## "To the end of the line."

"The Trolley Song," from the movie Meet Me in St. Louis, 1944

## Streetcars were electrified in the Twin Cities in 1888, in Duluth in 1890, in Winona and St. Cloud in 1892, and in Brainerd in 1893.

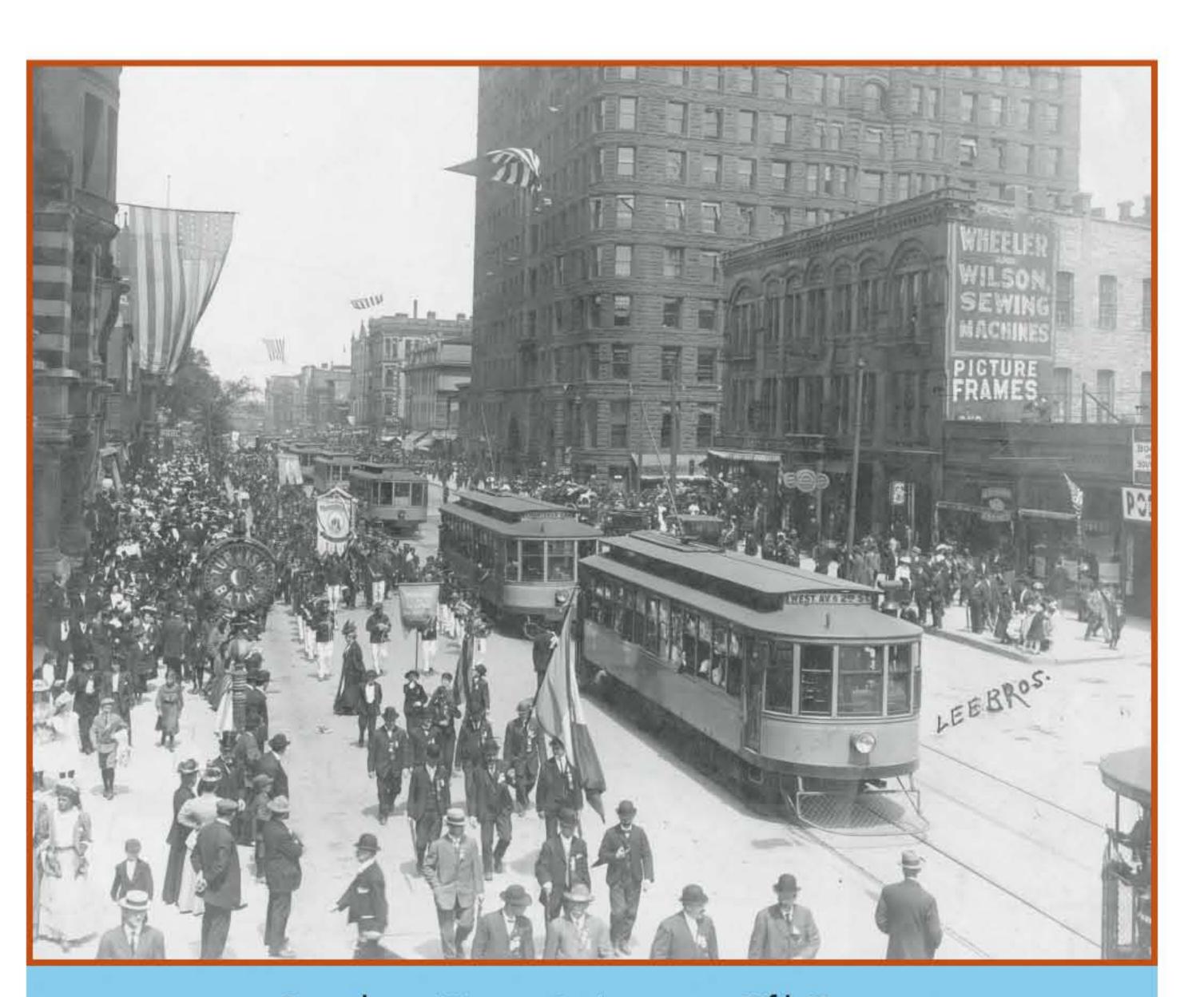
Tlectric streetcars made city dwellers more mobile and allowed people to live farther Li from their workplaces. Suburbs populated by commuters, including Robbinsdale, St. Louis Park, and White Bear Lake, began to spring up around the Twin Cities.

