

The Pacific Electric Railway - Our Common Link

The Pacific Electric Railway, the "Big Red Cars", reached Monrovia in the year 1903. Service between Monrovia and Los Angeles was inaugurated on March 1 of that year. Initially there were twenty five cars each way daily between 6:00 a.m. and 12:00 midnight. The scheduled running time from Myrtle and Olive in Monrovia to Sixth and Main in Los Angeles was 53 minutes. Later this schedule was increased to sixty cars each way and travel time was reduced to 45 minutes, including stops.

Pacific Electric service to Sierra Madre began January 1, 1906. The Sierra Madre Line connected with the Monrovia Line in San Marino. In time, depots were constructed in Monrovia at Myrtle and Olive and in Sierra Madre in Kersting Court. Both depots became local landmarks, and the depot in Sierra Madre was for many years lovingly decorated at Christmas time.

Decreased ridership after World War II threatened the survival of both lines. Finally the Pacific Electric applied for and received from the Railroad Commission permission to abandon both lines. The last car from Sierra Madre was car #1128 on October 6, 1950. The Monrovia Line lasted a little less than a year. The last train to Monrovia from Los Angeles was on September 30, 1951. The previous month the old depot in Sierra Madre had been torn down. The Monrovia depot lasted until 1967 when it, too, became only a memory.