



A Trip To The Past or A Blast From The Past

by Robert C. Valentine





Into southern California we go



A Trip To The Past or A Blast From The Past

Nestled between beautiful beaches and the mountain ranges of the Santa Monica Mtns, the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mtns, is my birthplace of Los Angeles, a city where I grew up and which once upon a time, turned your eyes watery because of the terrible smog. That was 60 years ago, and it has since been pretty much cleaned up, except for the delimiting, profuse and alarming asphalt choking homeless hordes of people. Ah, I've seen it grow firsthand, from the first parties with shopping carts to smelly, sidewalk mini tent towns. To this I add, I love writing history.

Rather than marching along with WW II history, this would be a grand opportunity to relate something more about life in my fair city of Los Angeles, as a sort of mini history of Los Angeles, but with a delectable emphasis on transportation, my experiences and memoirs from the sixties to the new millennium. Before we do, let us explore the beginnings of Los Angeles, before it was incorporated as a municipality on April 4, 1850, and before the discovery of oil in the 1890s.

It was originally known as “El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Ángeles del Río Porciúncula” and was a modest farming settlement. English translation: “The Town of Our Lady the Queen of the Angels of the River Porciúncula”. The oldest part of Los Angeles is Olvera Street, settled in 1781. Much of Los Angeles and its surrounding area is built on a desert, although the first orange grove was planted at the Mission San Gabriel in 1804. The population of Los Angeles in 1800 had a grand total of 315 with the outskirts making a total of some 2000. In 1836, a census counted 2,230 residents in Los Angeles, including 550 Indians, 50 foreigners, 29 were American. Severe flooding occurred in 1811, 212 years before the historic flooding of 2023 caused by storm Hillary. José Antonio Rocha, born in Portugal, became the first foreigner to settle in El Pueblo in 1815, the same year more wild floods hit L.A.

(Below) In early Mexican California period, also known as Alta California, we see how a lady dressed. (Courtesy of the Juan Matias Sanchez Adobe Museum, Montebello Historical Society.)



One year after John Temple opens Los Angeles' first general store, John Gronigen (renamed Juan Domingo), a former German sailor who had earlier been shipwrecked at San Pedro but decided to settle in Los Angeles, purchases in 1828 some Indian village land Yang-Na for development into a vineyard.

Juan expels the village's remaining native inhabitants and this whole farming area becomes one of L.A.'s earliest vineyards and much later, the Los Angeles Civic Center.

Two wars erupt in California, a mini internal one between Northern California and Southern California (1831-about 1845). And the war against the United States which ends in 1848 at the Battle of San Gabriel River.

Unlike the growing populations of the American East Coasts, Old California and her coasts lacked people. Up to the late 1830s, barely 6,000 people lived in all of California. Just to compare, the city of Anaheim today—home to Disneyland—has a population of some 349,000; in fact, more people visit Disneyland in one day than the total of that early 6000. And, of that 6,000, 4,000 were women and children. The book *Two Years Before the Mast* sparked interest in California and made a big hit on the East Coast. The second largest ethnic group in the city was French. Postcard below is circa 1921, at the tail end of the “Golden Age” of Postcards. That began in 1907. The U.S. Post Office mailed 678 million postcards in 1908—not a bad feat considering the country's population was only 89 million.



However, California began to change in more ways than one. A Gold Rush and John Sutter (link courtesy of History.com) brought calamitous times to California, with the discovery of gold nuggets in northern California. During the early 1800s, beside the 6000 one should take into account that there lived over 250,000 Native Americans in Old California during the early Spanish and Mexican eras, but sadly, about 100,000 Native Americans died within the first two years of the California Gold Rush of 1848. In historical perspective, there would exist only 30,000 indigenous left alive by 1873. Between 1846-1873, between 9,492 and 16,000 California natives were killed in cold blood, while hundreds to thousands were worked to death or starved by many of the thousands of new settlers.

From Tennessee, an unsuccessful farmer, originally moved to Oregon where he had proposed all free Blacks be forced out of Oregon and those who didn't should be arrested and flogged—which many Oregonians disagreed with—in 1851, as first governor of the new state of California who was now a lawyer, Tennessean Peter H. Burnett, stated to the legislature, "...a war of extermination will continue to be waged between the races, until the Indian race becomes extinct, must be expected." It was the destiny of the White race, or as he put it to his colleagues in that 1851 [speech](#), this destiny "is beyond the power or wisdom of man to avert." A little known dynasty of death entered the picture of early California. Burnett is below left.



California grew from 1,485,000 in 1900 to 3,426,861 by 1920. Los Angeles from 102,000 in 1900 to over 1 million in 1930, overtaking San Francisco with its 634,394 and San Diego with 147,995. For other years in our century: [source](#).

The city of Los Angeles covers the city proper not its far outlying suburbs. City proper population in 2023: 3.86 million. On the other hand, the Greater Los Angeles population is about 18.7 million, larger than Tokyo, London, Paris, New York, Miami, and Chicago. Greater Los Angeles in terms of statistics encompasses 3 metropolitan areas: 1) Long Beach and Anaheim besides L.A. 2) Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura. 3) AND Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario. Ventura is the smallest of the 5 counties at 2,208 sq miles. One of the prettiest is Anaheim-Santa Ana with 40 miles of Mediterranean like coastline and with beaches that are cleaner than Santa Monica, but that was not so some 100 years ago, or even just 60. The propensity to change involves one key factor: too many people did not care. The same thing happened in terms of public transportation, not enough cared until the late 1900s. I remember there were proposals of bettering Los Angeles from the 1960s to the seventies, and nada came to fruition. Reasons varied, and will be discussed later. Actually a real early attempt was the 1950s elevated monorail business but that went down the drain—before my time.

Before 1920, Los Angeles had no mechanical street traffic lights, so if you had a Model-T before 1921, driving in L.A. was bonkers and wildly dangerous. You also had horse carriages running around. The invention of the motor car brought motored buses to Los Angeles. The *Los Angeles Times* declared in 1925, “The motor bus experiment has been carried as far as any other city in the country.” meaning NY and Chicago. The first bus route debuted on August 18, 1923 when Model Ts were everywhere. (One in 3 Angelenos owned a car.) It ran down Western Ave. from Los Feliz Blvd. in the north to Slauson Ave. in the south. Next line that opened service was on Wilshire which stopped on La Brea but, by 1928 extended to Beverly Hills. That today is known as the Wilshire corridor. All this was a motor bus experiment but it proved that people liked them that by 1925, L.A. had 53 miles of bus routes. People travelled either by bus, rail lines and cars. In terms of the economy, the 1920s was known as the Roaring Twenties and expansion of all modes of travel hit tilt. You even had double decker buses and experimental buses that were powered by steam. You had Hollywood expanding, too



I grew up near downtown Los Angeles, California, in Boyle Heights. We were not even 10 minutes from the civic center so I guess you could call me an inner city boy. We did not have many things while I grew up, and sometimes it was pretty rough. Attended Dolores Mission, St. Vibiana, learned to play trumpet at Bosco Tech, Our Lady Queen of Angels Middle School, Hollywood High, Loyola High. Higher learning were Los Angeles City College, East Los Angeles City College, Cal State L.A., USC.

I hope you will find this report enjoyable and unique.

However, the uniqueness is not as self portrait, it is the aspect that I hope shows how people lived, that compared to today is a life on a different unique dimension. I've taken the liberty to utilize some pictures from the internet for both historical and educational purposes. I would like to begin with some stories going back in time circa the nineteen twenties, thirties, forties and fifties, and you do not have to be [Angelino](#).



I ran into this photo of Little Tokyo, June 10, 1939, by chance, as I was searching for smog pictures. Many buildings are still there but renovated. In front of the Hispano Broadcasting Co. with the sign Tony Sein are a line of P-cars on 1st St. followed by a PE 600 class Red Car. These P-cars were the first generation PCC streetcars from the streamline era, circa WW II. Note the windows. Next generation had distinct little windows above them. It is the 300 block of East 1st in historic Little Tokyo. Righthand side is Miko which can mean restaurant or hotel in Japanese. It could also be the Miyako Hotel at 258 E. 1st. Wartime Los Angeles had its share of turmoil, race riots, blackouts, smog and deportation of

Japanese-Americans. My father worked in the San Pedro shipyards before being drafted into the Army. My father used to tell me there were many more days of morning dew in the 40s compared to today. Somehow the arrival and explosion of people and war industry brought about a change in that even though many outskirts of Los Angeles were rural, ie. the suburbs, on July 26, 1943, Angelinos experienced the first big smog attack, so terrible and vivid with the air smelling like bleach.

In 1923, there were 430,000 registered automobiles in Los Angeles, a city really built on a desert. Most were 4-cylinder Model-T cars; not as much as today's 6,433,000 vehicles in urban Los Angeles, but for the next couple of decades there was a great expansion of people and vehicles. In 1942, an All-American Canal aqueduct was completed to provide water to the Imperial Valley, and is the largest irrigation canal in the world. One year before, the Colorado River Aqueduct had been completed as the largest public works project in southern California during the Great Depression. Three very good web sites to visit, at your leisure, that are involved in preserving and telling about the L.A. regions are [KCET Lost L.A. History](#) and the [Pacific Electric Railway Historical Society](#), and [L.A. as Subject](#), which is an association of more than 230 libraries, museums, official archives, personal collections and other institutions. Here is a [near-20min](#) with long-time favorite of the past Ralph Story.

America was in a difficult postwar transition after 1945 that avoided a depression as the economy switched from a wartime to a peacetime economy. From the late 1950s and 1960s onward, the suburbs were the places which saw the greatest expansion, especially with the baby boom generation. That includes me.

The following on the top of the next page is an artist's concept of a future monorail for Los Angeles in 1954 that never materialized. It is found in the Novak Archive. In 1951 the California assembly passed an act that established the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority, a planning agency that later took over all the streetcars, rail buses and private buses. Automobiles and a nice low gas price made ways of traveling out-



side the city limits a charm. This is not to say downtown was turning into a ghost town, on the contrary it was still pretty vibrant as I recollect.

Here is a [link](#) to a silent video on L.A. traffic of the 50s followed by a picture of downtown, before my time. Yet, I remember well we had similar scenes in the 1960s, lots of them.



7th and Broadway, civic center of Los Angeles. Incomplete combustion from car engines is a culprit of smog. After a study by the Automobile Manufacturers Association, the first catalytic converters were tested in 1954, but it was too late for that Oct, Angelenos were enveloped in horrific smog for 18 days. And, that was repeated in Nov. leading to not only car accidents but looting and deaths. Notice the extra sidewalk in the middle of the street. That is where the streetcars stopped so you could board. Tap above for a video, courtesy of King Rose Archives.