Because the streetcars were relatively empty on weekends and holidays, the Twin City Rapid Transit Company built two amusement parks, Wildwood Park on White Bear Lake and Big Island on Lake Minnetonka, to give people a reason to travel.

By the 1950s, the rise of the automobile, service cuts, and the conversion to buses led to the streetcar's demise. But in recent years, a revival in street railway systems has taken place in Minnesota and elsewhere.

Courtesy Minnesota Streetcar Museum

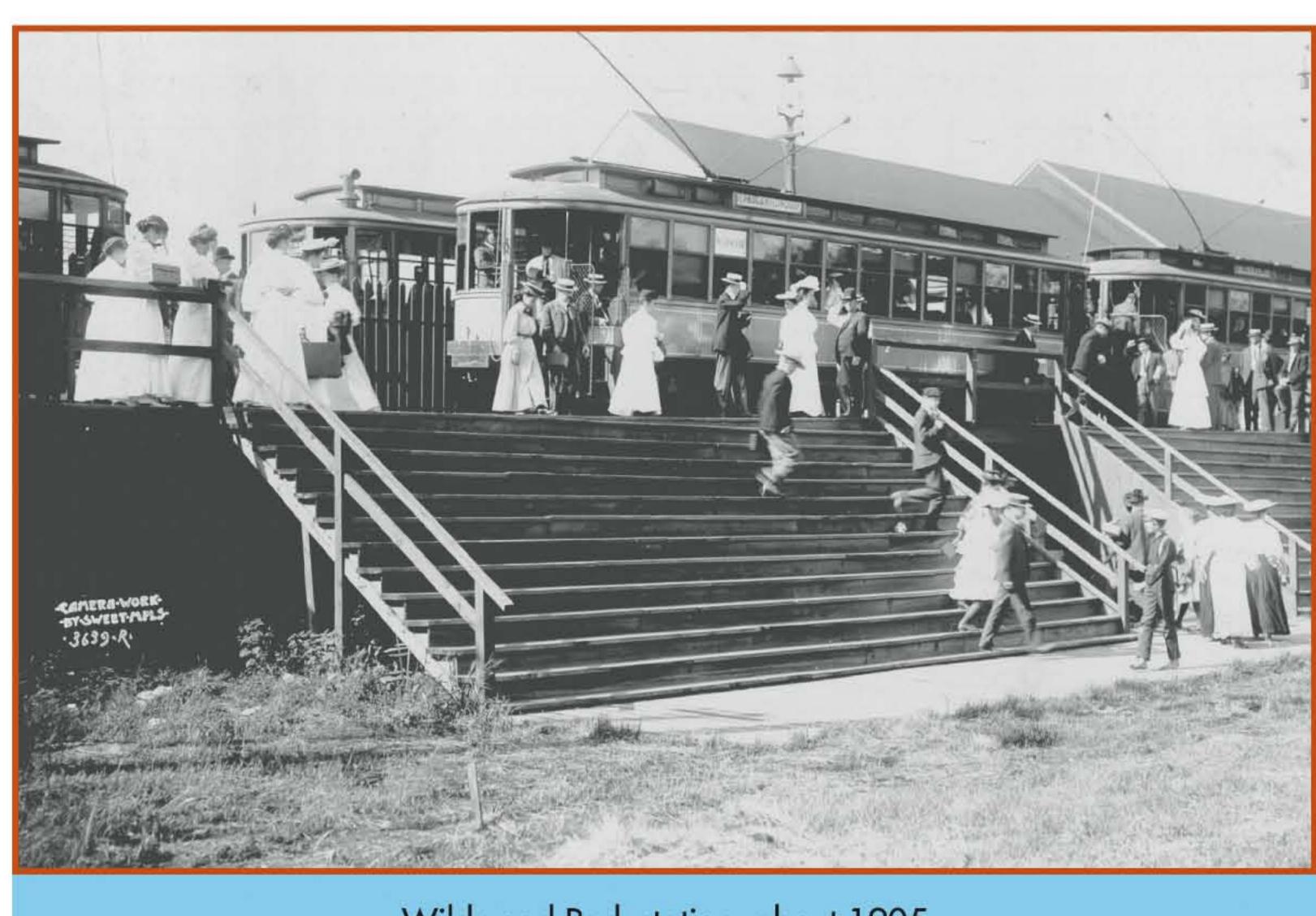




Parade on Hennepin Avenue at Fifth Street, Minneapolis, about 1906



Visiting Wildwood Park and the roller coaster, 1910



Wildwood Park station, about 1905

Courtesy Minnesota Streetcar Museum

The [streetcar] motorman slapped the rheostat full speed ahead. Now the strangely silent and muffled sound of riding tracks imbedded in earth instead of concrete, unaccustomed speeds of up to 60 miles per hour, the gentle rocking