To restore public confidence after the 1889 crash the incline was rebuilt to show a change in grade.
Jackson Park, one of the most inaccessible parcels of public land in Cincinnati, is situated at the end of a labyrinth of dead-end streets just east of Christ Hospital in Mount Auburn. Despite its forbidding approach, this obscure neck of land rising high above the city witnessed the beginnings of suburban public transit in Cincinnati. The city's first incline and earliest electric street railway of any length started at this location.

Although a few suburban villages far from the urban center had been established early in the city's development, Mount Auburn was one of the first close-in hilltop communities to be settled. The lofty eminence of Jackson Hill which removed it from the bustle and confusion of the basin made it a desirable residential area. By the 1850's, a female seminary, Mount Auburn Young Ladies Institute, was in operation, broad avenues were graded, and the landscape was dotted with handsome estates. It was a rich man's community from which the residents could afford private conveyance to the city, but there were some who desired the convenience and economy of public transit. This need was answered about 1850 by the establishment of an omnibus line. The horse-drawn bus was never satisfactory, however; it was slow, expensive, and often "crowded to suffocation inside with passengers of both sexes and 'many minds'. . .". The trip from the center of the city took nearly two hours, the most grueling portion of which was the ascent up Sycamore Street Hill. Even though a double team was used, a heavily-loaded bus necessitated several stops to rest the exhausted horses. During winter months, if Sycamore Hill was icy, service was suspended entirely. In addition, the fifteen-to-twenty cent fare was thought exorbitant at the time.

The prospects for improved transit grew brighter in 1864 when the Mount Auburn Street Railroad was organized. Chartered as Route 8, this company planned to build a line from Fifth and Main Streets to Auburn Avenue. The difficulties of surmounting Jackson Hill were recognized in the liberal provisions of the franchise, which permitted the contractor to select whatever streets offered the easiest grade so long as a majority of the homeowners along the way did not object. Progress was very slow, possibly due to a
shortage of materials and labor during the Civil War. By April 1867, the tracks reached the foot of Jackson Hill at Orchard Street, and by late June cars were running to the top of the hill. The route was a circuitous one: after the long grade up the eastward slope of Liberty Street, the tracks turned north on Highland, then west on Ringgold, north on Josephine, and finally on to Auburn Avenue. Again a double team was necessary, with all the attendant annoyances and delays involved in hitching and unhitching the extra horses. The Mount Auburn railway offered little improvement over the omnibus. The trip was nearly as slow, and the small, cramped bob-tail cars were no more comfortable. Meager patronage led to indifferent maintenance of the tracks, resulting in frequent derailments. The Cincinnati Gazette waggishly suggested that old citizens who wished to refresh their memory of the ancient corduroy road need only board a Mount Auburn horsecar.2

Meanwhile, a solution to the hilltop transportation problem in Cincinnati was being perfected upriver at Pittsburgh. A giant steam-powered hillside elevator, known more precisely as an inclined plane railway, was opened in the spring of 1870. The Monongahela incline connected the hilltop community of Mount Washington with the city of Pittsburgh. Soon after the incline opened, Joseph Stacy Hill (1813-1893), a Cincinnati soap manufacturer, visited Pittsburgh where he was struck by the obvious application of this scheme to Cincinnati's vertical transit problem.3 He enthusiastically reported the idea to George A. Smith (1820-1888), who was not only a man of property but also a practical mechanic and an experienced contractor.4 Smith had built all the piers for the Suspension Bridge connecting Cincinnati and Covington, Kentucky; the railroad bridge between Cincinnati and Newport, Kentucky; and the pontoon bridge across the Ohio River during the Civil War. His interests spanned real estate and public transport as well.