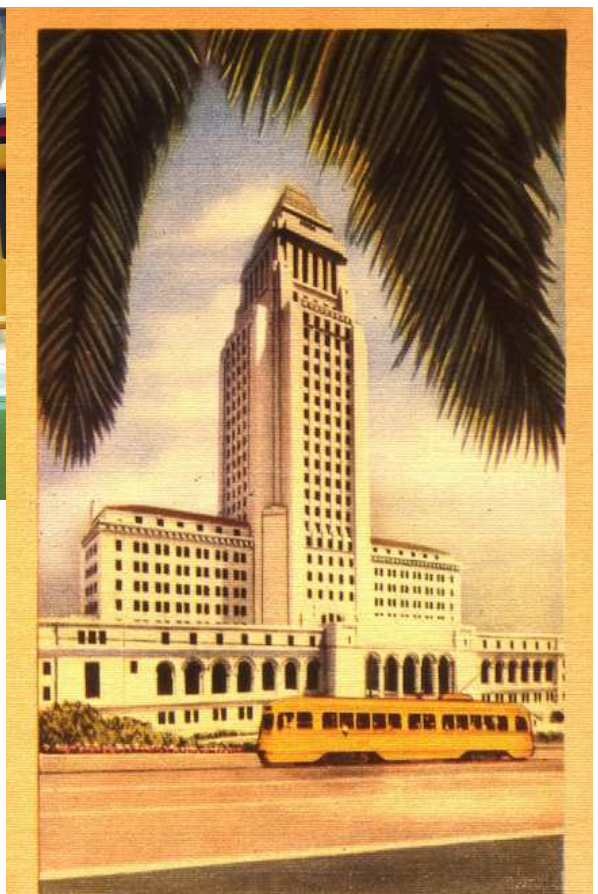
Streamlined electric streetcar, the P-car. Frontal view. It ran from Pico to East Los Angeles ending on Dozier and Rowan.



A new form of travel started in the 1930s in all major U.S. cities, the arrival of the PCC streetcars. The first PCC cars were delivered during the Great Depression, initially formed by independent railway companies in 1929 to design something new. They were streamlined, and in Los Angeles the avg person liked them because they were quieter and smoother than the Big Red Cars. PCC stood for Presidents' Conference Committee and before WW II, model 3s were everywhere although not til after WW II did the better PCCs come forth, such as above. A yellow P-car followed by a GM MTA bus. March 22-28, 1937 was [Transportation Week](#) in L.A., with Shirley Temple part of a publicity campaign to showcase the new PCC cars. Ridership went up and was still high in the 1950s. Above photo is courtesy of the Steve Crise Collection, the P-car is on Broadway and 7th St. circa 1961.

Los Angeles Motor Coach Co. was in turn renamed Los Angeles Transit Lines right after WW II. They in turn were purchase by the Metropolitan Transit Authority in 1951, more on the MTA later. Los Angeles today has 120 bus lines, 12,000 bus stops, and 6 rail lines (includes subways) but under Metro. In terms of buses, Los Angeles celebrated its 100th Anniversary, 1923-2023 in August.

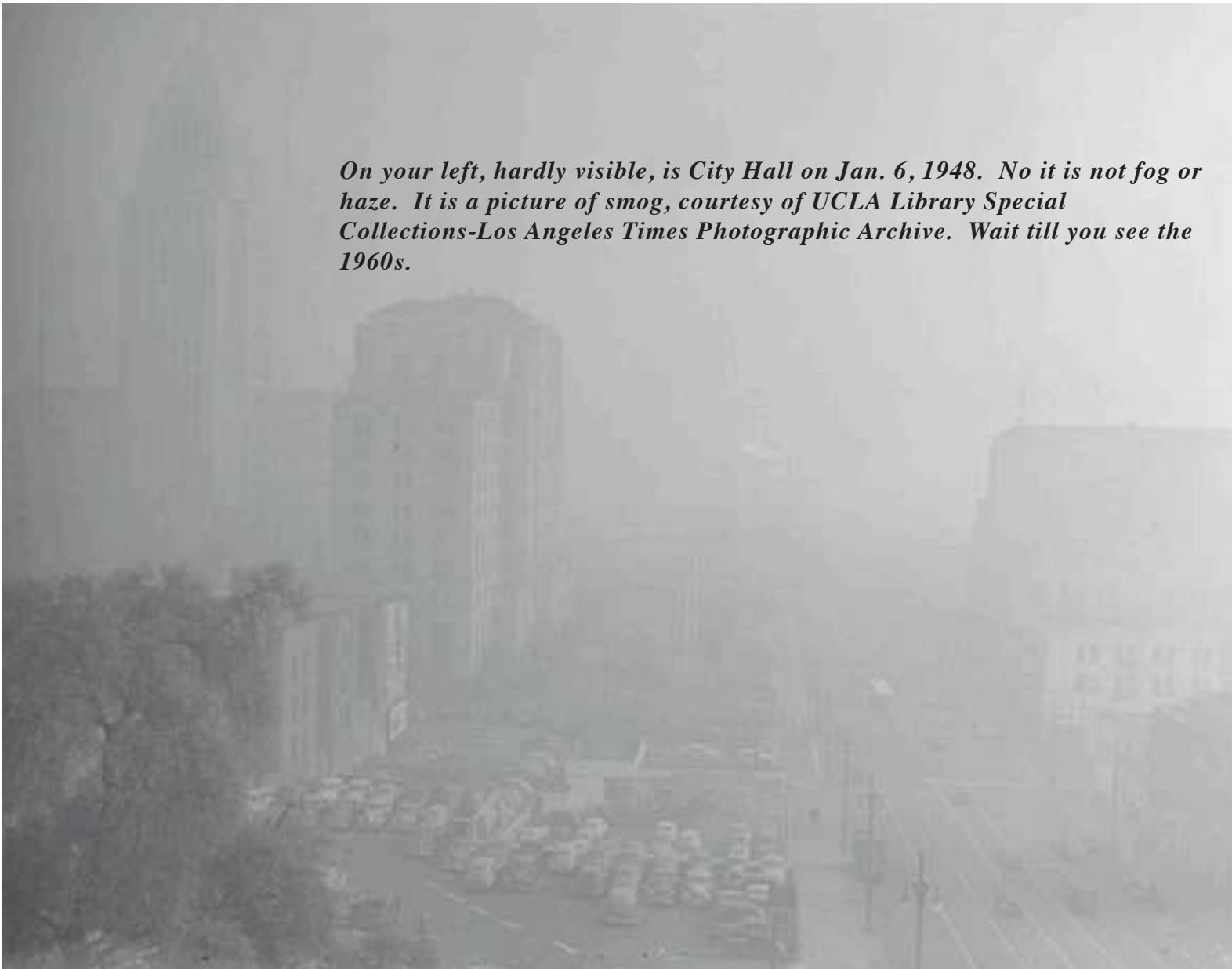
Although construction of the streetcar network in Southern California had peaked before the Great Depression and as stated, no new inner city rail lines were constructed thereafter, whenever Pacific Electric and the Los Angeles Motor Coach Co. planned a new route or a line extension, both companies depended on buses instead. It was an effort to create travel connections among their rail lines and expand service to streets that had no rail. A conglomerate known as National City Lines, backed by oil companies and tire maker Firestone slowly drove out rail by monopolizing transit systems by 1950, owned and controlled 46 systems in 45 cities in 16 states. The first bus line was on Western Avenue and is still running as Line 207 today. This is a model of the color scheme of the Los Angeles Motor Coach Co. It is made by Corgi, in a 1:50 die-cast scale in color.



Here is a [wonderful](#) web site about not only downtown Los Angeles, California, but the history of L.A. transit from 100 years ago to today. And, it all began when Los Angeles voters passed a referendum in 1923 asking for better transit in their rapidly growing city. Line 207 starts in Hollywood and runs to the outskirts of Inglewood; unfortunately it is often marred by less than desirable travelers who often do not even pay as the bus drivers "let them slide" for free. The last time I rode it, Aug. of 2023, we had one guy who stunk so bad, no one wanted to sit next to him; it was that bad. It did not matter the color of your skin, everyone were complaining why the bus driver even let him in, and I am not making this up. The building above right is the City Hall.



On your left, hardly visible, is City Hall on Jan. 6, 1948. No it is not fog or haze. It is a picture of smog, courtesy of UCLA Library Special Collections-Los Angeles Times Photographic Archive. Wait till you see the 1960s.





Pictures at left are across the street from the Pacific Electric building on 6th St. Across the street is the old Greyhound station at 6th and Los Angeles streets as a Red Car passes.

Opposite page a PE car starts to leave its depot for a run to Long Beach or San Pedro. The Hollywood Red model pulls out of the Pacific Electric building, ie. the depot on 6th and Main. Tall building is the back side of the PE building. Downtown L.A. was a maze of electric wires up to near 1962. Between 1946 and 1964, the number of children in America doubled.



Before my time, (above) a brilliant 1940s Los Angeles. The Red Cars took people outside the city of Los Angeles and helped create the expansion of the Los Angeles suburbs. At one point in history there were 1100 miles of track, more than the track mileage of modern NYC. But, there existed no underground subway system, only a bus and outdoor rail system, although a tiny stretch ran underground near Temple. Southern California's systems played a major role in making what it is today, and I grew up in it all—after the Red Cars that is. Before I was born you could ride the buses for a dime, and there was no sprawling freeways. They came into existence in 1939; the first connected downtown with the city of Pasadena.

On the following page is a snapshot of the building entrance on Main between 6th and 7th. In 1961, the last Red Car made it's final run, between L.A. and Long Beach. In 1963, freeway roads were all new and the cars had beautiful brand new whitewall tires. That was the fashion then. Disposal of tons of rubber tires was not yet a problem, too. Today's road resurfacing utilizes granulated tires in huge recycling projects in which rubber tires are cut into minute particles and are combined with



The Pacific Electric building in a vintage colorized view from the front, on Main St. Note where the PE Red car is coming out.

Entrance to the old PE building after the Red Cars were replaced. Today, an underground rail system exists in downtown.



conventional asphalt to form a new recycled product of street resurfacing. They help extend the life of the road and it also is a less noisy surface. The population of L.A. in 1960 was 2,479,015. It became the third most populous in the nation.

I remember we went down to the PE building a few times and took a special MTA bus to San Pedro or Disneyland or Balboa Park. Those buses were unlike the regular buses, for they had high cushiony chairs. All leather. On our journey, we would leave early in the morning and I remember once it was rather cool, a little drizzly and when the buses drove out they left us with what seemed to a kid a rush of wind. It was summer. Other regular bus lines utilized the depot. There were about 61 million cars in California in 1960. Neighboring [Hollywood](#) in color in the sixties.

A tough old breed, the GM but the longer distance model. Windows were higher affording clearer views. You can barely make out the higher seats. Windows opened. They had neat little metal brackets that held the windows open at different levels. Bus is still in decorated MTA green, however note the bus emblem: no more MTA. It is RTD. I remember there existed a transitional period where the old bus schemes still remained. More on that later.





Inside downtown Los Angeles of the late 1950s, Much of America was not ecology minded if you lived in a big city. This picture is in black and white but if it were in color you would see it all through a light yellowish haze, the smog. Would you consider it pretty bad or not?

