

HISTORICAL BUS 8499



In 1959, an order was placed with Flxible for 100 buses. The first 99 were 35' long, numbered 8400-8498, and were propane-powered. The last bus of the order, however, was built as a 40' bus, seating 48, and equipped with a 6V-71 Detroit diesel engine.

Delivered in 1960, 8499 represented a literal cross between two distinct bus designs, combining the body of a standard 40' propane bus of the 8000 and 8200 series along with the just designed Flxible "New Look" front end. Some of the features later to be found on Flxible's "New Look" buses were first tried on this coach.

For a three-year period starting in 1963, 8499 was equipped with a variety of experimental propane engines, none of which proved entirely successful. In 1966, it was re-equipped with a standard 6V-71 Detroit diesel engine; this type of engine is still used in 8499 along with a Spicer 184 transmission. The bus remained in revenue service until 1974, when it was placed in CTA's historical collection.

THE USE OF PROPANE BUSES IN CHICAGO

For a quarter of a century, buses powered with liquid propane gas played a major role in the movement of passengers on CTA's bus system, with 1700 buses ultimately being placed in service.

The decision to use propane at that time was one based primarily on economics. In 1950, when the first buses were delivered, propane was considered a surplus fuel, inexpensively priced in comparison to diesel and gasoline fuels. Additionally, its higher octane rating permitted higher compression ratios resulting in increased engine power. Visible exhaust smoke and objectionable exhaust odors were also completely eliminated.

The first 500 buses, 5000-5499, were built by Twin Coach, measuring 40' long, 8'-6" wide and seating 51 passengers. These buses proved an immediate operating success and orders for additional buses were subsequently placed with ACF-Brill, Mack and Flxible (Twin Coach).

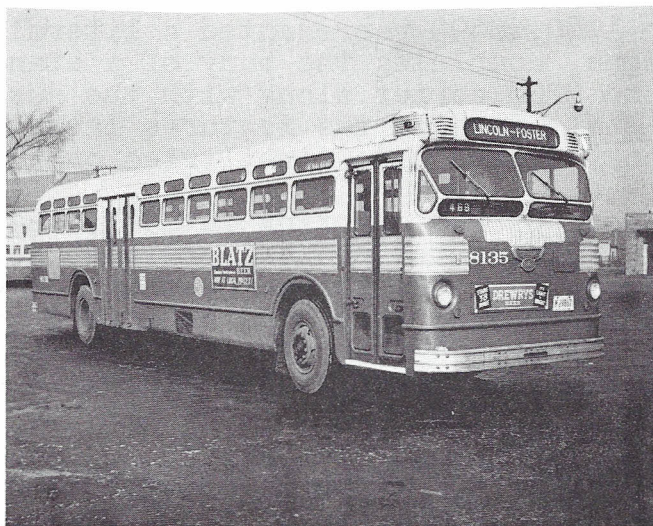
These buses were as follows:

Builder	Series	Year	Seats	Length	Width
ACF-Brill	2700 *	1949	48	39'-4 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	8'-6 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
	2701-50	1951	44	35'	8'
Mack	7200-99	1956-7	49	39'-6"	8'-6"
Flxible (Twin Coach)	5500-5999	1953-5	50	40'	8'-6"
	8000-8149	1956-7	50	40'	8'-6"
	8200-8349	1958-9	50	40'	8'-6"
	8400-8498	1959	44	35'-2"	8'-6"
	8700-8849	1963	50	40'-3"	8'-6"

* Demonstrator coach acquired in 1951

The 8700-8849 series were the last propane buses purchased by CTA, and were the only "New Look" propane units purchased.

By the beginning of the 1970's, the economic advantages of propane buses had disappeared. Propane had surpassed diesel fuel in cost. In addition, the unavailability of replacement parts and new engines made the continued use of propane impractical. By early 1976, all propane buses had been removed from service.



8000-8149 series bus