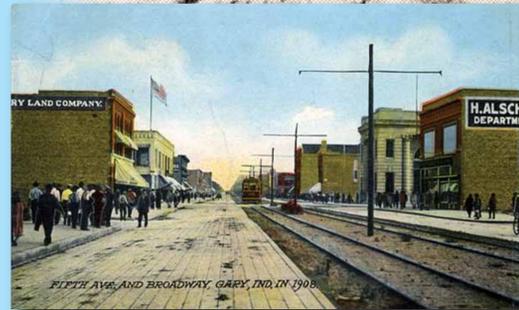
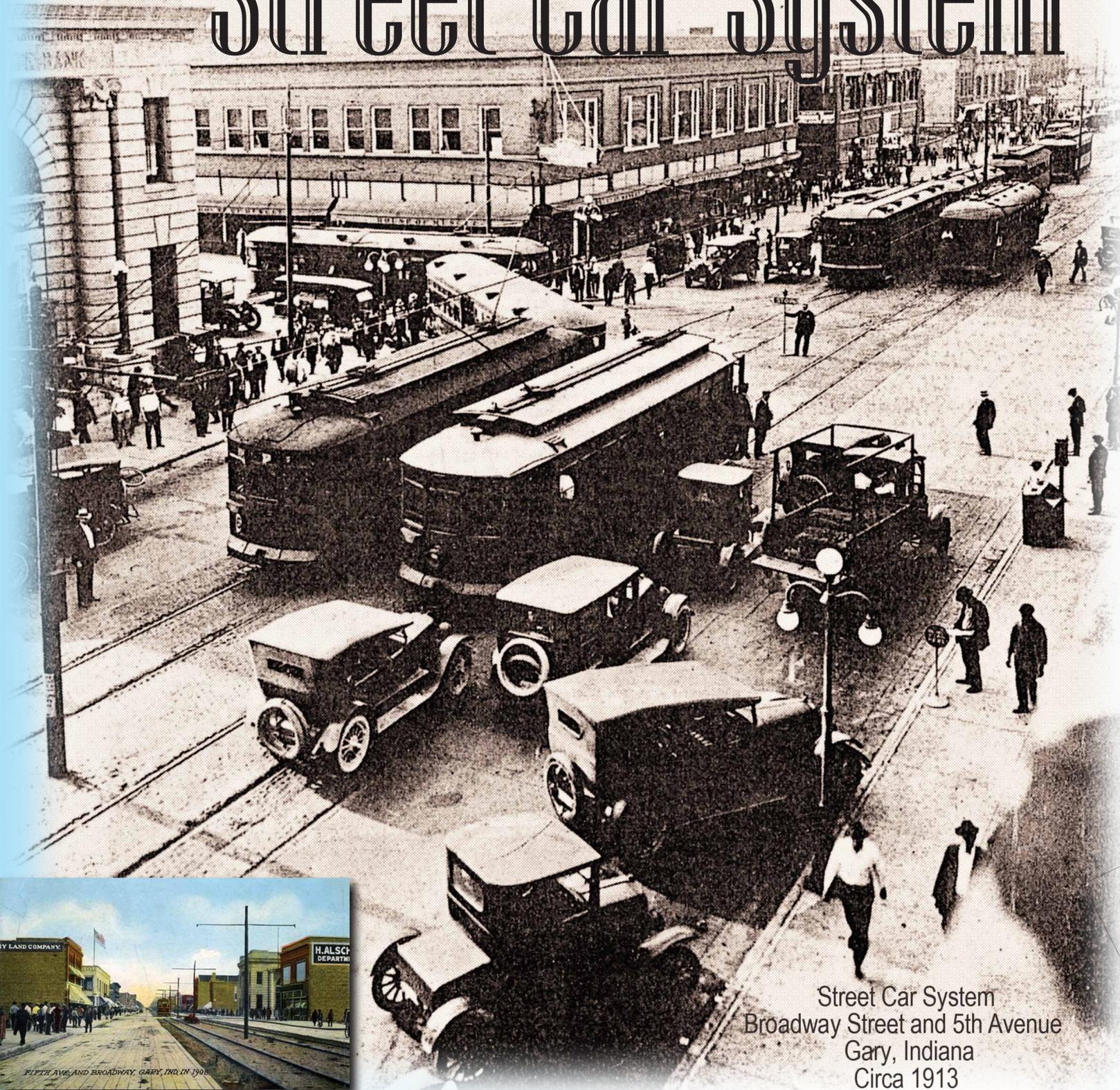


# Gary, Indiana's Street Car System



"Fifth Avenue and Broadway, Gary, Indiana in 1908." Postcard attributed to the Acmeograph Company.