Looking at a photo of the freeway system in Los Angeles mid-21st Century, the Hollywood Freeway 101 to Los Angeles with City Hall on the right.



The freeway system in the civic center was new in the 1940s and 1950s. The bus of the period (left) were GM models with a 2-speed Allison V-drive transmission and a 6-cylinder engine. GM literally owned the bus market from the 1940s through the 70s. Note Bubble Up Cola. You can still buy Bubble Up and other vintage drinks and sweets and gum at Galco's Old World Grocery (5702 York Blvd.) off the 110 Freeway off on York, it is in the Highland Park District.



Downtown on Hill St. looking north in the 1950s, with 3 GM buses. MTA in green, Los Angeles Transit in orange, and to the right is a Pacific Electric bus in red and silver. Far center is the 11-story Hotel Clark, 426 S. Hill in the heart of downtown. It is a historic building. Was to be renamed the trendy King and Grove Hotel, but that fell through.



MTA logo. That stands for Metropolitan Transit Authority.



Electric trolley buses also ran in Los Angeles. Numerous rail systems were abandoned and replaced by buses, which came into vogue in the 1950s especially bolstered by the new freeways of southern California. Yet, by the mid sixties they too were gone and replaced by diesel buses.



New silver liners that were entering service circa 1959. Like older GM models had air-ride suspension.

DREAMLINER 60

Tomorrow's dream come true today! Enjoy the most luxurious, the most comfortable ride you've ever had, in the beautiful new Dreamliner/60! New, smooth air suspension ride... fluorescent lights... superior ventilation... less sound and a better view. Plus handsome, relaxing decorator-designed interiors. Step aboard your New Year's gift—Dreamliner/60... in service soon.

THE FAST, EASY WAY TO WORK AND PLAY



Your New Year's Gift from M.T.A.

DREAMLINER AD for January to be inserted in community newspapers before display of new-style bus in selected cities on lines where new buses will be put in service. Lines will be 91, 94, 83, 58, 70, 71, and 51. A similar ad was run in "mets" just before Christmas, when bus was on display at Pershing Square.



ONE OF THEM TELLS:

How It Feels to Be Operator of the Month



E. R. Bell

(Excerpts from a letter to the Editor by Emmett R. Bell, Operator of the Month last October.)

• • •
“I shall sum up my experiences by relating the four (4) most thrilling events,” writes Mr. Bell. “Having worked the ‘P’ Line for ten years made me known to hundreds of people. And all over town I ran into people who had seen the picture (on the car card) and would congratulate me.

“1. I felt proud and humble when fellow-Operators congratulated me and said: ‘It couldn’t have happened to a nicer guy.’

“2. Most passengers would say: ‘If anyone deserved it, it was you. Congratulations.’

“3. One of the cards was placed in the foyer of my church (Bowen Methodist) and I was asked to

stand. And the importance of courtesy was emphasized by the pastor.

“4. My greatest thrill and most pleasure came in another manner. I pick up a group of Catholic school children around three o’clock each afternoon. They are from five to possibly eight years of age. Each day at Jefferson and Cimarron, they would board my car and say, ‘Good evening, Mr. Bell.’ Upon leaving the car they would say, ‘Bye, Mr. Bell, we’ll see you tomorrow!’ One became aware of how observant little children are.

“Through it all I must say that I had fun. I also realize I still have a continuing job to do. And possibly the only reward that comes to most Operators is their own realization that they have performed their job well. So I consider myself lucky.

“It was an honor [to be selected Operator of the Month].”

Streamlined coaches were initially introduced in Dec. of 1959 as Dreamliners, later were more known as Silver Liners. Above letter is from Jan. of 1960. The pretty girl on prior page is Miss Dreamliner, Sharon Girot.





Yes From The Past

Those are real bucket seats in leather circa 1960s.

On your right are padded leather seats still in MTA green. B-W pictures on prior page: top, the announcing of a new concept, Freeway Flyer buses; they ran in both the MTA and RTD.

Bottom an 83 bus in front of May Company on Fairfax and Wilshire. The department store was famous in its heyday, but not there anymore. The building is still there though.



Interior pictures of the buses of the last mid-century. Seats were never plastic. Only some silver liners had the rare bucket seats, a beautiful new design of distinctive flare. Upper left are the standard seats. On your left, included to show how the bucket back seats looked, clearly gives a new angle to fully padded comfort. These are not from the MTA/RTD as I could not find them from the MTA or RTD.





A new Greyhound and transit bus station was built in the late 1960s on 6th and Los Angeles streets, across the street from the old Greyhound. An acquaintance who likes transportation once thought the above station was built in the early 1970s. I told him nix for I remember going to Disneyland and the buses pulled out of this new station to Disneyland in the sixties. Downstairs was a busy, noisy bustling affair full of action. Buses went to San Pedro/Long Beach or Santa Ana via Fullerton and Anaheim and points further east. That was normal. A few times a day, especially on holidays and during summer, they had Special Disneyland Flyers that went non-stop to Disneyland. The entire building structure is now full of garment shops.



Silver liners augmented or replaced the old GM models. They brought a dynamic new look. This was the era of astronauts in gleaming silver spacesuits, the Space Age, and TV. I remember growing up and being attracted by these new TDH-5302 buses because of their silver corrugated sides. The advanced stress-skin aluminum had a neat tapered curve at front and they glistened brightly in the sun. They had geometric chrome side signals, and the taillights were modeled after afterburners of rockets; they were housed in streamlined nacelles. I am glad somebody captured the buses. The middle paint scheme is in new RTD colors which superseded MTA. They were also called fishbowl buses.



These GM buses were of superior technology and high quality construction.

A new silver liner. The Silver liners had a stunning new design – with a distinctive deco styling – with fluted brightwork siding. It was an imitation or emulation of the streamlined Art Deco railway passenger cars and the Greyhound buses of the 1940s dubbed Silversides, which had aluminum or stainless steel, however, the body had an entirely different shape, with slanted windows and new accent. The 1940s was an era of swing music, streamlined art and stainless steel. These buses were not streamlined in the 1940 fashion as with that art, the edges were much more curved. Everything from cars, refrigerators and toasters and furniture had that curve. Look at the streetcar below.

P-car near Sears on Pico. This line and its bus #26 that followed had the most passengers anywhere and it was not uncommon to see 2 or 3 vehicles in a row, all crowded with people during rush hour. P-cars were not the only PCC lines. I remember my father told me there was the J-car, the S-car, the W-car and who knows what else existed. The 26 line usually were given the newest buses first. In competition were line #83, the Wilshire line. In my mind, they came a close second although there are people who say the Wilshire line had the best and were just as crowded or even more. Both lines were the first to receive the new silver liners.



Bit faded but this is Boyle Heights. A P-car heading west on First St. It is either the late fifties or early sixties.

Same First St. but in 2022. The Gold Line runs on center track w/the bridge behind the posts. Toward the left barely visible is a train heading west. Heading east is the train on the right.

I grew up in Boyle Heights. The picture on the prior page is First St. crossing Gless St. with the Santa Ana Freeway bridge in the back. Still there, but the Gold Line now runs through 1st. On your right is the edge of Pecan St. Park. Look right of the Carnation Milk truck. You see what looks like the edge of an empty field. Today there is a swimming pool now which is part of Pecan St. Park. I remember when it was a brand new pool and it was great in summer. I also remember when the park did not have grass and we played on dusty fields. About a block away is the grammar school I attended for 8 years, Dolores Mission. We were taught by nuns from Belgium.



The picture above is a GM Scenicruiser.

Although buses carried nearly 9% of inter-city passengers at their peak during World War II, the share has dwindled to just over 1%.

After World War II, we saw the building of the [Interstate Highway System](#). The U.S. Interstate System is quite extensive with 47,622 miles of road, equal to two laps around the Equator and with planning that had little [computer speed](#), it was a [phenomenal undertaking](#). It began in 1956, and with competition from low fare airlines and the automobile, the market share of long-distance travel hit hard on both passenger bus and trains. In 1960, long-distance coach service had 140 million annual bus passengers. (Down to 40 million in 1990.)

The Silversides quickly became a big hit among drivers, passengers, fans, and Greyhound executives and accountants. It soon became and long remained as the new King of the Road – until the GM Highway Traveler PD-4104 arrived in 1953, and until the fabulous new GM Scenicruiser PD-4501 arrived in 1954. Greyhound was required by the [ICC](#) in 1955 to racially integrate its entire bus system. Initially ran on two 4 cylinder engines, in 1960 all new models had V-8s with a gold stripe on the body.

A lot of activity happened in the bus depot on 6th St. when it was new that historians have overlooked. Long-distance buses served the travelers, both Greyhound and RTD. Continental Trailways was a bus company that used to also serve folks. Here is a photo of how those buses looked in color. Their station was in the civic center of L.A. on Main St. between 5th and 6th.



Our spotlight is on a unique day of the year, and it was repeated for several years in a row. I do not recall when it started or ended, It always occurred during Spring-time. On March 17 to be exact, in honor of St. Patrick, Disneyland was open to Catholic schools, both grammar and high school. At that time there were no passes. Nor the advance reservation bit.

For us kids, it was a time of re-charging our batteries, a day of full anticipation, and adventure and fun. However, there was a further unique component to it all. What Disney enterprises did was to offer any Catholic school special lower prices to Disneyland with an advance order form to the 1-day event on March 17. We'd fill it out and get the money from our parents before a dateline. Later, a special package was mailed to our school with sets of ticket books. Each booklet was in color, had 1 admission ticket and several others divided by letters, from A to E. We called the A ticket boring. You went up the scale til you reached E. E had the best rides.

On St. Patrick's Day, everybody descended on [Disneyland](#), by car or by bus.



DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES !

Thousands and thousands of school kids in varied uniforms, although you were under no compulsion to wear it. You could dress any which way you wanted. High school kids were there, too. There was lots of green, as St. Patrick was Irish. You could say we all turned a little Irish that day.

If I am not mistaken, I think I remember seeing school buses in the parking lot. Today, the front of Disneyland looks like this (below). Shopping stores and restaurants (and a theater) mark the area where the parking lot used to be. Mind you, it was huge. You could bring your lunch and leave it at some private lockers.



Rides like the Matterhorn had very long lines. A ride up on a gondola or a trip through Inner Space or riding the train around the Magic Kingdom had lines that were less long. It's A Small World was relatively new in the late sixties. Previewed at the New York World's Fair in 1964 for a two year run, it was originally conceived by the folks



at Disney in 1963--that is the year Loyola High of Los Angeles took the C.I.F. football championship under Coach Mario DiMurio, a 2 year winning streak--I had to give a plug in for my old Alma Mater, although I did not go there till the next decade.

All students riding on the RTD were given the chance to purchase a student bus card, so that your fare would be lower. Cards could be purchased for 50 cents, unbelievably. Had a picture but when I find it will be above. And, I believe the fare was 25 cents. For the love of me, do not recall the fare to Disneyland. Walt Disney above right.

