

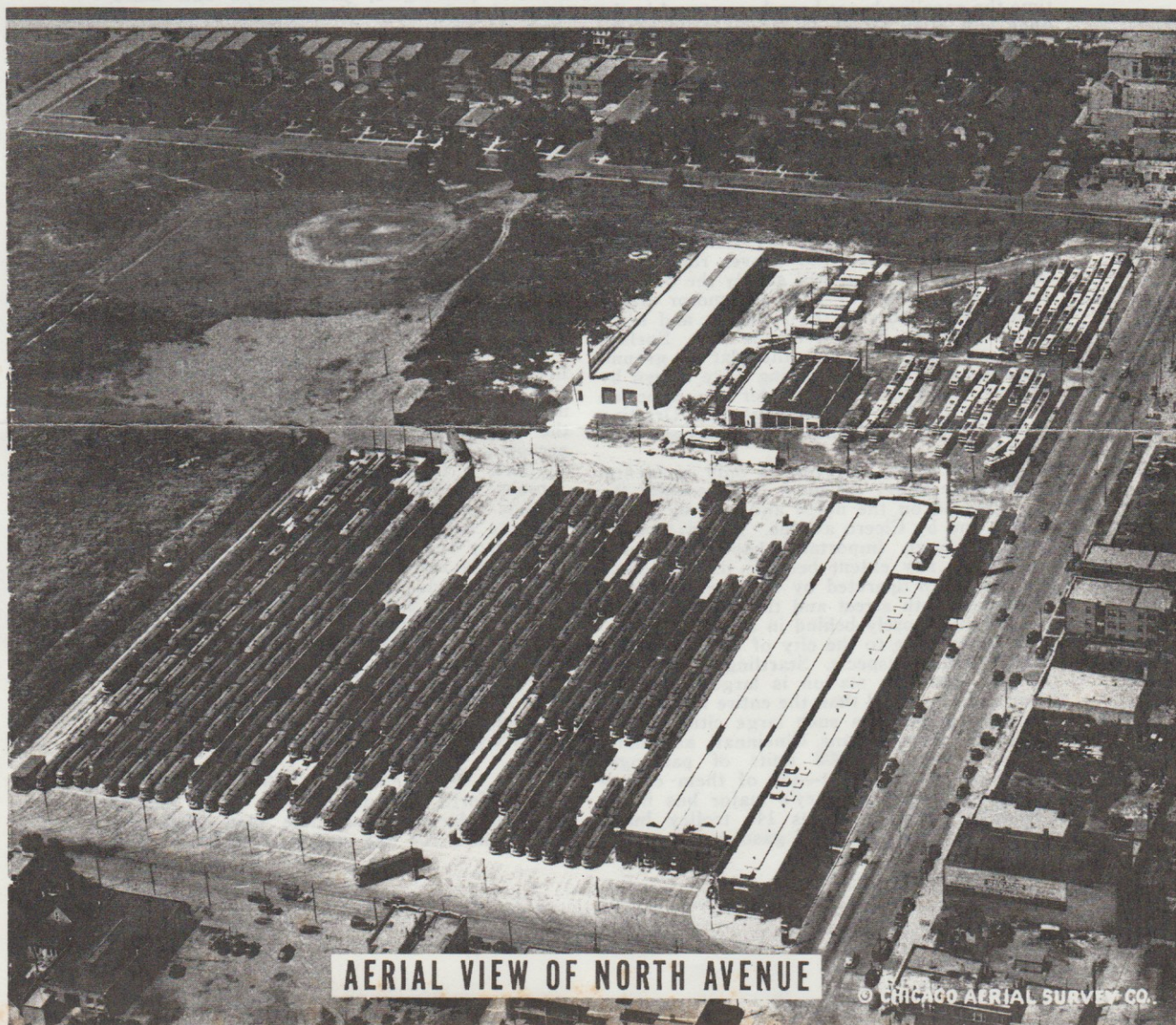
Surface Service

• **MAGAZINE** •

VOLUME 15

AUGUST 1938

NUMBER 5



AERIAL VIEW OF NORTH AVENUE

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Surface Service Magazine

A Monthly Publication by and for Chicago Surface Lines Employees

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AUGUST, 1938

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Size Plus Service

North Avenue Depot Probably World's Largest Street Railway Station—\$100,000 Bus Storage Building Latest Addition

Opening of the recently completed \$100,000 bus storage building at the North Avenue depot has flashed that station into the spotlight as being what is probably the largest street railway division plant in the world. From the standpoint of equipment operated, men employed, and total pay roll the station—though only one of 16 similar depots operated by the Chicago Surface Lines—is larger than the combined systems of Indianapolis, Indiana, and Columbus, Ohio.