and swaying of the car, the trees and brush at times slapping the sides and the country air permeating everything, brought on a festival atmosphere.

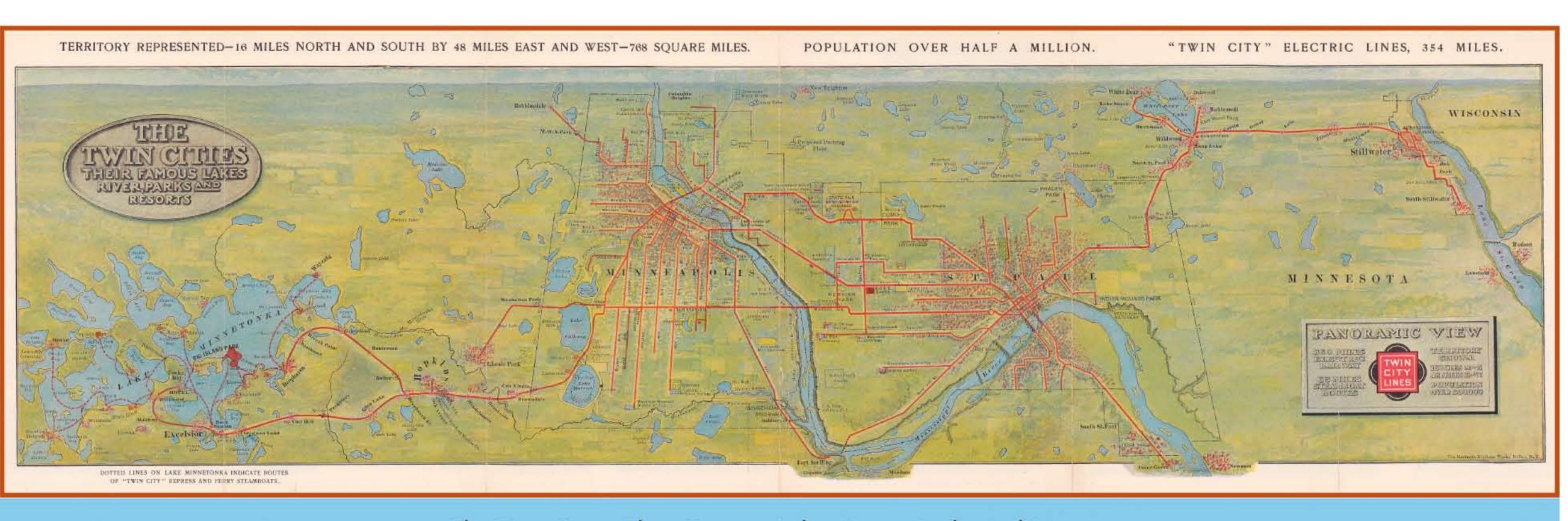
> W. H. Farrrell, St. Paul Dispatch, Nov. 19, 1979, about the streetcar ride to Wildwood Park, which had about 4,500 visitors per week during its heyday in the late teens and 1920s.



Courtesy Minnesota Streetcar Museum

I went to sleep at night listening to the Bloomington Avenue streetcar going by and I got used to listening to traffic at that time. They used to clickety-clack along outside my window over a porch that had huge lilac trees along the sides. In the spring my whole little room smelled of lilacs. It was just beautiful. What a way to wake up in the morning.

Oscar Backlund, Minneapolis, childhood in the 1930s



The Twin Cities: Their Famous Lakes, River, Parks and Resorts, Twin Cities Rapid Transit Company, Buffalo, N.Y.: Matthews-Northrup Works, 1907