Our school was not wealthy, so there was no school bus. I utilized our public transit to go to Disneyland. I remember vividly we'd have to leave way early in the morning to wind up at the big bus station on 6th. I was amazed how so many people were already ahead of us. Eventhough we had no school bus, that didn't stop us. Thousands upon thousands rode the buses to descend on Disneyland. Leaving the park was less crowded and hectic as people departed at different times. Not everybody lasted the whole day. I do not know the story about the Disneyland Express.

In the bus station, everybody descended the escalator; it was full. Bus line 58 took us to Disneyland. There were 2 or 3 58 buses. A 58 S. A 58 F, for Freeway Flyer and

Color photos 1, 3, 4, 5 on the following pages show the inside of the new station where we boarded buses. They are from the nice collection of Scott Richards and I am grateful for using them otherwise it is just talk. Uppermost photo is where the dispatcher would call out which bus was at which stall. There was one day I will never forget and it should be pencilled into the history of Los Angeles. It was the day all buses in the system were FREE. My God you think nobody would ride the buses because this is a city on wheels, but it was a day of adventure and a terminal that was super crowded all day. People literally came out to ride their buses. My dad and mom took my brother and I to far -away San Bernardino. We passed Pomona and I think Riverside. It was a couple hours trip. We saw the country surrounding a hard to pronounce Yucaipa. I learned you pronounce it You kai pa. It is a native American name. We saw farms and ranches and lots of green fields once we passed the suburbs. We left our house when it was still dark. When we got to the terminal it was already full of people going every which way. But, people were not dum, and those traveling like us chose the far reaches of the county. Some went to other long distances like Balboa. To me, it seemed we all stood in line for the same bus which had a super long line heading toward San Berardino. They seemed the longest lines. My mom packed a picnic basket. How I wish we had taken a camera. To this day, this day is hardly ever mentioned by anybody. Don't tell me all those people who were with us just disappeared. I have no idea at what time of the year we took the trip, but it was probably a Spring. On the upper level where the entrance was located you had chairs with little individual TVs which you could watch.

1



A bus going to Santa Ana via Fullerton and Anaheim, photo 3 below.



4

If only pictures could talk. Inside the building, downstairs was a busy, noisy affair. Above color scene is of a parked Flixible bus #58 taken during the waning days of the terminal. Trips to San Bernardino and Riverside were a long distance affair in those days, as was going to Disneyland or Knotts Berry Farm. Disneyland was smaller than today; as an example, in 1969, 9.3 million people visited Disneyland. In 2005, it was 14.2 million visitors, and more people drove. We had these long distance buses. I remember they had stick shifts. Those were the days before the El Monte Busway and the Gold Line. I used to sit up in the front just to watch the driver do the shifting. For me, it was always fascinating. The above bus does not have a stick shift and is going to Santa Ana via Fullerton and Anaheim--a time when newer buses started replacing the stick shift buses, in this case an A/C Flixible bus. They were comfortable and the working air condition was strong. This historical PDF would not be possible without the assistance of the pictures of the Metro Transportation Library and Archive. Also, my many thanks to Allan Weeks, historian whose love of southern California is second to none and who started taking pictures over 60 years ago. How the [terminal looks](#) this century, courtesy of [rmwtsou](#). The homeless now have pitched tents in the heart of Los Angeles.



A GM transit bus banking down a freeway entrance in green MTA bus line color. The freeway system that existed ran through the center of civic center. A brand new DWP building is under construction in 1965 in the background.

5

Imagine RTD buses lined up bustling with people. When a bus left it went up a ramp. The exit would see both RTD buses and Greyhounds waiting for the cop to signal us out and it was safe to leave. A lighted parked GM bus #60 on your right. Note the left side. The first seat had a high barrier and I used to like to sit up front and absorb the adventure. All seats on the long distance buses faced forward, like Greyhounds. GM buses lasted well into the 70s.



the normal 58 which had more stops. The 58 would also make a stop at Knotts Berry Farm, except the Flyer, I believe. There was some park with alligators in Buena Park. Also in Buena Park was Ripley's Believe It or Not Museum; both defunct now. Fifty years ago Buena Park was pretty different. My father worked at a giant company called Anderson's which made fine furniture and cabinets. He was a cabinet maker. Once in a while I remembering going there and used to see orchards and pastures with real cows. There were no homes or condos, at least not near Anderson's on Carmenita near the 5 Freeway.

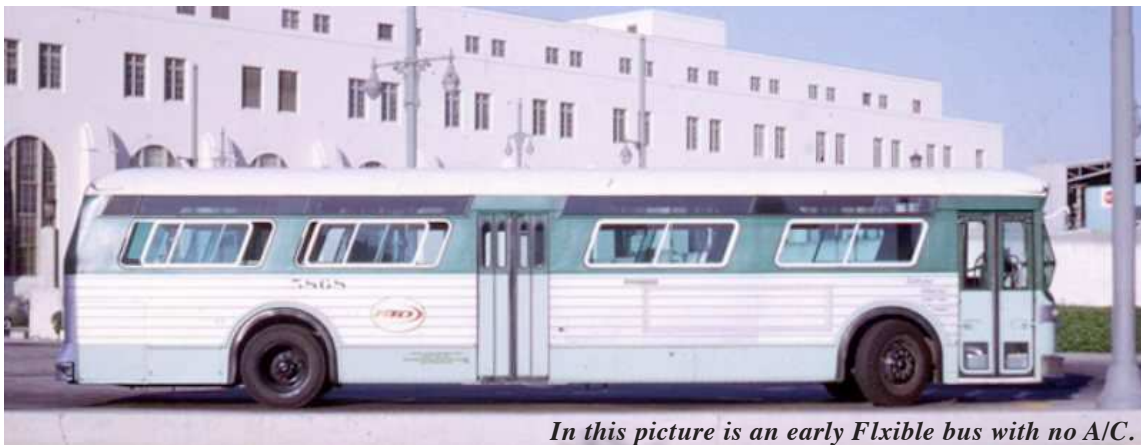
Disneyland on Mar. 17 was a kaleidoscope of kids of every race and color in varying uniforms, when compared to other days. There were lots of kids in school colors and many nuns. I guess priests came too but for some reason but for some reason or another do not stick in my mind. The long-distance buses had one entrance

and one exit. Not all buses on St. Patrick's were long distance buses for there were not enough long-distance buses to handle the capacity. Every conceivable bus was utilized into service. Regular 58 service still ran. There were lots of 58Fs. It was not uncommon to see Disneyland Flyers in a row in the freeway, one after another, heading down the Santa Ana Freeway (the 5 Freeway) heading to Disneyland. That was a phenomenon in the history of Los Angeles.

A view of the new Greyhound and RTD Terminal in downtown L.A. on 6th and Los Angeles circa late 60s. It was quite impressive and had 3 floors. I know of no videos of the place in operation. RTD buses occupied the level below street level. Police patrolled to make sure vagabonds did not occupy the building even though it was literally in the heart of skid row.



A really bad day in smoggy L.A., typical in the 50s and groovy 60s on breezeless days. Anybody who was young used the term groovy. The British had something called **Mods** and you had to look cool. I also remember on such days we were not allowed to play outside. In both the public schools and private schools everybody was kept indoors, till we went home. In real color, the scene was not at all gray but a funny yellow haze that hurt your eyes. Lung problems would come later. It was that bad in the sixties.



Los Angeles was one of the fastest-growing regions in the United States. The **1960s** was an era of culture change, race riots, new color TVs, super 8 film, hippies

and long hair. Swearing and bad language was still frowned upon. It was an era of Black Power, Chicano Power, Kodacolor everywhere, free love, protests against the Viet Nam War, the Cold War and a growing problem of drugs among teenagers. But, I was too young for all that. Here is a piece of [popular culture](#), how childhood memories were similar, with music of the period. This posted on the web shows a [historical rundown](#) of teen experience, dressed and listen, showing the creative music and art potential in the USA. I also found this very interesting 14 minute video. This is what I do remember watching as a little boy in [1966-67](#). They say it was the greatest single season in American TV history. We had Batman and Green Hornet, in color too.

During the 1970s, there were different paint schemes of the RTD buses. One set of buses, in light green, were called Spearmints and lasted into the mid-seventies. I do remember riding these buses on the #75 Venice line to Loyola High School. The only thing worse than this were the buses painted a full white; pretty ugly with no style.

MTA was first replaced by SCRTD in 1964. The Flxible bus (prior pg) is in the old 2 tone green color scheme of MTA, but with an RTD emblem. Those buses had windows that opened at an angle and actually let in little air. They were horrible to ride in summer. No air condition. But on a smoggy day, you did not want to open the windows. Wait a minute. How did we survive? A stuffy bus full of people on a crowded hot roasting summer day in a bus with closed windows to not let in the dirty smog? And no A/C. Can you imagine that during rush hour? Incredible. But people were tough and resilient.



A GM bus with 2-speed Allison V-drive transmission (VR or VS2) powered by Detroit-built 6V71 or 8V71 engines. They had rather poor air vents inside that ran the length of the entire bus, and they provided very little cool air. So no real A/C? and the windows were no better. Actually, if I remember correctly, sometimes we could slide open the windows on the non-GM buses if we pushed them hard enough to let in more air. That you could not do on these GM silver liners because sliding them open was limited.



An excellent view of the longer distance passenger bus in a new colorful paint tone. Note the different windows and the 3 little distinctive lights on front of the bus. Those models entered service way back in 1952. The 3 lights were a tip-off this was not your normal transit bus.



A GM and a new look Flxible. Both had air-ride suspension and GM-made engines. The older GM-style bus on your left was built for 29 years and were dependable and tough. This is a picture from the transition era in Los Angeles. Flxible buses, unlike their GM counterpart brother buses, did have 3 lights in front of their vehicles.



(Top photo) From the early 1970s on, different paint schemes were seen. Framing an interesting piece of the period 1971 (check out the prices), & yes we too had to defrost the fridge. We do find a bus that is more white. They lasted into the early seventies. Others were called Spearmints, although not by me. I don't recall where that moniker spearmint came from but, they resembled the colors of a Spearmint gum wrapper. I rode the #75 Venice line to Loyola High School and saw them on Hill, Broadway, Spring, and Main. The only thing worse than these buses were the buses painted a full white. (Bott photo) A view of a GM S8M- 5303 long-distance bus (s for suburban). These had the optional GM 8V71 engine which began to be offered in 1966. They were not your normal buses. Most had stick shifts, overhead baggage racks and high seats.



The transition era in L.A., probably from around 1968 to 1972 or 73. Bus 93 went to the San Fernando Valley.



Going through downtown on Broadway is another Flxible bus.



A new shorty bus. These were the first generation shuttle buses that ran all over downtown Los Angeles; some even ran as shuttles to the Hollywood Bowl. That is George Takei of Star Trek. Below, launch of 25 cent bus fares.

