

Dispatcher

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LAST OF THE YELLOW CARS - PART TWO GOODBYE FOREVER

by WILLIAM WOOTTON



No. 3002, the last car operated over the P line, ties up at Georgia Street shortly before 6 a.m. on March 31, 1963, the final day of Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority narrow gauge operation.

(Richard Smith picture)

The "Yellow Car System" had been shrinking for some years and was down to five lines facing an uncertain future when the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority announced that all remaining streetcar and trolley coach lines were to be abandoned on March 31, 1963. In the months before abandonment railfans hurried to get those last pictures and MTA personnel made final preparations for the closedown.

Three hundred new buses, ordered from General Motors and the Flexible Coach Company, arrived in time for the conversion and crews worked feverishly to get them ready for the first day's operation. Training coaches were out on the lines almost daily and streetcar operators prepared for their new role as bus drivers. Bus stop signs sprang up along the car lines, and notices of abandonment were posted in all streetcars. Advertisements proclaimed the "virtues" of their successors. All unnecessary track was removed from the loops and asphalt

paving was put down so that the replacement buses could use the loops on the first day. All was in readiness.

On Friday the 29th, eight all-electrics were run down to Vernon Yard to join the streetcars already there. Crews worked as fast as they could to complete the temporary trackage which would soon be needed to hold the remainder of the fleet.

For many operators, the Friday afternoon rush hour was the time of their last runs. Many of the operators' wives brought their children or just themselves to take a last ride. Some had cameras and took pictures to help keep the memory of the last ride alive. As the time for abandonment came closer, more and more people were to be seen lining the streets and taking their last rides on the cars. Many regular passengers took cars out to say farewell.

Then came Saturday morning, March 30. The last full day of streetcar and trolley coach operation was at