The new bus garage is the latest addition to this vast plant. It was opened for service on August 5.

Fifty buses can be stored in the new building which measures 60 x 330 feet. Prior to this time the gasoline buses have been stored in the open and often repair work was done as the buses stood in the bitter cold weather. The new structure has three inspection pits, one repair pit and one pneumatic-hydraulic hoist to elevate buses when necessary.

Planned by CSL Engineers

The building is of brick with concrete flooring and three motor operated steel-curtain doors at both east and west ends. The roof is supported by flange "H" beams 36 inches wide and the roof is of pre-cast reinforced concrete with a tar and gravel roofing. A separate heating plant will supply the building with heated fresh air. There are motor driven exhaust ventilators in the skylights and separate ventilators in each of the pits. Surface Lines surveyors laid out the plat of ground and the plans for the building were drawn by Surface Lines architects under the direction of Superintendent of Buildings and Drafting H. W. Busch. Ben Lindstrom supervised construction.

The new unit, however, is only incidental to the huge street car plant that occupies the site bounded on the north and east by North Avenue and by Cicero Avenue. The size of the layout, though important, has never been stressed to any extent because the station is but one of 16 operated by the Surface Lines. Seventy-seventh street and the Archer Avenue stations run closely behind in size.

Its importance to the city of Chicago is obvious in many respects. Startling, however, is the fact that this station is larger in equipment and personnel than the entire local transportation systems in such large cities as Indianapolis, New Orleans, Cincinnati, and many others. There are 608 units of passenger equipment at the depot—184 of them constituting one of the country's major bus fleets. The latter figure includes 145 trolley buses and 39 of the system's 125 gasoline buses.

Let's take a look at the passengers carried by this equipment. The population of Chicago was estimated at 3,490,700 in 1937. Last year the cars and buses operating out of North Avenue depot carried nearly 30 times the population of the city—94,316,832 revenue passengers. That is a greater number of revenue passengers than were carried during 1937 by all the street cars and buses in Kansas City. It is a greater number of revenue passengers than were carried by the combined systems of the Indianapolis (Ind.) Railways, Inc., and the Louisville (Ky.) Railway Company.

And if you add to these 94 million passengers another 80 per cent, the usual ratio of transfer passengers, you have a still more staggering figure to illustrate the importance of the North Avenue depot lines to Chicagoans.

Huge Payroll

The payroll, too, makes a sizeable figure that far exceeds the total receipts of many transportation companies serving well-known cities. If you like to day dream now and then you might plan how you'd build your castle in the air with the \$3,140,069 which constituted the payroll for North Avenue employees during 1937. There are more dollars in that number than there are revenue passengers in the annual reports of such cities as Ogden, Utah, and Charleston, South Carolina. When you discuss North Avenue you have to talk in big figures!

These millions were paid to approximately 1,650 employees who staffed the various divisions at North Avenue last year and they meant much to the business establishments of the northwest section. Statistics, generally accepted, indicate that the average wage earner supports a family of approximately 3.5 or 4 persons. On that basis the payroll of the North Avenue forces provided for the direct upkeep of some 6,600 persons. Indirectly, of course, the money filtered into many avenues of trade, thus aiding many businesses and their clerks, salespeople and others.

Similarly the \$79,016 spent for materials and supplies alone, exclusive of labor, by the Shops and Equipment Department to keep the cars in shape is another item of great importance to numerous firms. That figure is, of course, but a small fraction of the total amount spent for maintenance for most of the major repair jobs are handled at the West Shops.

Many Trainmen Required

The North Avenue depot is more than a small headache to schedule men when the time comes for the quarterly picks. Frank