April 1-5, 1974



ANDREW NOVAK PHOTO

On display is a new beauty, a welcomed beauty. This is the new Flexible transit bus with real air condition. Thanks to Andy Novak for the picture. Their refrigeration power was not dismal like the GM buses. The A/C unit was mounted above the rear window where the rear-mounted condenser and cooling fan were located. They still possessed the flare of the silver sides. Windows opened though. Sometimes we had a fight with a screaming bus driver telling the passengers to keep the windows closed. On hot days, sometimes you had a dodo head who slid open a window. Air-ride suspension was standard. Seats were comfortable padded foam. Light green I think. Years and years after they initiated service, the A/C still worked nicely. Had both 6V71 and 8V71 engines. Oh, by the way, it was sometime later when the RTD put some kind of little clips where the window slid open so that a person could not easily open the window.



A transitional time still in effect on a 45 GM. Production of these older GMs ended in 1969.



A silver liner. Regular GM buses were still in service in mid-1970s. Note the GM emblem in black, which signifies it is a first generation bus, 1959-1962. Bus #95 ran on Vermont. The bus that passed near my house was line #47, that ran on 4th St. to downtown and were mainly like the older GMs where you could open the windows all the way up, and if the bus driver had no stops, he could drive like the devil, and it was fun with the wind blowing in your face.



The old GM and a new bus made by Neoplan, based in Germany, had trend-setting design and a Cummins engine and Allison gearbox. Both had air-ride suspensions. The top picture is a rare close-up of the transition era, near Monterey Hills. From left to right: RTD decor GM 45; RTD decor Flexible w/ great A/C; MTA decor, the first Flexibles minus A/C; original MTA decor GM45 and MTA spearmint decor GM45. Sorry, no GM silversides.

No RTD decor. No MTA decor. In bland white a GM RTD bus. If it were not for Alan Weeks who took this picture, we would not have this picture.





(from top photo) Downtown, Division 2 bus yard near 9th St. Buses take us to work, school, daycare, doctors, parks, clinics, and the grocery store. From the early 1970s on, bus ridership held constant. Framing a gigantic bus transfer in b-w is an interesting piece of the period 1973-1974 when the SCRTD, Sacramento, San Francisco, and San Diego were federally funded to experiment with steam engines. In center is William Lear of Lear Jet fame. The program did not work out too well and the 220 hp steam engines were removed, as is explained at this [link](#) by Kenn Bickell. However, a steam powered Lear car set a world land speed record. From a 1975 teamwork promo film, we see L.A. Rams Ken Geddes and Phil Olsen. Different approaches to bus travel: a steam bus of 1973.

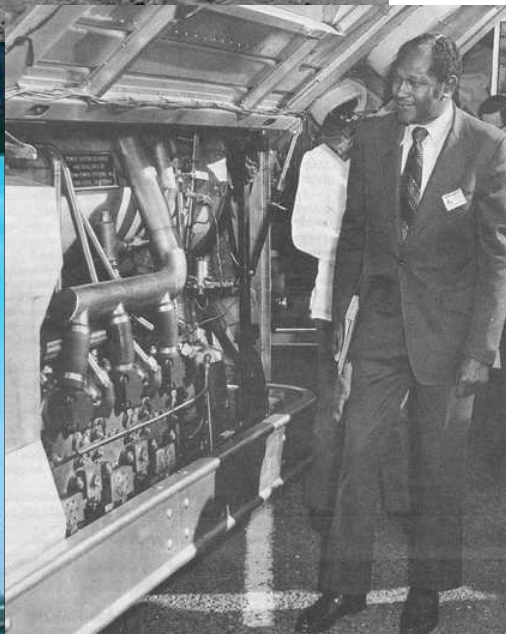
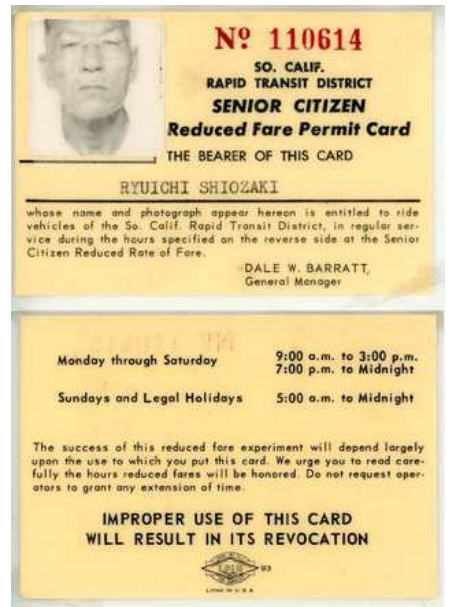




On this page you can clearly see the difference between a long-distance GM bus and the regular city GM buses. Regular GM city buses had no stick shifts and no 3 lites above the windshield. In the long distance the different seats are visible, were foam padded, and in leather. On your right are two bus #40s at the popular Hollywood Bowl.



Three quarters of all rides on Los Angeles transportation systems today are taken on the bus. Before Los Angeles had the resources to build rail, buses were rapid transit, and as early as 1961, MTA (1958-1964) first introduced reduced fares for seniors, making Los Angeles one of the first cities (after Detroit) to implement such a plan. A 'Freeway Flyer' service that got rolling in 1959 promised to "melt miles and minutes off the map," but if a freeway was jam packed, travel time was also slow. The **El Monte Busway**, the first eleven mile bus rapid transit system in the nation that debuted in 1973, shaved over twenty minutes off commutes. Below in b-w: the Busway being constructed. Councilman, later Mayor of Los Angeles, Thomas G. Bradley inspects a bus steam engine. In color is the hospital stop on the El Monte Busway, L.A. County General Hospital now known as USC Medical Center. Their legacies are present in the J (Silver) Line and G (Orange) Line that still run on the El Monte Busway. A pair of bus drivers in old time uniforms and caps beside Flxible transit buses. The outer limits that reaches the **inner mind**, thanks 90Mac & RTD1.



Summer Beach Service

JOIN



**Now thru
Labor Day**

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT



Part Freeway Flyer.

A bus rider program from Los Angeles to the beaches called The Street Fleet was instituted in the 1970s; of course, you could also take the Long Beach and Santa Monica buses. The Blue Line would not exist til another decade and a half or so. Below are typical sample schedules of the era, from Pasadena or Whittier to Santa Monica. Or, Seal Beach.

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| WESTBOUND | | | | WESTBOUND | | | |
| LV LINCOLN WYOMING 8:45 AM 11:30 | LV FAIR OAKS WASHINGTON 8:56 AM 11:41 | LV HUNT. EASTERN 9:22 AM 12:07 | AR SANTA MONICA 10:00 AM 12:45 | LV WHITTIER STATION 8:30 AM 11:05 | LV WHITTIER MONTEBELLO 8:42 AM 11:17 | LV WHITTIER LORENA 8:58 AM 11:33 | AR SANTA MONICA (PICO & OCEAN) 9:35 AM 12:10 |
| EASTBOUND | | | | EASTBOUND | | | |
| LV SANTA MONICA 2:00 PM 5:00 | LV HUNT. EASTERN 2:35 PM 5:35 | LV FAIR OAKS WASHINGTON 3:04 PM 6:04 | AR LINCOLN WYOMING 3:15 PM 6:15 | LV SANTA MONICA (PICO & OCEAN) 1:40 PM 4:35 | LV WHITTIER LORENA 2:17 PM 5:17 | LV WHITTIER MONTEBELLO 2:33 PM 5:33 | AR WHITTIER STATION 2:45 PM 5:45 |

It's the year of the Street Fleet. Look for the conning tower and get aboard for a day away from it all. Pasadena never had it so good.





A set of Flexible buses. They were built in either Ohio or Alabama. End of an era. Production ended in 1978 yet, were seen as late as 1992. These are Ohio built buses; Alabama buses had only 2 headlights. Good bye Flexibles.



A GMC bus in the 80s.

The 1980s was an era of culture change, acid washed jeans, long hair of the 60s was out, pastel colors and designer clothes were in. This was the age of MTV, an

art of new music television, new personal computers, bright Neon colors, PAC Man, the fashion of female hair, the wearing of shoulder pads by women. There was no escaping the film hits of the era: *The Terminator*, *Back To The Future*, *Beverly Hills Cop*, *Footloose*; musical thrills and hits of **Michael Jackson**. This was an era of pulsing videos by Jane Fonda, and before we knew it, we were all into a fitness chase. There was always someone who did aerobics, 5ks, 10ks, dance class or into athletic gear. It zoomed into high gear when the **Summer Olympics** arrived in 1984, courtesy of Richard Simonton (skip to 16.15 to bypass long intro, if you like). Also, in the 1980s, the Boy Scouts of America had a resurgence, which most historians forget, part of an embodiment of an era that had more patriotism, as this **music hit** attests; the Boy Scouts received a new uniform (designed by de la Renta) and going back to basics like camping didn't hurt. Neil Diamond had a big hit in the 80s, "America."

The 1980s had good things and bad things. Overall, it was a decade still part of the Cold War, with a TV movie that scared the dickens out of everybody in 1983, called THE DAY AFTER airing on ABC, November 20, 1983 (100 million people watched it). Two months before, on Sept. 1, the shooting of a Korean passenger airliner by a Soviet jet that killed 269 people, including 63 Americans, did not help. In between, and unbeknownst to the public, on Sept. 26, one of the closest calls the world came to Armageddon almost happened, when during the night, a band of suspect items appeared on a radar screen on a Soviet base outpost that looked like rockets, was spotted on a new early warning system. The officer, Lt. Colonel Petrov had one call to make, either it was an attack or not. He had no way of knowing if it was real or not.

His screen showed what looked like one after another missile was launched. He counted 1, 2... then, five. Everything involved minutes, for missiles travel fast. By the grace of God, he held back and decided not to call Moscow that missiles were inbound. The world was saved, no Hollywood made-up-dream. The mid-eighties saw something called the Strategic Defense Initiative, doubling military spending, centering on Star Wars technology that President Ronald Reagan instituted. And, there were 4 songs paralleling the theme: 1) Pointer Sisters *Neutron Dance*, which went viral featured in the movie *Beverly Hills Cop*. 2) *Everybody Wants To Rule The World*. 3) *The Final Countdown* year of the Chernobyl and Challenger disasters and THE COLD WAR 1986 4) And, finally, Billy Joel *We Didn't Start the Fire*, from 1989. The world

needed to escape from itself, however, it may seem that before we knew it, what followed became worse, and even though the USSR was no more (her war in Afghanistan and military spending was what did her in) the next decades followed with a cacophony of deafening themes in the American hemisphere, loosing my religion (and a hit song of the 90s), people attended less and less Church services, more and more drive-by-shootings, rising mass shootings (earliest was the Columbine High School massacre), multifarious nasty photography on cell phone-video-screen technology, the growth of perverts kidnapping teens and kids, illicit drugs, sex changes, city councils' allowing Satan clubs to coexist with the PTA. I am not saying none of these things, with the exception of the satanic clubs, did not exist decades before in some form, but by the mid-2020s, they are not the size of a Twinky—**they are a horrible** engulfing ocean, a sea that plasters and engulfs society in morbid growing, sprawling non-shrinking waves that like a never-ending sea, the waves keep pulsating in and out, splashing in and out. How sad.

