

NEWS RELEASE
6:00 PM, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1951

The Lehigh Valley Transit Company's Liberty Bell trolley line, which was instrumental in opening a large trade and travel area between Philadelphia and upper Pennsylvania in its 39 years of service, had its final run last night.

The transit company announced yesterday it would discontinue the trolley service between Allentown and Norristown effective today and would substitute bus service in its place.

Through buses will be operated daily from Allentown to Norristown starting at 6:05 A.M. and every hour thereafter until 10:05 p.m. with buses leaving Norristown for Allentown starting at 7:20 A.M. and every hour thereafter until 12:20 A.M. Rates will be the same on buses as they have been on the Liberty Bell cars between common points and the route of the buses between Allentown and Norristown will be as near to the present rail route as improved highways will permit. Copies of notice indicating exact route and availability of other information have been posted at stations and other important loading points.

Despite seeming abruptness of the change, O. P. Young, company president, stated that application for approval of conversion to bus operation had been before the Public Utility Commission since December 1950. The application, Young explained, had been the subject of several commission hearings and has just been approved.

Company officials, anxious to make the change at the earliest possible date, have had buses readied for use on the historic line since last November in anticipation of the move which is designed in every way to improve public service, Young said.

New equipment purchased to effect the conversion together with increased garage facilities and repaving obligations which must be met by the Company to effect the changeover will cost nearly \$1,000,000, Mr. Young stated.

The bus lines, it is expected, will not be subject as greatly to the delays caused by snow storms and electrical storms, hence the Company will be able to maintain more accurate schedules along the heavily-travelled Allentown-Norristown-Philadelphia route.

No manpower will be lost as a result of the change, officials believe.

The transit company has been conducting a training program to enable most of the personnel now working on the Liberty Bell line to be absorbed in the new operation. Some of the motormen, it is expected, will switch to the remaining street car lines in Allentown and its immediate vicinity. Some of the men will undoubtedly retire on pension, it was explained.

Nor will the 42 miles of track go to waste. Young explained that the track will be taken up and used in furthering the defense effort.

The colorful Liberty Bell line is the latest of local trolley lines to succumb to the Company's program of progress in transportation service for this section of the state.

Familiar to millions in the southeastern quarter of Pennsylvania since 1901 when the service extended to Chestnut Hill, the present route was inaugurated in 1912 between Allentown and 69th Street, Philadelphia, via Norristown.

The High Speed Line, as it was commonly known, opened a new, fast-flowing freight and passenger route not only between those two cities but between Philadelphia and up-state communities as far north as Stroudsburg.

At one time trolley lines through Bangor, Wind Gap and Stroudsburg, made possible rapid travel by trolley for nearly a third of the width of the state. The Company's elaborate program of improvement both to roadway equipment and service did well in meeting the demands of an increasing population.

The through fast limiteds of the Liberty Bell route, famous for more than a generation, were one of the points of attraction in the Lehigh Valley and Allentown.

Company officials report that people from every state in the Union have made special trips over the historic line.

During the war years the line formed a vital transportation link between Philadelphia and Allentown. Company officials pledge the same effort in bus operation in carrying on the worthy tradition of the historic Liberty Bell route.