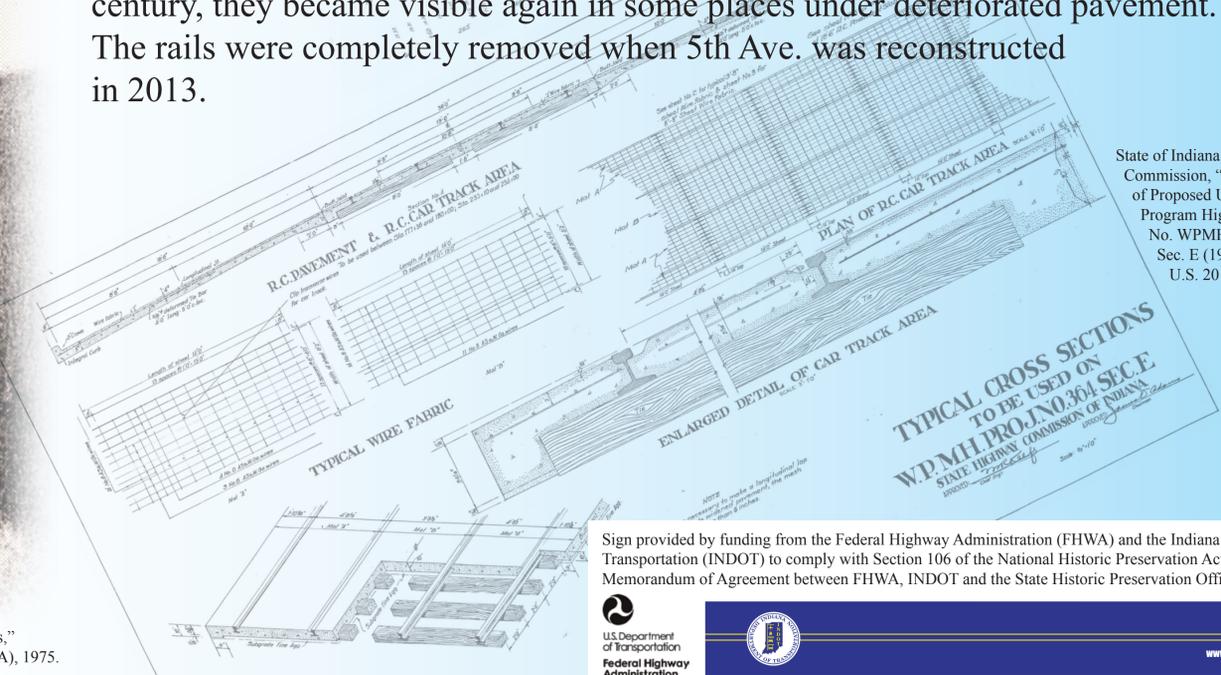
Street Car System  
Broadway Street and 5th Avenue  
Gary, Indiana  
Circa 1913

Photographer unknown; ca.-1920; Photo reprinted in James J. Buckley, "Gary Railways," From Bulletin 84 of the Central Electric Railfans' Association (CERA), (Chicago: CERA), 1975.

The founding of Gary in 1906 occurred at a time when electric street cars were booming in cities across the country. Provisions were made in the original layout of Gary for electric passenger car rail lines to be placed down the middle of major thoroughfares. A median strip for rail lines was included along Broadway St. and 11th Ave. Only a short spur was originally constructed along 5th Ave., but by the 1920s, it also contained a major line. Gary was built around three key industries of the United States Steel Corporation: the Indiana Steel Company, the American Sheet and Tin Plate Company, and the American Bridge Company. One of the major functions of the street car system was to carry workers of these companies on their daily commute.

During the height of street car service in the 1920s, fares were 8 cents with additional 6 or 8 cent zones for the longer routes. Historic photographs and postcards of Gary, such as the ones here showing the busy intersection of 5th Ave. and Broadway St. in the 1910s and 1920s, attest to the glory days of the streetcar system. At the height of operation, the city street cars carried more than 50,000 passengers daily over 100 miles of track. In the 1930s, buses began to displace street cars as the common mode of public transportation. During World War II, street car ridership experienced a boom, but after the war, the conversion to buses was reinitiated, and the last street cars through Gary ran on February 28, 1947.

Brick surrounded the street car rails, and in many cases, the brick was retained even after the adjacent streets were paved with other materials. The rail lines on 5th Ave. were first paved over sometime in the late 20th century. In the early 21st century, they became visible again in some places under deteriorated pavement. The rails were completely removed when 5th Ave. was reconstructed in 2013.



State of Indiana, State Highway Commission, "Plan and Profile of Proposed U.S. Works Program Highway Project No. WPMH-364, Sec. E (1936), U.S. 20 in Gary."

Sign provided by funding from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act through a Memorandum of Agreement between FHWA, INDOT and the State Historic Preservation Officer (IN SHPO).