The age of PAC-MAN, fashion, home-computing for the masses, I want my MTV Eighties was a decade of domestic success and excess, a new American dream as stated on *National Geographic's The Eighties, The Decade That Made Us*. Economically, America was finally coming out of a lousy recession (like in 2023?) and, there was an availability of credit cards. AND, we had a new recreation-idea: the recreation-shopping mall for Middle America, which first appeared with the opening of the Sherman Oaks Mega Mall in 1980, a suburb of Los Angeles, California. I lived it.

It was a composite of feeling good, (a safer internal society compared to today?) money, and, “the mother of all explosions of capitalism” as expressed by Robin Leach, host of *The Lifestyle of The Rich and Famous*, and complemented with new technologies from coast to coast, voila!, you had a masterpiece of a booming economy.

The tops seven gadgets of the 80s?

Portable Walkman radio cassette player-recorders, first started by the Sony Walkman, which by 1985, there were at least 4 million Walkmans sold in the U.S.A.; Apple Macintosh computers (adios learning computer coded-languages to master a home-computer), the portable hand-held telephone such as the Motorola DynaTAC 8000x; our Smartphones are

direct descendants of these which at first cost \$3,995 each (boosted by Reagan's deregulation of the airwaves; he also allowed commercial airplanes to use something called GPS technology, in 1983), the camcorder video camera using little boxes of magnetic tape (first launched in 1982, adios reels of film), large cassette-radios called the boom box, revolutionary microwaves that by the end of the decade they were so common in American households, more than toasters; although my dad and mom did not trust them as we could get "radiated", Nintendo games like Tetris and PAC-MAN. In that day and age, you also had the first transcontinental fiber optic cable laid (1985); the unveiling of CDs and the first artificial heart in 1982. The year of the Olympics, you had the first public use of the internet and DNA fingerprinting. First stereo-sound TV and supercooling superconducting in computers were possible in 1986; and before the decade is out, we had digital photography, the first 1.4 MB floppy drive, the Human Genome Project to decode human DNA and read the sequence of life (initiation) and, unfortunately, the discovery of AIDS.

I somehow felt, and still feel, the spirit of the 1980s is more captured from 1981 onward, with the year of the birth of Rubik's Cube, the DeLorean, the thong bikini, the Popemobile and when Muhammad Ali said people are at the foot of the wall of knowledge but that his horizon "is greater than theirs" because he is "at the top". His last fight was Dec. 1981. The eighties is a transition period from how the way people lived and thought to what we have now.

Many of the great film stars from the Golden Age of Hollywood were still around, incidentally. Two greats, Henry Fonda and Katharine Hepburn each won an Academy Award for the 1981 film *On Golden Pond*. Best Picture of 1981? *Chariots of Fire*, but, as we come to the transition period, and just as the great boxer Ali representative of the 1960s faded into the sunset, a new sunrise, an entire new era was to begin, and it struck everything imaginable, from popular culture to technology...Super Wowie.

One factor of the 80s, in terms of Hollywood, was that this was the era of movie "sequels". Old Hollywood believed lightning couldn't strike twice.

That idea vanished.

In came sequels, with, for example, *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *Indiana Jones*, later *Ghostbuster*, *Blade Runner*, *Back To The Future*, which was the king of them all—with DeLorean, Pepsi-free, the talking head Max Headroom, and, a Walkman. In this decade VHS and cable, furthermore, became the reason for the decline of the movie theaters. All these things inspired and reflected the era that made 1980s America.

What "music hits" formed part of the decade? As they say, music is an international language. Unlike the 1970s, we had a British Invasion, with the closest thing being the Beatles of the 1960s, that shared the limelight in terms of an American popular culture.

It was wonderful. Do not take them for granted that it was just music sounds, it was a combination of the sound of the bands, but also of equal importance were the creativity that poured from the written language, the words of the period were creative, inspiring, pensive and something so unique, leaves periods of other music decades behind. America was powered by a canopy of multiverses that was distinctly unique, in sound, sight and verse that captured people's hearts and minds. In the mix were a few from the Caribbean (calypso and reggae) and the European continent, ie. Norway and Sweden, and it was great to hear how diverse it all was, from *Rhythm of the Night* (DeBarge), *Who Can It Be Now* (Men At Work), *All Night Long* (Lionel Richie), *Kids in America* (Kim Wilde) to *Save A Prayer* (Duran Duran). There was no need for dirty language.

What music hits led off the decade? Well, we have 1980 *Call Me* by Blondie; *Magic* by Olivia Newton-John; 1981: *Planet Earth* by Duran Duran; *Tainted Love* by Soft Cell, original released in 1964; *Bette Davis Eyes* sung by Kim Carnes; *Don't Stop Believing* (still big in the yr of the Olympics '84); 1982 *Hungry Like the Wolf* by Duran Duran; 1982 *Physical* by Olivia Newton-John #1 or #2 single in '82 depending who you talk to; 1982 *Eye Of The Tiger* by Survivor; 1982 *Come On Eileen*; *Chariots of Fire* 1982 but this theme was played all over the 12 months leading up to the 1984 Olympics; 1983 *I will Be With You Again*; 1983 *Owner of a Lonely Heart*; 1983 *Flashdance* made famous by singer Irene Cara; 1983 *Neutron Dance*; 1983 *Maniac*; *Beat It* by Michael Jackson; *Thriller* by Michael Jackson; *Down Under* by Men At Work; 1983 Cyndi Lauper's *Girls Just Want To Have Fun*.

1984 was a big year: *Transformers*, *Tetris*, *Ghostbusters*, *The Karate Kid*, *Beverly Hills Cop*, *The Terminator*, *Olympic Fanfare* from The Summer Olympics. Many songs came into being; one of my favorites was *Break My Stride* sung by Matthew Wider, as I was into running. My favorite TV show: *Miami Vice* which combatted crime.

1984 songs: *In the Name of Love* by U2; *Jump* by Van Halen, really released in Dec. of '83 (where he seen the toughest around but, don't just put your toes in the water, jump in!); *Axel F* by Harold Faltermeyer; *The Reflex* by Duran Duran; *New Moon on Monday* by Duran Duran; *Take on Me* and not even from the U.S. or UK but from Norway; re-recorded in '85 when it really went big, recorded by A-ha; *Wake Me Up Before You Go* by Wham; *When Doves Cry* sung by Prince considered #1 by Billboard; *Say, Say, Say*, sung by Paul McCartney and Michael Jackson; *Self-Control* sung by Laura Branigan; *Ghostbusters* sung by Ray Parker Jr.; *Karma Chameleon* sung by Culture Club; *What's Love Got To Do with It* sung by Tina Turner; *Time After Time* sung by Cyndi Lauper; *Shout* by Tears For Fears; *Somebody's Watching Me*; *Let's Hear It for the Boy* sung by Deniece William; *Hello* by Lionel Richie; *99 Luftaloons* by Nena; *The Warrior* by Scandal; *Jump (For My Love)* by The Pointer Sisters; *New Attitude*

sung by Patti Labelle; *The Heart of Rock and Roll* sung by Huey Lewis and the News; *Don't Get Stopped in Beverly Hills* sung by Shalamar; and, if I were to include more, I'd easily would write 5-10 pages, but for the record, of the Official Top 40 best-selling songs of 1984, the top 3 were: *Do They Know It's Christmas?* By Band Aid, a 2nd release was in '89 with less impact; *I Just Called To Say I Love You* sung by Stevie Wonder, and *RELAX* by Frankie Goes To Hollywood. Too bad *Everybody Wants To Rule The World* by Tears For Fears did not come out in '84; released in March the year after, a new wave song, originally was written as "Everybody Wants to go to war" but as lead singer Curt Smith said it is "quite serious, it's about everybody wanting power, about warfare and the misery it causes." As I said in my ebook, the 1980s was still the Cold War and it was not until 1985-1986 did it begin to change, so that the Cold War would fade into a memory.



Marineland Freeway Flyer.



A new kind of A/C bus with tinted windows showed up in the late 70s. This is a special Marineland Freeway Flyer. The term Freeway Flyer began in 1959 and was still used in the 70s but began dying out in the 80s as mainstream. Not really sure why. Marineland was a vacation spot that does not exist anymore. Although we have Sea World but that is toward San Diego.

Right before the Olympics came to my fair city two things stick out in my mind. Cities not just L.A. were sponsoring what seemed 5 or 10 K races every week, they had Olympic [music melodies](#) all over the place. And, there was the perceived idea that the city was going to choke in its cars when the whole world would come to L.A. Los Angeles had about 70 suburbs. We were bracing for the onslaught of people, and we were told on television to please not drive. What?

Southern Californians not use their car? We were, and are, a car conscious society. Caltrans predicted the worst to happen during morning rush hour and 2 to 4 pm. You had 400,000 ticket holders, plus 12,000 athletes who were in the mix each day. Athletes housed at 3 locations had to be transported to 20 training areas and 24 competition sites. However, the worst never materialized. A 3-hour opening ceremony on Sat. July 28 in a 92,655 packed Memorial Coliseum blazed with both the spectacular and the poignant, began the [XXIII Summer Olympics](#) and the start was on, because people worked together in numerous aspects. The business sector did their part, offering a change of work hours. There was better ride sharing, even offering free gasoline for carpools. Six percent of companies changed to 4 day work weeks. The California Truckers Association made a giant effort by increasing night deliveries during the Games. We saw a fleet of 550 Olympic buses specifically for shuttle service to the Games *AND* park-and-ride. Volume was heavy for park-and-ride service, which had a \$6

Angels Flight above Hill St. overlooking downtown





one way fare. Trouble spot maps were distributed by Commuter Computer to its client companies (sorry, smartphones did not exist, yet.) It is pleasing to state but, people did listen and took their advise to try the [mass transit](#) system (basic fare 50 cents.) 29 new Caltrans freeway signs were put up in time for travelers who went to distant venues like the Rose Bowl, UCLA, the Forum, Santa Anita Racetrack, the Long Beach Convention Center, Pepperdine or the Anaheim Convention Center via express buses, at \$4, or went by \$2/ride downtown shuttle. Los Angeles County supervisors ordered county parking lots around the main RTD loading areas opened on weekends and at night for public use. People participated together in the City of the Angels.