Thus Hill had made his suggestion to a man of energy and means who wasted no time in implementing the plan. Smith in turn called on James M. Doherty to supervise the project. Doherty and Smith had been acquaintances since the mid-1840's when as young men they served as conductors on the Little Miami Railroad. Doherty had worked for Arthur Latham and Company, operators of several Cincinnati omnibus lines, and in more recent years was an official of a local street railway.5 The organization papers for a steam railroad, initiated some twenty years earlier but never built, were used to obtain a charter from the Ohio State Legislature on April 21, 1871. In this way the company hoped to be free of regulations and restrictive street railway laws imposed by the city. Despite this somewhat questionable maneuver, it still was necessary to obtain permission from the city for crossing the various lateral streets above Jackson Hill. The necessary ordinance was passed in May 1871, and the Cincinnati Inclined Plane Railway Company (hereafter referred to as the C.I.P.) was grudgingly recognized. George A. Smith held all but five shares of stock in the company.
By mid-December construction was underway and the equipment was ready for delivery. The machinery consisted of two boilers, a pair of reciprocating steam engines with 12 inch by 24 inch cylinders (70 horsepower), two winding drums 9 feet in diameter by 12 feet in length, and safety wheels and brake mechanisms. The engines and winding apparatus were built by Cooper and Company of Mt. Vernon, Ohio. The passenger car bodies were completed by February 1872, and it was hoped the incline would open by the first of March. But the plane was not ready for a test run until April 20, when all was reported ready for opening to the public except for a pending lawsuit in which several property owners along the line had obtained an injunction against the incline company. The suit was soon resolved and the grand opening was held on May 12, 1872.

The opening of the first incline in the city was expected to draw a large crowd, but the number of curiosity seekers was swelled by patrons bound for the annual festival of the German Protestant Orphan Home in Mount Auburn. The police were on hand to direct the crowds both at the bottom station at Mulberry and Main Streets, and at the top station on Jackson Hill. An estimated six thousand persons were carried up and down the first day. No mishaps were reported, though the engineer and other crew members were admittedly nervous in running the machinery for the first time with passengers aboard. An ingenious telegraphic system of signal bells permitted communication between the operating engineer in the power house at the top of the hill and the attendant at the bottom station. Two bells rang for “ready;” one for “alarm,” signalling that the doors were closed and locked; and three for “start.” The 850-foot trip took 1½ minutes; at last there was a speedy avenue from Mount Auburn to the city. The city papers pronounced the incline not only a grand success but also an invention that would change the character of the city. Henceforth, citizens would leave the crowded, filthy city to commerce and industry, inasmuch as “the future home of the future Cincinnatians will be out on hills. . . . .” This prediction was borne out by the four other inclines which opened in subsequent years.

Once the incline was successfully running, the owners of the C.I.P. decided to build a connecting system of horsecar lines. At the bottom, a horsecar line was to be constructed from the station at Mulberry and Main Streets down Main to the Fifth Street Market (Fountain Square) in the center of town. Construction for this line was authorized by the city in December 1871, and rails were on order when the incline opened in 1872, but progress was slow. Smith and his associates gained control of the Mount Auburn Street Railroad in the winter of 1872. The competing Mount Auburn line (Route 8) was absorbed in the take-over, and its tortuous Jackson Hill line was abandoned. Temporarily, a spur track was built over to Liberty Street where a connection was made with the Mount Auburn Street Railroad, which conveyed cars of the C.I.P. into the city’s center. This branch was
In 1889 the C.I.P. put into operation the first electric streetcars in the city. Superintendent James H. Doherty, below, asserted that "transportation was expensive and the public must expect to pay for it."
opened in April 1873. The new Main Street horsecar line affording a direct
route between downtown and the base of the incline at Mulberry and Main
Streets was eventually opened on May 16, 1873.  

