

An electric streetcar traversed the road bed that is now Route 159 from 1899-1928. The East St. Louis and Suburban Railway was known locally as the Interurban or the “Yellow Hammer” due to the yellow cars and the rough ride. There were two stops near Glen Carbon: one at the intersection of Glen Crossing Road/Rt. 159 and one at Cottonwood Road/Glen Carbon Road located approximately where the Walgreens stands today.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, January 13, 1918 (adapted)

On Friday, January 11, 1918, there was a terrible blizzard. Eighteen persons who left Edwardsville for St. Louis at 6 p.m. Friday became stalled at Cottonwood Station. They ran into a five-foot snow drift. All efforts to get through failed. It was so cold nobody could sleep and pretty soon they ran out of coal. They kept warm by parading up and down the aisle. Then, the crew got out and tore down the Cottonwood Station, a small wooden waiting shed, and they burned the wood in the stove. Otto Kriege, a farmer, living a half mile from where they stalled, came and got them at 5:30 in the morning. Lena, Otto's wife, had plenty of hot food cooked for the travelers and they stayed at the house until the rescue party came. The story had a happy ending because of the gracious aid of the Kriege family and the warmth from the burning boards of Cottonwood Station.

The streetcar originated at 10th & State streets in East St. Louis. It served several towns including Collinsville, Maryville, Glen Carbon, and Edwardsville. In Edwardsville, a connection could be made to Mitchell, Granite City, Madison, Venice, and Brooklyn. Residents relied heavily on the streetcars to traverse the entire metro area.



East St. Louis & Suburban Railway Electric Line Streetcar traversed track that later became Rt. 159, circa 1918



When Rt. 159 was built, a concrete tunnel replaced the trestle



“Yellow Hammer” Streetcar (photo courtesy of St. Clair County Historical Society)



Kasper Kacer, standing near streetcar shed at Glen Crossing Station (later Rt. 159)



Trail Info