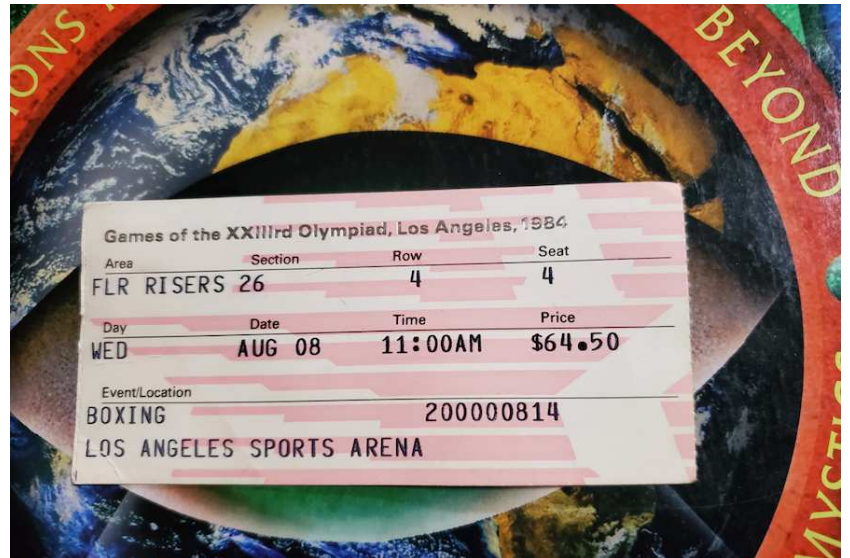




New Cameras. Vandalism and graffiti were slowly tearing apart buses so that in the mid-1980s new video cameras were installed. Close to the tune of a \$100,000 a month was spent to fix scratched window glass, torn seats, graffiti inscriptions and other lousy things that marred a bus or railcar. The majority of graffiti were markings of gangs. Those caught in graffiti were fined \$250 or 48 hours of community service (in the mid-eighties). Another measure was the addition of undercover cops to patrol the lines.

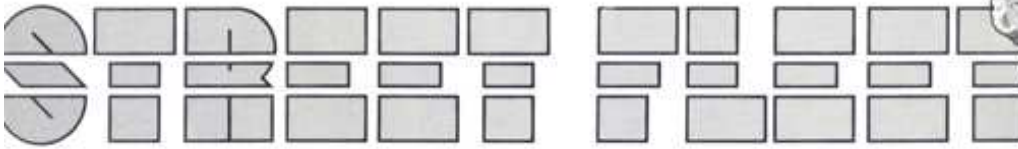






In 1984, the RTD instituted a contest drawing with winners being given tickets to an Olympic event. It was free. There were many winners, and my dad and I won 2 times. We hopped an RTD bus to a water polo event held at Pepperdine University. And, we also got to see an Olympic boxing match; actually it was more than one that day at the L.A. Sports Arena. We did purchase tickets to a track and field event. You never saw a city in so much vibrant pastel colors. And, believe it or not the city cleaned itself up, too. I am not too sure what happened to the homeless people during the Olympics, although their numbers were not as prodigious as today. There was no epidemic of homeless as we have today, but skid row was still there. The other day, a friend showed me a stat I could not believe. Six years ago (2017) marijuana stocks handed stockholders profits between 268% and 902% in 7 months or less. Stocks or no stocks, the smell of marijuana permeates Los Angeles as never before.

JOIN THE RTD



RTD'S SUMMER BEACH BUS SERVICE... FOR FREE POSTER SEND NAME AND ADDRESS TO: RTD, 1665 S BROADWAY, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA



SCHEDULE

BOARDING LOCATIONS AND TIMES GOING SOUTH TO BEACH

WEST ROUTE

| | | | |
|--------------------------|------|-------|-------|
| PARAMOUNT COUNTY LIBRARY | 8:25 | | 11:55 |
| HAMILTON J.H. | 8:30 | 10:00 | 12:00 |
| JORDAN H.S. | 8:35 | 10:05 | 12:15 |
| LINDBERGH J.H. | 8:40 | 10:10 | 12:20 |
| HUGHES J.H. | 8:45 | 10:15 | 12:25 |
| CALIFORNIA & 15th | 8:55 | 10:25 | 12:35 |
| FRANKLIN J.H. | 9:00 | 10:30 | 12:40 |
| ARRIVE SEAL BEACH | 9:10 | 10:40 | 12:50 |

BOARDING LOCATIONS AND TIMES GOING SOUTH TO BEACH

EAST ROUTE

| | | | |
|-------------------|------|-------|-------|
| LAKEWOOD H.S. | 8:30 | 10:05 | 12:15 |
| MARSHALL J.H. | 8:35 | 10:10 | 12:20 |
| MILLIKAN H.S. | 8:40 | 10:15 | 12:25 |
| STANFORD J.H. | 8:45 | 10:20 | 12:30 |
| WILSON H.S. | 8:55 | 10:30 | 12:40 |
| ARRIVE SEAL BEACH | 9:05 | 10:40 | 12:50 |

RETURN BOARDING FOR BOTH ROUTES

| | | | |
|------------------------|------|------|------|
| OCEAN & 1st SEAL BEACH | 2:25 | 3:45 | 5:05 |
|------------------------|------|------|------|

NOTE: ON WARM DAYS, BUS MAY RUN LATE DUE TO LARGER LOADS.

FOR INFORMATION, CALL 591-2301



A rare photo of a double decker bus beside a regular transit bus.



When this type of Flexible Metro buses were running in 1998, there were 228 million guns in the U. S.A. and 208 million cars, and over half the robots employed in factories processed in the car industry. Pay attention to the gas prices



Patrons who rode the double deck buses had the luxury. They mainly operated between Los Angeles and the valleys . These gorgeous buses were the byproduct of years of political debate, yet voters who approved the Prop A sales tax measure in 1980 gave a huge impetus for change and brought about the building of the Blue Line and Red /Purple line subway corridors along with their railcars. On you right is the interior of a double decker.





Double decker bus leads the pack in the mid-1980s. I rode it a few times. I believe a new breed of double decker buses are available in 2023, being run by the Antelope Valley Transit Authority. The double deckers seemed to float. Date is unsure but it was either 1979 or 1980 when I rode this Airport bus to LAX. LAX was not exactly long -distance but the RTD tried a new non-stop concept. Actually it was not fully nonstop. It had a few limited stops; one in Fox Hills Mall the other in Westchester someplace, I believe. Note the high seats. But if I remember right, they were mainly almost empty. The ridership on them was considered low. I would ride it to Westchester.





SCRTD - Kids Clean Graffiti RTD.1775.12 | by Metro Transportation Library and Archive

Between the old and the new Los Angeles



It is quite a job to take care of all the buses and railcars that travel the streets of Los Angeles and suburban streets. The RTD had in 1990, nearly 2,800 buses covering a territory of 1,442 sq. miles. Metro in 2023 has 2,320 buses, with 17% high capacity 60-foot articulated buses, not to mention the fleet of 439 rail vehicles.



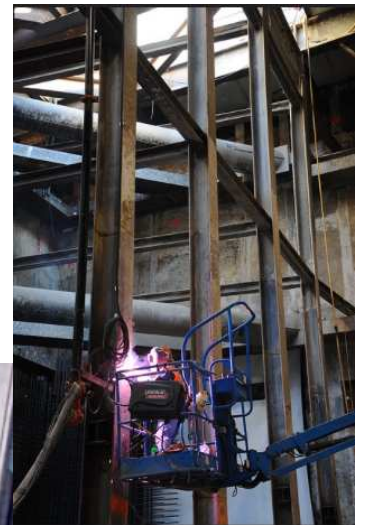
On display in 1989, a new 49-ton rail car. Actual light rail service began in 1990 to Long Beach. Total underground subways began to be added in Los Angeles in 1996. I remember also going inside a big old Red Car which was also on display although it was not running on a rail, but I think it had some sort of make shift vehicle wheels. Too bad I did not think of taking a picture. Original rail service was run by the Los Angeles County Metro Rail system.



Picture of Los Angeles infamous ozone-laden smog. There are about 14.5 million cars in the state of California today with about 6,433,000 automobiles in urbanized Los Angeles alone. The above picture is taken from the San Gabriel Valley, and it shows the terrible smog. The photo is from the **San Gabriel Valley Tribune**.



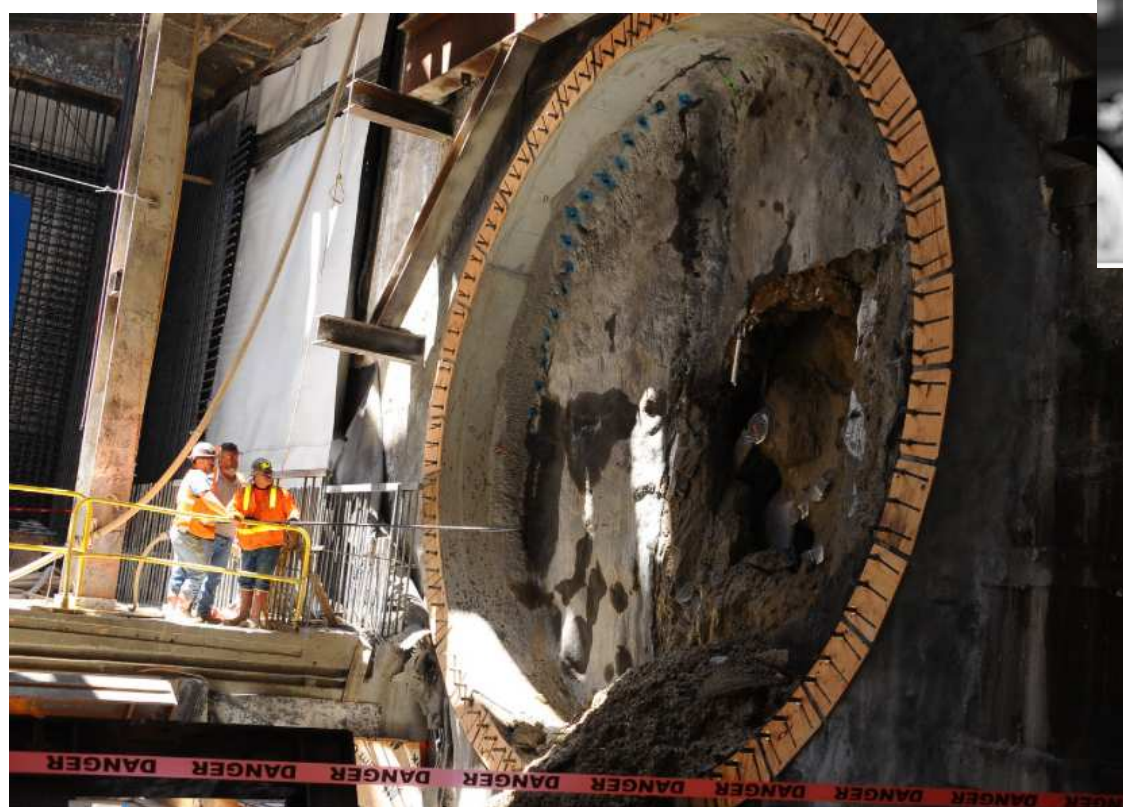
Red Line subway construction. From the 11th floor of the Clark Hotel, in downtown Los Angeles. This item is from a collection of the Pershing Square Station Construction Progress Photographs. Construction for the Red line was very challenging as crews even found 15.5 million year old fossils--they had to be delicately removed. Upper right is in reality deep in the bowels of the earth. His closeup is below. My deep gratitude for all those unsung Americans who helped make Los Angeles beautiful.