At the same time work on a horsecar line from the top station to Auburn
Avenue was underway. As a temporary measure, within two months of the
incline’s opening, omnibuses were operating from the top of the incline to
the adjacent suburbs of Clifton, Avondale, and Walnut Hills. These con-
necting lines assured a steady volume of traffic for the incline. By June
1872, six hundred passengers daily were riding the incline; traffic during
the first year was reported to be a million persons.  
The relatively high
fare did not seem to discourage passengers. Twelve combination city-incline
tickets sold for one dollar; twenty incline tickets alone cost the same price.
When complaints were heard, Superintendent Doherty countered that the
old Route 8 failed twice on the five-cent fare. He added that transportation
was expensive and the public must expect to pay for it.  

It occurred to Smith not long after the incline opened that the magnificent
overlook of city and river from the top station made an ideal site for a public
garden. If it attractively provided entertainment and refreshment, even plain
folk who could not afford to live in Mount Auburn would ride the incline
for an evening’s amusement. Hopefully, the place would pay for itself and
generate excursion traffic for the incline. The idea appeared a sound one
and Smith decided to build not only a garden but also a “refreshment saloon”
so that year-round operations could be maintained. A crew of carpenters
were put to work, and, obviously without the advice of an architect, built
a simple two-story wooden building that was little more than a promenade.
Plain as a mud scow, it was named the Lookout House and was declared
a magnificent pleasure palace when completed in the fall of 1872. It mea-
sured 50 by 150 feet, with a 50-foot square kitchen at the rear.  
The first
floor served as the bar and wine room; a dancing hall and smaller refresh-
ment room occupied the upper floor.

Sunday was the busiest day at the Lookout House. The Sunday closing
laws were brazenly ignored as beer and wine were sold openly. The noisy
crowd became a nuisance to the staid residents of Mount Auburn. One of
them wrote a vitriolic condemnation of the low morals tolerated on the Sab-
bath; the music was of a kind “... that provokes thirst, and the impatient
clinking of beer mugs can be heard on every hand.” Despite this and
other protests, no official action was taken for another twenty years, when
a stricter enforcement of the law closed all of the hilltop houses forever.

The Cincinnati Inclined Plane Railway Company had no interest in man-
aging the Lookout House but instead leased it to an independent operator.
George Kemmeter was the first proprietor, followed by Frank Harff, who
proved to be an innovator in hilltop house management. A former Vine
Street saloonkeeper, Harff saw the need for special attractions to promote
greater patronage. Fireworks, bands, and balloon ascensions became the stock-in-trade at the Lookout House. In September 1876, Harff brought the famous German Military Band, then on tour after playing at the United States Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, to the Lookout House where it played to an audience of ten thousand. The following June, Harff exhibited one of the greatest attractions ever shown in the city, a giant white whale. The mammal was transported from the East in a boxcar fitted with a tank. Harff erected an exhibit tank holding 168,000 gallons of water, to which salt was added until a sea-like solution was simulated. But the whale did not thrive in its artificial environment; by early July the public was encouraged to “see it today, for tomorrow it may be dead.” When it did die a few days later, its body was embalmed, a process guaranteed for six months. Yet within a day or two a repellent odor began to be remarked by visitors to the Lookout House. The stench soon became so vile that the whale was hastily removed to a soap factory for rendering while the building underwent massive fumigation. All this notoriety created the sensational interest that Harff craved for the Lookout House.

During the years of Harff’s management, many improvements were made to the grounds and buildings. He added bowling alleys, enlarged the promenade, and in 1878 erected a theater. Octagonal in shape, its pagoda-like roof added much-needed architectural interest to the Lookout House. Among the plays produced there in the early years were “Our Boarding House,” “All That Glitters Is Not Gold,” and “Uncle Tom’s Cabin.” Banquets were another important source of business at the Lookout House. In July 1877, the Board of Trade held its grand banquet with a six-course meal that can only be described as Roman. Entertainment was provided by Currier’s Orchestra and a Prof. Weiffenback, who performed solo pieces on sixteen drums. The National Brewers’ Congress banquet was also held there.

Frank Harff departed the Lookout House in 1878 to take over management of the Highland House on Mount Adams. The succeeding managers never matched his genius and the Lookout House soon was eclipsed by the other hilltop houses of Cincinnati. The Lookout House should be remembered, however, as the prototype after which the others were modeled.

