

1910



With the opening of the Big Pavilion in Saugatuck in 1909, special Interurban cars were added to transport the influx of summertime evening visitors.

SAUGATUCK'S

INTERURBAN

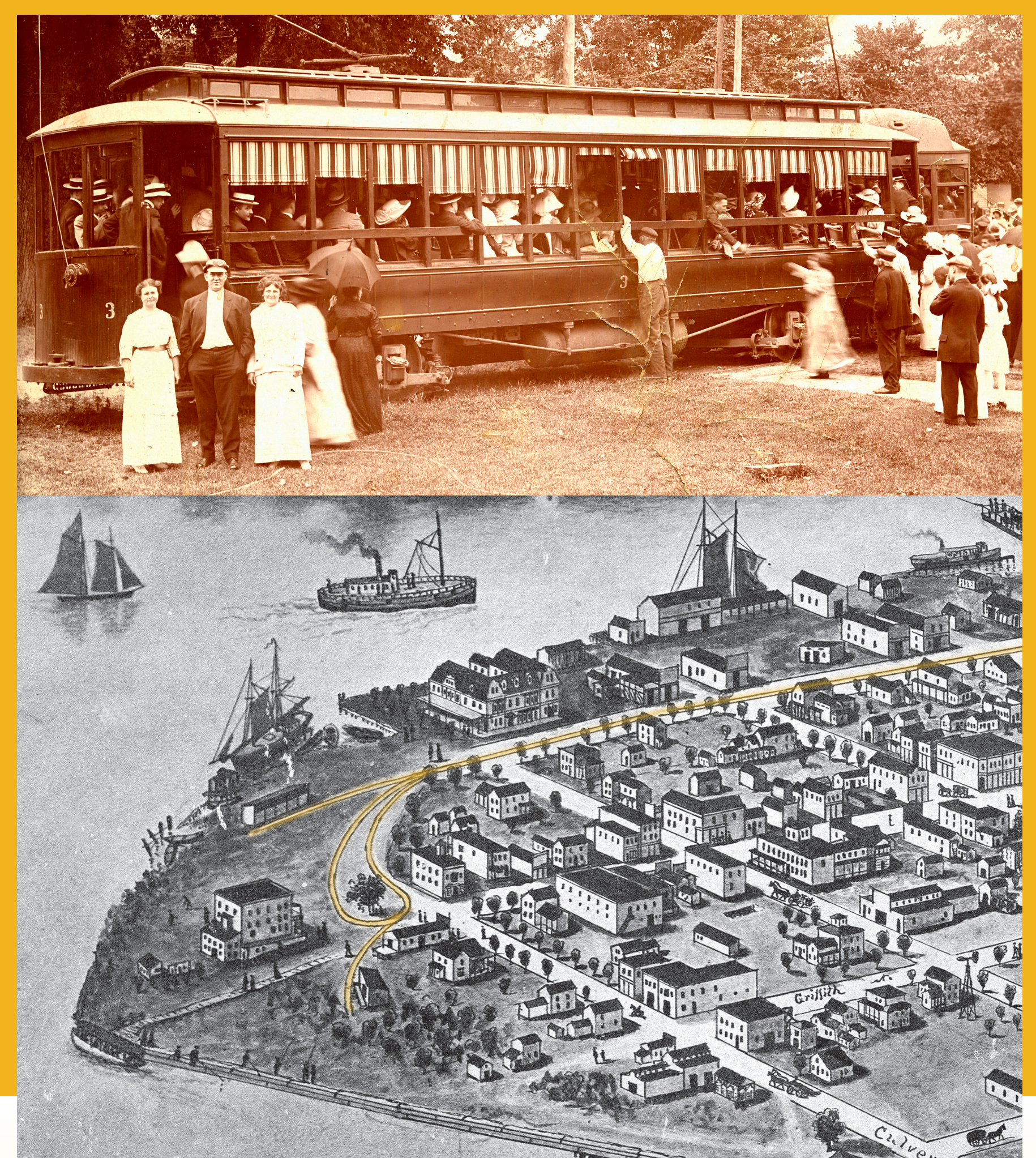
In the early 1900s, many cities across the country were connected by interurbans, or self-propelled electric rail cars. In a time before widespread automobile use, when rural roads were unpaved and difficult to traverse, interurbans made traveling between city centers more convenient.

The Holland & Lake Michigan Electric Railway Company was founded in 1898, with its first interurban tracks connecting Holland to Macatawa Park near Lake Michigan. By 1899, the tracks were extended south to Saugatuck. In the inaugural year of the service, 13 trips ran daily between Saugatuck and Holland, where riders could make connections with steamships or continued rail travel to places like Grand Rapids and Allegan.



Above: In Saugatuck, the Interurban ran buses, first pulled by horse and later with electric motors (show at left) to shuttle riders to Douglas.

Below: The station and the tracks looping by the Hotel Butler.



The Interurban turnaround loop and siding tracks are highlighted in yellow on this 1907 drawing of Saugatuck.

Originally built to carry passengers, the Interurban quickly became an important asset to farmers and freight operations. Sidetracks were added to ship fruit and other crops by rail.

In October of 1926, following money troubles and the increased popularity of automobiles, the Interurban company was sold at public auction and rail operations ceased.

In 1980, the Interurban returned to the community as the Interurban Transit Authority, an on-demand bus service. Saugatuck artist Cora Bliss Taylor was instrumental in getting the public transportation system established.



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