On display is a tunnel Boring machine. Unlike the construction of the S.F. Golden Gate Bridge which had 11 fatalities, the precision and valuable safety measures during tunnel excavation meant no fatalities, and it also went down not up, way way down, 50-70 feet down, but it would vary.

Original rail service was run by the Los Angeles County Metro Rail system but in 1993, it and the SCRTRD merged to form the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA, comonly called Metro.)





Today, when nearly 89% of Metro’s bus riders fall below the poverty line, and nearly 50% make less than \$15,000 a year it is clear that without clean, efficient, and high quality bus service, we cannot provide meaningful opportunities to the millions of hard-working people who have made Los Angeles their home. Tunnel Boring Machine (above) "Harriett" made a breakthrough August 22, 2016 at the Crenshaw/LAX Martin Luther King Station in Los Angeles, California. New Busway Station El Monte, mid-70s.



By special ramps on buses, people in wheelchairs could ride the buses; by 2020, all major U.S. city bus fleets were 100% wheelchair-accessible. It took forever for legislature to act beginning with the 1968 Architectural Barriers Act and the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). An AM General Metropolitan bus with either 6V-71 or 8V-71 with Allison transmissions and large windows. These buses were manufactured from 1974 until 1979--and saw limited service in Los Angeles. Long articulated buses were also made but I do not recall seeing any of those, however, below is a vintage photograph that demonstrates they did exist. This is 7th St. downtown in front of Robinsons Department store. They were bought by Federated Dept. Stores which also bought Macy in 1994 (yes, of New York fame), subsequently Robinsons merged with May Co but it in turn was dissolved in 2005-06 ie. aka briefly Robinsons-May. Like Zody's, Woolworth and FEDCO, they all flew the coop by 2010.





Someday, a people mover will take people straight into LAX.

Construction on the Blue Line was not the only major project in the 1980s, L.A. also saw construction of the Century Freeway underway. It all began with Los Angeles County Supervisor Kenneth Hahn. He put a half cent sales tax measure on the ballot in 1980 that worked, barely passing with a 54 per cent in favor. Thus was born the first rail line to serve L.A. in over 30 years.

It ran towards Long Beach.

Mr. Hahn had the brainy idea it is best to use a light rail (overhead electric lines to power light rail) as it cost less vs. heavy rail. Another tax initiative passed by even a slimmer margin, 50.4% approval in 1990. By the tiniest of margins, much needed funds helped pave the way for the Green, Gold and Expo lines however, there was a setback as LAX never got the Green line to go into the airport itself because of some opposition by the Aviation Administration. The photo appearing above is part of the grand opening of the Gold Line, in Chinatown, on July 26, 2003.



The Red and Blue lines on the other hand were a smash hit and they became so fiery and so popular, it gave rise to the genre of mass approval for mass transit. The power to the people showed itself 18 years after 1990. Measure R was passed by over 60% in favor. Angelinos in 2008 were the architects of approval in their own city and because of that, beautiful extensions were able to be built, one to Santa Monica and one to mid-Wilshire, thus murdering the very slow Wilshire bus line as the main means of travel. That nine-mile line was crucial in driving away the congestion along Wilshire, up to Western Ave. The modern Los Angeles Metro received an extra boost by the people when the 2016 sales tax measure was passed, and the apotheosis for transportation extensions followed. One toward the San Gabriel Valley via Azusa and the other the construction of the Crenshaw Line, the K line, beginning in Jan. of 2014 (that seemed forever to construct.) It opened in 2022, the year the oil companies in southern California went bezerk and raised the price at the pump to astronomical heights.

But why? when in fact, giants like Exxon made a gross profit for 2021 (ending Dec. 31, 2021) to the tune of \$55.182 Billion, a profit of 78.34% increase year-over-year. In 2018, they had a gross profit of \$64.695 Billion. The year of COVID-19 (2020) they only had a profit of \$30 billion; gee, don't you feel sorry for them? In the systemic long run all oil companies have been making profits for many years, as mentioned in my new ebook. Blame it on whatever you want, the thing is that the pic at the top paints a picture of a thousand words, as companies like Arco continue to make huge profits year after year by their rising consumer prices.

While the Red and Blue lines seemed popular 20 years ago, that is past history, as a new era in transportation in L.A. took hold in 2023 with the opening of the L.A. Metro Regional Connector. Here is a wonderful video explaining the new extension, courtesy of [Optimusjack](#) who made this video and shares it with us.

You start in downtown LA near the Broad Museum, how cool is that? AH, this isn't 1999 or 1969. To me that artwork at the 9.26 min mark looks like skyscrapers with the moon at the top, and round blotches of pollution signifying smog, oil and soot at the bott?? Are we rising away from the ashes of smog? The whole new system is a novel way to get around beside the El Monte Busway, below. At right is Metro CEO Phil Washington with a giant Metro TAP card. This card works throughout L.A. County with 25 transit agencies including Metro to facilitate travel on buses and trains, and is reloadable.



metro.net/lineletters

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| A A Line (Blue) | B B Line (Red) | C C Line (Green) | D D Line (Purple) |
| E E Line (Expo) | G G Line (Orange) | J J Line (Silver) | L L Line (Gold) |

Meet the Line Letters

Metro is growing. So we're adding letters to the name and symbol of rail and busway lines to keep it easy to get around. We promise to make the transition as smooth as possible, but you may see old and new as we make the changes. Our plan is for all stations to have updated signs within the next several years.

Nuevos nombres

Estamos creciendo y le agregaremos letras al nombre y símbolo de las líneas ferroviarias. Prometemos hacer la transición lo más fácil posible y ver a letras viejas y nuevas. Nuestro plan es que todas las estaciones se actualicen dentro de los próximos años.

M Metro



He lucked out at the end to be able to finish his tour.

For the young, how to get to LAX via the Metro: from downtown on 7th, you take the E Line (Expo because it runs length of Exposition Blvd which has all the museums near USC and the LA Coliseum) to connect to the newest K Line. The E Line says Santa Monica because it goes to the ocean, but you disembark on Crenshaw, you go outside and walk to the K Line boarding area. E and K line tracks are not physically connected however, they are well lighted and at last check, clean. You are in Inglewood, home of the LA Rams stadium, and you have to scoot outside, rain or shine to get to the all silver K Line subway with grey, black and orange trims. You go down the escalators to board at the K Crenshaw station, which appears short and narrow compared to the rest of the lines.

If you rode the subways before, the routes were known by a cool color, Ex the Blue Line or Red Line. I say they blew it, instead of sticking to colors associated with the letter. They went into some-letter-sequential ie, A, B C, D etc. The main two subways used to be the red and blue lines. Then came the Gold, Purple and Green. **INSTEAD OF CALLING THE BLUE LINE THE BLUE, THEY LABELED IT THE "A"** with a new blue color. That goes to Long Beach, and was the first line opened. It is now quite expanded from what they had in 1990. When construction is all done, you can go from Long Beach toward the San Gabriel Valley, ending at Azusa which years ago, people in Azusa had squawked they didn't want the line to extend to Azusa; actually now ends at Citrus College. Your red line is now the B Line (into Hollywood). Green Line is C and the Gold Line is called L. On the prior page at the bottom, as the pics below, is the grand opening ceremonies of the Expo Line Apr 27-28, 2012. It was a grand event in the history of the city of Los Angeles. (Left to R) L.A. City Councilman and Metro Boad member Mark Ridley-Thomas; L.A. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa; and L.A. Supervisor Metro Board Member Zev Yaroslavsky. A huge crowd attended the activities as you can tell by the pictures; even a dinosaur joined in.



Why the jump way to the letter L is beyond me. The Expo Line which runs along Exposition to Santa Monica has a lighter blue but it keeps the letter E and is the only one that is near the old color and prior name. On this page are the opening ceremonies to the Expo Line 2012.

The short Purple Line instead of getting a P gets a D.

Some Orange line is called G, which does not stand for Gold Line. Why didn't they give the old Gold Line the "G" a simple letter G? Instead, they went nuts. Why didn't they also call the Green line the G Line? So they went A, B, C, D, E, L, G, J and the newest K Line toward LAX, which when you get there you hop on to a free bus that takes you into LAX proper. The video ends on Westchester, but in the near future will have an extension that goes beyond where you will be able to connect to the Green Line station dubbed Aviation-LAX and into LAX itself.

When finally completed, you will have an automated people-mover that will go into the LAX terminals. LAX normally has 60 million yearly passengers with 50,000 employees. Of course, depending from where you start ie. Redondo Beach or La Habra you can hop on the Green Line and bypass the K and get off at the LAX stop. Anyway, there you are.



Frank J. Walton, California secretary of business and transportation, County Board of Supervisors Chairman Warren M. Dorn and RTD President Norman Topping, take the first shovels full of dirt to commemorate the beginning of construction on RTD's El Monte-Los Angeles Busway.

Someday the picture below will be true, a people-mover that goes straight into LAX. This is an artist's rendition.



Breaking ground for the El Monte - Los Angeles Busway. This Busway in actuality is a toll lane/expressway on the San Bernardino I-10 Freeway. In 2005, the novel Orange Line opened as a connector from North Hollywood to Chatsworth, unique all-bus line. Experience the S. Cal Orange Line vs the Orange Line of Pakistan, for fun.





The experience of living through the point in history called the era of COVID-19 was earth-shaking, and hellish for many. All buses in the system were free for a while during, and following the wretched COVID-19. I took the picture above. Early 2020 will be remembered as the year in sports it had no avid fans in the bleachers, and people were told to stay home, morgues were overflowing. Stay-at-home orders ended Jan. 25, 2021 and mid June, California "reopened."







Light rail in the future. In California, the future is here and everywhere. The latest in buses with TV and recorded sound is here (bott pic). Population of L.A. in 2021: 3.849 million.

Actually, it began with closed circuit television. Sometimes they gave you pop quiz contests. Most buses today have recorded sound and have a display of what time it is and the stop. The voice speaks when there are bus stops and when a person wants to get off. On some modern vehicles, you have video monitors. All that did not really exist in 1990s Los Angeles. Population of the city of L.A. in 2000: 3,694,820. The entire metro area is 12,534,000 in 2023.

In 2010, the pop. of the entire metropolitan area of L.A. was 12.16 million residents. Metropolitan city population was forecast to hit 4 million in 2018. Some stats said it would also hit in the range of 18.7 million in 2018 (never did) if one includes and encompasses the 5 county suburb regions and outlying cities. There is great news. Drivers in L.A. use three times as much gas and diesel fuel as they did 60 years ago, however, certain vehicle-emitted pollutants have dropped by 98% since the notorious 1960s, although not all.







I flipped when I saw this, on a summer day of 2022.



Jan. 2016, pic Metro held a special internal event called Rodeo days where drivers show off their skills like the way cowboys do 5193 is on the 4th St bridge, my old stomping grounds. *Bott R*, new Monrovia Maintenance shop, 2016.





The Future









Adios Los Angeles

