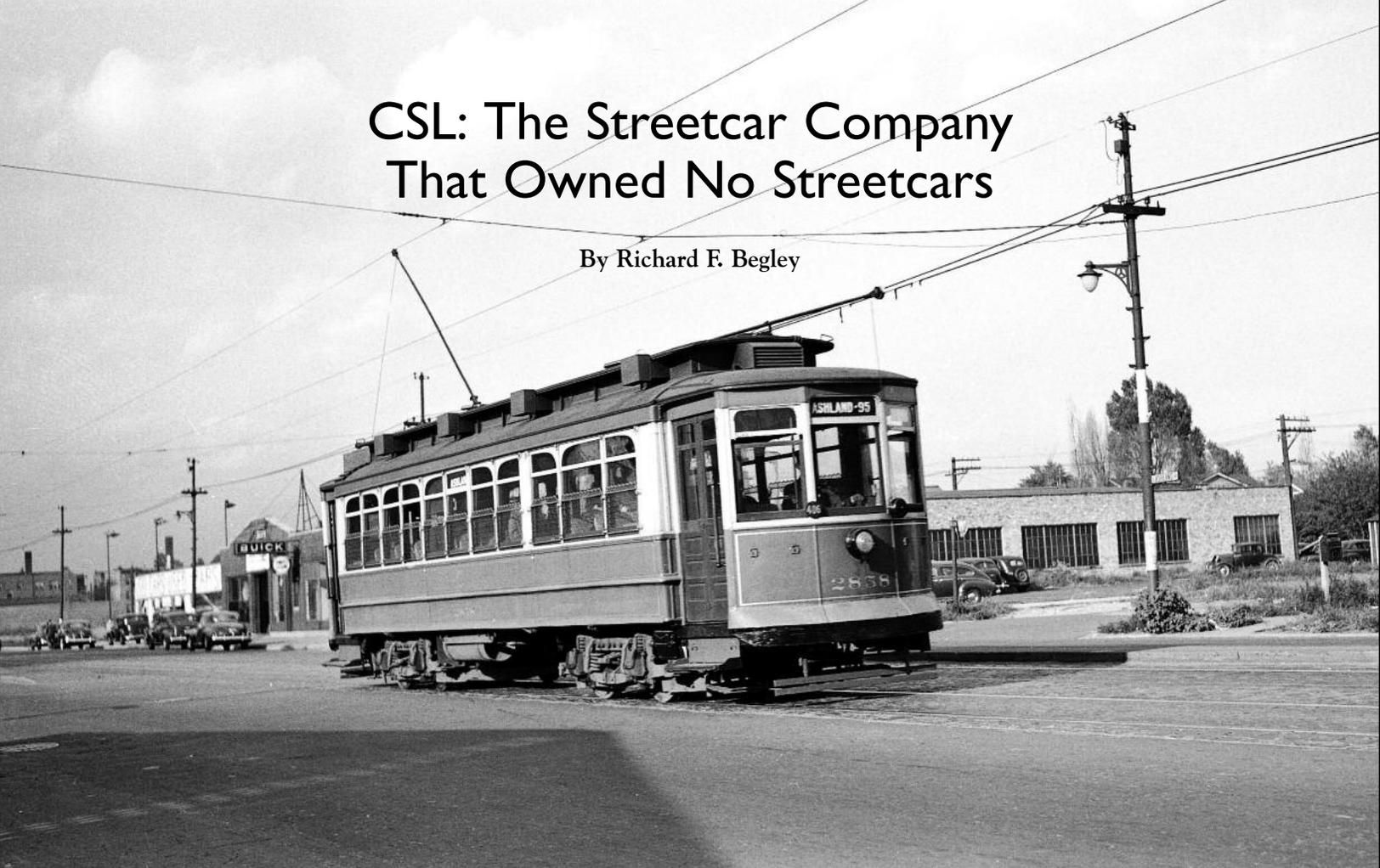


CSL: The Streetcar Company That Owned No Streetcars

By Richard F. Begley



▲ CSL 2858, owned by Calumet & South Chicago Railway and running on tracks of Chicago City Railway, is southbound on Ashland Avenue at 85th Street. It is operating on Route 9 Ashland on September 23, 1943. The streetcar was built by Kuhlman in 1910 as C&SC 2. Originally, it served as a funeral car but was converted to passenger service in 1919.—Robert W. Gibson photo, W.R. Keevil Archive