In September of 1875 the Zoological Gardens opened, not as a public enterprise but as a privately-owned stock company. Among its founders was George A. Smith, who saw obvious traffic potential for his inclined plane. It would only be necessary to extend the tracks up Vine Street from Auburn Avenue to connect the Zoo with a direct line to the city via the incline. A month after the Zoo’s opening, the city gave the C.I.P. permission to lay tracks on Vine Street. The C.I.P. in turn purchased some shares to ingratiate itself with the Zoo’s management. Construction of the new line languished, however, perhaps due to the depression following the Panic of 1873. The Auburn Avenue segment was double-tracked in the spring of
Frank Harff, the dazzling promoter of the Lookout House, ignored Sunday closing laws and established his hilltop attraction as a model which other belvederes later copied.
1876, but little work was done on the Vine Street line until the following year. By early August of 1877 the extension was open to Hammond and Vine, a little over a half mile from the Zoo entrance. On September 13 the extension reached the Zoo entrance, the double-tracking of Vine Street from Auburn Avenue was completed, and through downtown service was inaugurated. Traffic justified the extension as some three thousand passengers visited the Zoo on a Sunday.

Several weeks after the opening, a steam dummy locomotive from the Baldwin Locomotive Works was obtained for trial on the upper end of the Vine Street line. It ran only 3,300 feet from Hammond Street to the Zoo entrance, horses being used on the remainder of the system. If the dummy proved successful operation would be extended to the top of the incline, and more “silent steam motors” might be purchased. At least this was the hope of the Baldwin Locomotive Works, which at the time was promoting dummy locomotives for street railways by sending demonstrators across the country for trial. One other horsecar line in Cincinnati wanted to try a dummy but the city council refused to grant even a sixty-day trial. The C.I.P. ignored the city ruling, although its franchise for the Vine Street line specifically stated that only horses or mules might be used for power. The C.I.P. fell back on its state railroad charter which allowed it to use steam. The dummy proved expensive to operate; wages and fuel came to $8.50 a day, with yearly maintenance and depreciation figured at twenty-five percent of the original construction cost. Little is known of the dummy’s operations after late October 1877, but it was presumably returned to the builder for resale.

The next ten years were uneventful ones for the C.I.P. The management was content to operate the small six-mile system. During these years the company owned 24 cars and 145 horses and mules, and employed 90 men. In 1881, 2.3 million passengers were carried; six years later the number of riders was up 600,000. Net earnings averaged $18,000 per year. While the capital stock was authorized at one million dollars, only $10,500 was paid in during the early years, the cost of the company being carried by a $125,000 first mortgage. In 1884 nearly half a million dollars in stock was sold, but since no new tangible assets were acquired the new investors were surely receiving “blue sky” certificates for their investment. No effort was made to repay the mortgage.

While Smith, Doherty, and Hill were content with things as they were, the residents of Mount Auburn were losing patience with the C.I.P. and its complacent ways. The fare was high: five cents from downtown to the incline, five cents for the incline, and another fare for the connecting car at the top. To save wages young boys were employed as drivers and conductors. Generally rude and insolent, the gang of "street arabs" who operated the cars didn’t help to endear the road to those required to travel on it.
Though the other street railways of the city were busily building extensions, acquiring new cars, and even adopting cable power for the heavily-traveled routes, the C.I.P. indolently drifted along.

