

# TMER&T #846



Type: Streetcar

Built - 1920

Seats - 55

Length - 45' 0"

Width - 8' 8"

Height - 12' 0"

Weight - 35,000 lb.



Electric streetcar systems began appearing in America in the late 1800s, and by 1915, most cities with over 10,000 residents had a local trolley. These street and interurban electric railroads formed the backbone of the industrial revolution, quickly becoming very important to urban society.

Milwaukee was no different. By 1920, The Milwaukee Electric Railway and Light Company (TMER&L) controlled almost all streetcar tracks in the city, as well as building interurban lines out into the country and developing the power grid in southeastern Wisconsin. TMER&L eventually became WEPCO in 1938, which evolved into the present-day We Energies.

Milwaukee had a large fleet of wooden and smaller steel streetcars at the time, but in 1920, more modern cars were ordered to improve service and increase reliability. The 800 and 900 series cars were ordered. Two of these unique cars are now preserved at ETRM, which operates on the last bit of TMER&L trackage left. One of these, car 846, is currently the only operable TMER&L streetcar.



Russ Porter Photos

846 operated mainly over the Route 10/Wells line, which operated around the downtown area, before reaching out over the north side of the city. Part of this line ran over the massive Wells Street Viaduct; 90 feet tall and almost a half mile long. Streetcars were very important to Milwaukee, as they transported kids to and from school, and parents to shopping and workplaces.



Postwar car-centric lives put an end to almost all electric rail systems in North America. The system in Milwaukee was no different, with all lines except Route 10 being abandoned or converted to buses. Due to the large expensive viaduct along the route, the railroad was reluctant to abandon, but eventually did on March 2, 1958.

846 is one of only a few surviving streetcars from the system. No. 978 is also here at ETRM awaiting restoration, with the other several at other museums across the country. 846 was built in 1920, and donated in 1958 to the Kentucky Railway Museum. In 2002, the East Troy Railroad Museum received the car and performed an amazing restoration. The car now regularly runs on the last TMER&L trackage: the six miles between East Troy and Mukwonago, Wisconsin.