AS ROBUST AS IT WAS FOR THE 33 YEARS and eight months of its existence (February 1, 1914 to September 30, 1947), the **Chicago Surface Lines (CSL)** never owned a streetcar, a car barn, any trackage or any other asset related to its operations. Although the streetcars all carried the famous CSL logo, they were the property of the four companies which the CSL managed as if they were one. The riding public was none the wiser. If the streetcars ran on time, the public had no interest in the ownership or other peculiarities of the organizational structure. In this photo essay, we will look at the streetcars of one company running on the rails of another

company, where they operated as if they were in home territory.

The four component companies of the CSL were: **Chicago Railways Company (CRY)**, commonly called the North Side company although it also served the West Side; **Chicago City Railway Company (CCR)**, usually called the South Side company; **Calumet and South Chicago Railway Company (C&SC)**, whose routes were on the Far Southeast Side; and **The Southern Street Railway Company (SSR)**, a small company whose principal route was on 22nd Street (now Cermak Road). Effective October 1, 1947, all assets belonged to the **Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)**.



▲ Standing on the loop at Navy Pier on Chicago Railways tracks, CSL 5647 is serving the public on Route 28 Stony Island in 1946. One of only 29 streetcars owned by The Southern Street Railway, it was built by Brill in 1910. During the CSL era, the SSR streetcars were never assigned to routes using the tracks of the company which owned them.—*Fielding Kunecke photo, W.R. Keevil Archive*



▲ On April 20, 1946, CSL 1418 is ready to head westward from 87th Street and Commercial Avenue on rails of the Calumet and South Chicago Railway. It is running on Route 87A 87th Street. The streetcar was delivered to Chicago Railways in 1907, part of an order of 323 vehicles that became known as the Little St. Louis streetcars.—*Robert W. Gibson photo, W.R. Keevil Archive*



▲ CSL Robertson 2805 has a unique provenance. It was built in 1901 by St. Louis Car Company as Chicago City Railway 2591. It was sold by CCR to Calumet & South Chicago in 1908 and subsequently renumbered in the 1930s. It is seen here on the tracks of its original owner southbound on Cottage Grove Avenue at Oakwood Boulevard, March 28, 1946, while operating on Route 5 Cottage Grove-South Chicago.—Robert W. Gibson photo, W.R. Keevil Archive



▲ CSL 3342, a 1929 Front Entrance Center Exit (FECE) product from Brill built for Chicago Railways, is southbound on Vincennes Avenue near 78th Street in 1942, operating on Route 22 Clark-Wentworth. It is passing the South Shops of the Chicago City Railway on that company's tracks. The building's datestone, located near the top of the structure, reads: "1902 / C.C. RY. CO. / SHOPS." The building, complete with the datestone, is in place today.—Robert W. Gibson photo, W.R. Keevil Archive



▲ On July 13, 1947, CSL Nearside 5759 is southbound on Ewing Avenue near 108th Street on the last day of Route 5 Cottage Grove-South Chicago service south of 93rd Street. The Chicago City Railway streetcar was built by Brill in 1912 and is running on Calumet & South Chicago tracks.—*Robert W. Gibson photo, W.R. Keevil Archive*

▼ Southbound on Halsted Street at Taylor Street on trackage of Chicago Railways, CSL Big Brill 5219 was built in 1906 in a 400-car order for Chicago City Railway. This photo on Route 8 Halsted in spring 1947 illustrates the integrated operations: a streetcar of the South Side company running on rails of the North Side company on the West Side of Chicago.—*Fielding Kunecke photo, W.R. Keevil Archive*