While most passengers only grumbled, one decided to build a competing cable railway to spark the C.I.P. into either action or abandonment. Henry Martin had invested heavily in real estate in the area and realized it would never mature in value unless truly satisfactory transit was available. Thus motivated, he organized the Mount Auburn Cable Railway in 1886. The route was to start at Fourth and Sycamore, then proceed up Sycamore Street Hill, and by various streets go north on Highland and Burnet Avenues to the village of Avondale. Construction proceeded through 1887, but the engineering was second-rate and Martin, inexperienced in street railway matters, made many mistakes. Still, he was a wealthy, strong-willed man who finally saw the first section of the line opened in March 1888. The entire road to Avondale opened in June of that year. Though Martin's management was inept and he himself exhibited eccentricities—such as his insistence on selling the line to his superintendent every Saturday and reclaiming the title on Monday, so as not to sully himself with operating a business on Sunday—the new cable line cut deeply into the C.I.P.'s traffic. Riders were down nearly fifty percent. Though the net loss for the year was surprisingly small, only $3,500, confidence in the company's future was badly shaken. The stock fell to one cent on the dollar. George Smith's death in January 1888 was the final blow for the C.I.P. The executors of his estate, fearing the company would fail, decided to sell. Smith was virtually the sole owner, Doherty and Hill having only a few shares each and neither having private funds to save the company. Complete abandonment looked imminent.

It was thought that perhaps the Kilgour brothers, Charles and John, owners of the Cincinnati Street Railway Company, would buy up the shares, but apparently they were too involved in developing the lines already in their control and in acquiring George Kerper's lines, a competitive system and the second largest in the city. Possibly they simply hoped the C.I.P. would vanish, allowing their Cincinnati Street Railway Company to step in and take over the lucrative excursion traffic by extending its Vine Street cable line to the Zoo. None of this, however, came to pass. In a surprise move a syndicate from Louisville, headed by Hardin H. Littell and backed by Fidelity Trust Company of Louisville, bought a controlling interest in the C.I.P. in the fall of 1888. Littell was an experienced street railway man of national reputation who had started with the Louisville City Railway as a lad of nineteen and become its superintendent three years later. He helped organize the American Street Railway Association and was elected its first president in 1882. His brother, Harvey M. Littell, then managing a line in St. Paul, Minnesota, was brought to Cincinnati to direct the C.I.P. Doherty was retained as secretary out of respect for his long service and experience.
Frequent banquets and concerts benefited the Mount Auburn Incline and the Lookout House as well as "yellow fever sufferers."
The Littels realized that a crash modernization program was needed to
revitalize the C.I.P. Electric traction had proved practical a few months
earlier when Frank J. Sprague's pioneering line in Richmond, Virginia, was
opened. While more conservative street railway men would wait a year or
two to see a more complete test, the Littells decided to plunge ahead, and
contracted with Sprague in November 1888 to purchase twenty new electric
cars. A generating plant was built next to the incline power house, and
the incline was rebuilt with open platforms so that the electric cars them-
selves might be raised or lowered. The old fixed-cab incline bodies were
removed; with the new system the tedious, time-consuming transfer was
eliminated. When the new system was put in service in June 1889, Cin-
cinnati's first electric streetcar line of any consequence was opened. 21

Some months before the opening, the new management of the C.I.P. had
an opportunity to show its aggressive spirit. The Martin cable line had
extended its line east from Burnet along Erkenbrecher Avenue to the Zoo's
main entrance, thus threatening to take a portion of the traffic since the
C.I.P. tracks were somewhat farther from the entrance. The Littells cor-
rected this with a bold countermove: "Working in the mud and under a
pouring rain, they extended their tracks from the former Terminus right
to the new gates of the Garden." 22 The construction, directly across the
property of the Zoo, was done without the knowledge and consent of its
trustees. While the action was presumptuous, there is no evidence that
the Littells were ever forced to remove the tracks.

The electric cars were operating smoothly, patronage was good, and the
Littells were busy with plans for a ten-mile extension to Carthage. A minor
accident at the incline on July 14, 1889, resulted in a return to the fixed-
cab system, with transfer of passengers at the top and bottom stations.
The old winding machinery had been retained and was admittedly too light
for trucking streetcars on open platforms. While no serious injuries re-
sulted from the mishap, it foretold of a far grimmer event.

