



# Twin Cities by Trolley: The Streetcar Era in Minneapolis and St. Paul

*John W. Diers, Aaron Isaacs*

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The recent development of light rail transit in the Twin Cities has been an undeniable success. Plans for additional lines progress, and our ways of shopping, dining, and commuting are changing dramatically. As we embrace riding the new Hiawatha light rail line, an older era comes to mind—the age when everyone rode the more than 500 miles of track that crisscrossed the Twin Cities.

In *Twin Cities by Trolley*, John Diers and Aaron Isaacs offer a rolling snapshot of Minneapolis and St. Paul from the 1880s to the 1950s, when the streetcar system shaped the growth and character of the entire metropolitan area. More than 400 photographs and 70 maps let the reader follow the tracks from Stillwater to University Avenue to Lake Minnetonka, through Uptown to downtown Minneapolis. The illustrations show nearly every neighborhood in Minneapolis and St. Paul as it was during the streetcar era.

At its peak in the 1920s and early 1930s, the Twin City Rapid Transit Company (TCRT) operated over 900 streetcars, owned 523 miles of track, and carried more than 200 million passengers annually. Recounting the rise and fall of the TCRT, *Twin Cities by Trolley* explores the history, organization, and operations of the streetcar system, including life as a streetcar operator and the technology, design, and construction of the cars.

Inspiring fond memories for anyone who grew up in the Twin Cities, *Twin Cities by Trolley* leads readers on a fascinating and enlightening tour of this bygone era in the neighborhood and the city they call home.

John W. Diers has worked in the transit industry for thirty-five years, including twenty-five years at the Twin Cities Metropolitan Transit Commission. He has written for *Trains*, and has served on the board of the Minnesota Transportation Museum.

Aaron Isaacs worked with Metro Transit for thirty-three years. He is the author of *Twin City Lines—The 1940s* and *The Como-Harriet Streetcar Line*. He is also the editor of *Railway Museum Quarterly*.

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