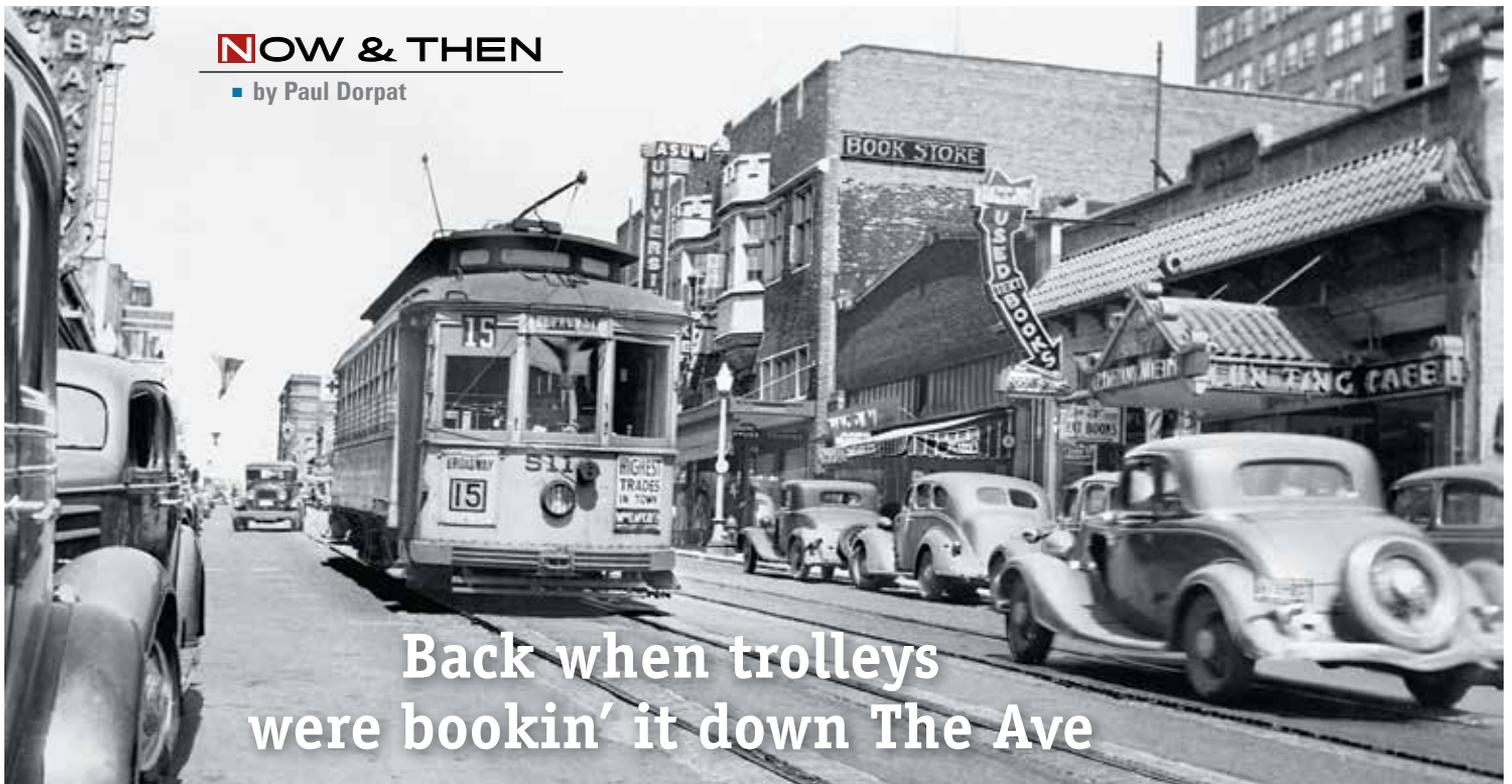


■ by Paul Dorpat



Back when trolleys were bookin' it down The Ave

COURTESY LAWTON GOWEY

HEADING SOUTH on The Ave (University Way Northeast), Seattle Municipal Railway car No. 511 was recorded midblock between Northeast 43rd Street and Northeast 45th Street, very possibly by a rail fan, perhaps James Turner or Lawton Gowey. Both started waiting for and/or chasing trains and trolleys with cameras before World War II. They knew and admired each other and shared their well-wrought snapshots. (Much later, Lawton and I did the same.)

Running on Route 15, car No. 511 is heading for Capitol Hill's commercial arterial, Broadway, as seen printed on the reader board above the center window. The "double-ender" was one of 25 trolleys (Nos. 500-524) manufactured in 1906 in St. Louis for use on the already-roaring streets of this then- (and now-) booming city. All were 1 inch longer than 40 feet, and all were scrapped in 1940 or 1941.

The Varsity Theatre opened across the street from the University Bookstore in 1940. Perhaps the theater is hidden behind the cars on the left or, perhaps, is not there. We prefer to think this photograph was recorded a year earlier, sometime in 1939. Note the American flags flapping above the southbound rails. They could be in celebration for that year's Independence Day, but not for the 1940 Fourth of July, by which time the Broadway trolley line



JEAN SHERRARD

THEN: On University Way, circa 1939, when the 4300 block of The Ave was the busiest book block in Seattle.

NOW: The Ave lost its rails in 1940 but kept its common carriers; this one is heading south to the Central Business District from the Maple Leaf neighborhood.

had been abandoned. The tracks were soon pulled, and The Ave's pavement then resembled the wartime rubble often printed in the city's three dailies of the era: The Times, The Post-Intelligencer and The Star.

On the right, the popular Lun Ting Café opened sometime in 1938. It did not make it into that year's Polk City Directory. The chop-suey and chow-mein provider appears here adorned with roof tiles. Roy Nielsen, the author of "UniverCity, the Story of the University District," fondly reflects that Ray Chinn, the cafe's manager and, like Nielsen, a longtime member of the neighborhood Rotary Club, "was very popular in the District." In 1970, when the University Bookstore expanded into his cafe, the Rotarians held a mock wake in the cafe on its closing

night. They called it a "Chinese Smorgasbord Inside Picnic." Chinn reopened nearby on 12th Avenue as a Chinese drive-in.

In 1925, the Associated Students' University Bookstore moved to The Ave from its campus home in the basement of Meany Hall. The 1970 expansion was one of its many remodels. Here, circa 1939, the bookstore is the gorilla on The Ave's 4300 block, which then was Seattle's busiest book block. Nestled near it were the Washington Book Store, Dearle's Book Store and the Bookery and Lending Library. University Bookstore celebrated its centennial in 2000. A year earlier, I had a fine time in the store's employ, writing and illustrating its centennial history. 📖

Check out Paul Dorpat and Jean Sherrard's blog at pauldorpat.com.