It was Tuesday, October 15, 1889, and the noon bells were ringing. 23
Eight passengers bound home for lunch boarded the incline car for the
ascent to Mount Auburn. The trip proceeded normally until the car ap-
proached the summit, but instead of slowing down it continued at full
speed with a fearful crash into the top station. The engines continued to
turn, holding the car at the top of the plane, but with such force that both
the hoisting and safety cables were pulled loose. The car, now free from
all restraints, lingered for an instant and then began its lightning-like plunge
to the bottom. The impact sounded like an exploding boiler—the air was
filled with flying bits of glass, wood, and dust. The car body wrenched loose
from the truck frame and hurled itself into a grocery store across the street;
the roof of the car sailed down Main Street a full one hundred feet. Three
passengers were killed outright; two more died within a few hours; and a

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sixth was dead several days later. The others escaped with injuries, as did two luckless pedestrians who were struck by flying debris. Who was responsible for this monstrous horror? The coroner’s investigation revealed several defects in the machinery: the clips holding the cables were not secure, no safety latches were provided to hold the car should the cable come loose (a precaution taken by the other inclines), a small chip of metal was found in the throttle valve chest. The operating engineer, Charles Goble, stated that he could not stop the engines, claiming the throttle was frozen; the chip of metal was blamed. He admitted that some trouble with the machinery had been experienced earlier that morning but a few drops of oil had seemed to correct matters. Goble was held responsible since he was an experienced operator and should have reversed the engines and applied the winding drum brakes. The other employees on duty were charged with criminal neglect for failing to close the incline for a thorough inspection when the trouble was first noticed. It might be noted that while major catastrophes were perennially predicted and minor mishaps did occur, this was the single serious incline accident in the city’s history.

To restore public confidence it was decided to completely rebuild the incline. The old wooden trestle was demolished and the curious humpback grade was slightly reduced. New heavier engines were built by I.&E. Greenwald of Cincinnati. The track gauge was increased from 4 feet 10 inches to 6 feet 3 inches. The new plane was 860 feet long with a vertical lift of 275 feet. Open platforms measuring 36 feet by 8 feet returned the trucking of streetcars up and down the hill. Duplicate throttle and reversing mechanisms were installed as a safeguard against a repeat of the October disaster. The rebuilding of the plane was supervised by Milo D. Burke, an experienced civil engineer who earlier had directed construction of the Price Hill Incline. The new plane was reportedly ready for testing in mid-December, but for reasons unknown to the writer it was not formally opened until February 9, 1890.

Three days after the incline’s reopening William Howard Taft, then judge of the Superior Court of Cincinnati, decided a case which had been pending against the C.I.P. since the electric road went into service. The telephone company had complained that the single overhead wire with ground return used by the Mount Auburn line was interfering with phone service in the area. The telephone company also employed ground return and claimed priority rights, having installed its poles along Auburn Avenue in 1881 and 1882. The Kilgour family also controlled the phone company and was undoubtedly interested in prodding the case along to harass a new rival in the street railway business. Taft ruled in favor of the telephone company and ordered conversion to a double overhead trolley system within six months. The decision was of considerable importance because it set a legal precedent. If it were upheld it could mean the end of the single trolley system and
would constitute a major setback to the spread of electric railways in this country, for the single wire trolley was the cheapest electric distribution system yet devised. Fortunately for the industry the Taft ruling was reversed by the Ohio Supreme Court on June 2, 1891, when it was demonstrated that properly bonded street railway tracks could carry the ground return without interfering with competing electrical systems.  

Despite the twin setbacks of the incline wreck and the telephone lawsuit, Littell pressed on to extend the C.I.P. into the northern suburbs, convinced that expansion was the only hope of saving the C.I.P. as an independent operation. By March of 1889, the County Commissioners had agreed to the C.I.P.’s extension of tracks on Vine Street to Carthage. Work did not begin until the following spring, after the old part of Vine Street had been electrified. By May 1890 rails were distributed along the new line as far as St. Bernard, where a power plant was built at the B&O Railroad crossing of Vine Street. New stock worth $300,000 was issued, and there was talk of continuing the tracks on to Glendale. The formal opening of the Carthage extension as far as St. Bernard was held on December 31, 1890, when at 8:00 p.m. a special train of cars carrying seven hundred guests traveled over the new line into the city. A brass band on the first car added a festive note to the event. The round trip took ninety minutes. A banquet was held in St. Bernard with toasts of success and thanks for the new enterprise. The mayor presented Littell with a handsome floral piece in the shape of a trolley car. In time the extension was built out to Lockland.

A few months after the opening of the Carthage extension, H. H. Littell left Cincinnati to take on the management of the Buffalo trolley system. He maintained control as president of the C.I.P., but after his brother H. M. Littell departed the city in 1893 he called upon H. P. Bradford to manage the company. Bradford, formerly superintendent of the Little Rock, Arkansas, lines, remained in charge until the property was sold five years later.

The new manager was faced with a series of difficulties soon after taking office, the most serious being the legal proceedings begun by the city in 1894. The city claimed that the C.I.P. had no right to operate in the corporate limits under its steam railroad charter and was liable under the various street railway ordinances and car license taxes. Since it was not legally franchised, it was ordered to stop operation immediately. Again the company was saddled with a long, expensive lawsuit. While the suit was working its way through the courts from one appeal to the next, the C.I.P. fell onto the hard times that followed the Panic of 1893. By July 1895 interest payments on its mortgage bonds had to be suspended. A receiver was appointed in October. The city, eagerly pressing its case, started a second suit demanding that the C.I.P. remove its tracks from Liberty Street. Meanwhile, the first case had reached the Ohio Supreme Court, which ruled in favor of the city in December of 1896. The C.I.P. was able to obtain a
The success of the single trolley system, represented by car 75 above, and the failure of the steam dummy, bottom, were overshadowed by the tragedy of October 15, 1889, as sketched by a Cincinnati Enquirer artist.
temporary stay of dispossession from Judge Rufus B. Smith of Cincinnati. The company was given six months to right its affairs. Its fiscal matters were resolved a few weeks later and the receiver was dismissed. Littell talked again of rebuilding the company; more modern electric cars would replace the pioneer Sprague equipment and new extensions would be built. The limit of Judge Smith's temporary order came and went. The C.I.P. continued to operate but the end was approaching and a public sale was in the air.

The Cincinnati Street Railway quietly offered to buy the line in early July 1897. Two plans were offered, one a complex cash and stock transfer, the other a straight cash offer of $350,000; both offers were rejected. The Cincinnati Street Railway was eager to absorb the C.I.P., now the sole independent street railway operation in the city. Another opportunity presented itself when the Fidelity Trust Company of Louisville offered to sell its considerable holding of C.I.P. bonds in the fall of 1897. The bank, anxious to unload the troublesome company, sensed that the natural monopoly inherent in public transit had already been consummated by the Kilgours. The bank asked for a decree of sale, which was granted by the U.S. Supreme Court in late February 1898. The sale was held on April 14.

Charles H. Kilgour bought the property for $278,000, considerably less than the Cincinnati Street Railway's offer of the previous year. That portion of the road from the Zoo to Lockland was turned over to the Mill Creek Valley Street Railway for operation; the city end went to the Cincinnati Street Railway Company. Kilgour was a director with a sizable interest in both corporations, which constituted in reality one company. On June 4 the incline was reported temporarily closed for repairs, but it never reopened. The Mount Auburn and city tracks of the C.I.P. were absorbed into the other routes of the Street Railway.

The northern portion of the line, however, was not so quietly absorbed. The citizens of Lockland were outraged at the take-over. Splitting the system in two parts, they declared, was a ruse by the Street Railway to collect a double fare. The Street Railway was said to be behind the litigation that drove the C.I.P. out of business. In addition to this monstrous conspiracy, the new owners, by calling for a transfer and extra fare at the Zoo, were clearly violating the charters granted by several Mill Creek villages. The people of Lockland, who were skeptical of legal proceedings, decided to handle the matter in their own way. Late one Sunday night in early June a gang of men stole out with picks and crowbars to tear up the tracks. They first visited the mayor of Lockland to ask for his sanction. This he would not do, but he advised them to "make a good job of it" if they meant to break the law. Besides pulling up the tracks at the far end of the line, a great barricade of rails and ties was piled up at Mill Creek Bridge. When the repair crew came out they were met by an angry mob armed with rocks.
and clubs. The local fire department threatened to hose down anyone who attempted to put the rails back. An injunction was served the next day which further infuriated the crowd; those rails not previously disturbed were now torn loose. The battle continued throughout the summer. Carthage repealed the charter granted for the line's construction and ordered the removal of the tracks.

The argument was finally resolved in court. Service was restored and memories of the old Main Street line gradually faded. The line was made part of the regular street railway system, with the transfer at the Zoo eliminated. In more recent times it became the Lockland route 78 and was one of the last Cincinnati streetcar lines to be abandoned. It retained one distinctive feature to the last year of service. All of the city's other trolley lines had the double trolley wire system—very rare in the United States—but the Lockland line from Mitchell Avenue north retained the single wire system which had been so valiantly fought for by the Cincinnati Inclined Plane Railway so many years ago.

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(1) Cincinnati Gazette, June 25, 1872, gives an amusing account of the Mount Auburn omnibus. Other facts on this subject were found in the Gazette, April 29, 1871, and the Scientific American, February 22, 1873, p. 116.
(2) Cincinnati Gazette, October 30, 1872.
(3) Information on J. S. Hill is drawn from a reminiscence written by his son J. S. Hill, Jr. The manuscript is in the collection of The Cincinnati Historical Society.
(4) See various Cincinnati newspapers, January 4, 1888, for obituary notices of Smith.
(6) Cincinnati Gazette, February 19, 1872. The bodies were made in Philadelphia, presumably by J. G. Brill.
(7) Cincinnati Enquirer, May 13, 1872.
(8) The other inclines operated in Cincinnati, and their opening dates, were: Price Hill (1875), Mount Adams (1876), Elm Street (1876), Fairview (1894).
(9) Cincinnati Gazette, May 17, 1873.
(10) Scientific American Supplement, April 20, 1878, p. 1905-06.
(11) Cincinnati Gazette, July 11, 1873.
(12) Ibid., September 24, 1872.
(13) Ibid., May 21, 1873.
(14) Ibid., June 21, 1877.
(15) Ibid., August 8, 1877.
(16) Ibid., August 28, 1877, noted the desire of the Walnut Hills line for a trial of steam dummies.
(17) Ohio Railroad Commission Reports, 1880-1887, is the basis for these and the subsequent figures.
(18) Street Railway Gazette, July 1888, p. 95-6.
(20) Street Railway Review, February 1891, p. 52.
(21) The Mount Adams and Eden Park Inclined Railway opened a short electric line with Daft motors on Oak Street in April 1889 but it was largely an experimental
operation.  
(22) *Street Railway Journal*, February 1889, p. 44.  
(23) Accounts of the October 15, 1889, accident were found in the Cincinnati newspapers on October 16, 17. The coroner's hearing was reported on November 6 of that year.  
(26) *Street Railway Review*, February 1891, p. 38.  
(27) Details of the city suit against the C.I.P. are to be found in Arthur Espy, *Code of Franchises* (Cincinnati, 1914); *Poor's Manual of Railroads*, 1897, 1898; and various Cincinnati newspapers for the inclusive dates.  
(28) The two other sizable independent companies, the Mount Auburn Cable Railroad and the Mount Adams and Eden Park Inclined Plane Railway, were absorbed in 1896.  
(29) *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, June 6, 7, 1898.