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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

MAY 23 1988

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railroad Passenger Station
other names/site number Rock Island Railroad Depot

2. Location

street & number 302 South Main not for publication
city, town Clarion vicinity
state IA code 019 county Wright code 197 zip code 50525

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

[Signature] Signature of certifying official 5/16/88 Date
Bureau of Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of Iowa
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. [Signature] Entered in the National Register 6-23-88
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Railroad Passenger Depot

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Romanesque

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation limestone

walls brick

roof wood shingle

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railroad passenger station (1898) in Clarion was situated on the south end of the town's business district, on a two block long lot just west of South Main Street.

The brick building measures 26' by 88.5' and stands 18' at the ridgeline. The water table consists of four courses of ashlar limestone. Limestone lintels underscore the windows, springstones anchor the rounded arches above the windows, and the chimneys are capped and their shoulders are faced with limestone. Three large brick and stone chimneys remain, two of which stand eight feet above the roof, the other four feet. The east chimney appears to be decorative, a split flue bypasses a window placed through it at the first floor. A flat fronted bay (ticket office, 15' 4" wide) with rounded corners features a dormer cap and clerestory window. Fenestration on the depot is symmetrical, with window-door-window patterns (identical 19' 11" x 26' bays) flanking the bay. The roof is a combination hip and gable, with separate roofridges over the main building and baggage room on the west.

On the north side a porch-like arrangement carries a gable roofed dormer beyond a single door. Two single sets of double hung windows flank this entrance.

In plan, the depot is irregular, having the main passenger building on the east end, rectangular on plan (55' x 26') with a projecting bay centered on the south side. A connecting link, housing toilets, ties the freight (19' 7" x 22' 6") room on the west end to the plan. The roofline is brought forward to a point in line with the eavesline of the main building, forming an open porch effect.

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CFN-259-1116

The original roof was slate. Fifty railroad cars of stone were consumed in the building's construction. The original plan was modelled after the interior of the line's Cedar Rapids depot (non-extant) and included: two waiting rooms (17' x 23'), connected by a general waiting room (13' x 17'), the ticket agent's office (16' square), ladies' toilet (11' x 12') and a baggage room on the west end (17' x 20'). The ceiling was twelve feet high throughout. Large fireplaces heated the two waiting rooms. A. H. Connor and Company, of Cedar Rapids, was the contractor for the brick and stone work, and the cost of construction was \$12,000.

When completed, it was locally termed the "best depot on the Burlington line north of Cedar Rapids." The construction of the depot coincided with a general upgrading of the railroad frontage in the town, with the relocation of the stockyards, and the conversion of an earlier depot into a freight depot.

The 1896 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map locates an earlier depot just west of then Maple Street. A line of grain elevators, warehouses and a hog yard were south of the tracks from the future depot site. Four lines of tracks serviced the immediate downtown area.

By 1900 the present depot was of course present with extensive brick platforms around and south of the building, ranging for a full block from east to west. A new freight depot was a block to the east, but area uses remained unchanged. The map indicates the presence of a wood shingle roof, and not slate as planned. A separate frame mens' toilet stood northwest of the depot. 1909 saw fewer grain elevators, no stockyards, but the same number of tracks. The privy and another small frame shed were northeast of the depot. 1921 saw few changes, the same trackage, the freight depot as before, but no elevator remained south of the depot. By 1928 the frame outbuildings were gone, indicating a likely remodeling of the bathroom. By 1941 the freight depot was gone, replaced by an expanding elevator. The same trackage remained.

Today the depot survives relatively unchanged. The brick platform is gone, replaced by grass, the double set of tracks south of the depot remain, a rarity in Iowa these days. The roof has been replaced, the only change being the loss of decorative finials, long gone. The interior plan is intact. Restoration efforts began in 1984, with the goal of restoring the interior to its original appearance. Hardwood woodwork remains as do the two fireplaces. A stained glass window, originally in the east end above the fireplace will be restored to its original position.

The present depot is dominated by a municipal water tower just north of the building. Elevator services (Cargill) continue in the immediate area, in keeping with the historic pattern of land use. The depot will become a local museum.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Transportation

Period of Significance
1898

Significant Dates
1898

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
A. H. Connor, Cedar Rapids, Builder

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railroad (later the Rock Island Railroad) passenger depot is the principal surviving structure associated with the important role played by the railroad in the history of Clarion. During the early decades of the twentieth century, not only did the B.C.R. & N. service Clarion's needs, the Chicago & Great Western Railroad maintained a depot as well as shops employing 145 men (both the shops and the C. & G. W. depot are non-extant). The Burlington depot, when completed in 1898, was noted as being "the best depot on the Burlington line north of Cedar Rapids" which local sentiment concluded to be both "a credit to the company" by doing "the right thing by our people: and "a matter of pride to every resident of this community."

The depot construction, completed December 21, 1898, marked a broader pattern of the improvement of railroad facilities throughout the state. High agricultural prices beginning in the mid-1890's brought about a prosperity that was soon reflected in Main Street construction and railroad improvements. The Chicago and Great Western followed suit in 1904, building a two story frame depot. A new freight station followed the construction of the subject depot, being added a block east, by 1900.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet 9.2+

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	5	4	3	9	9	8	0	4	7	3	0	8	7	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

Zone				Easting				Northing						

(Clarion Quadrangle)

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description Part of T-91N, R-24W, Section 6 (N.W.¼). The precise verbal boundary is a rectangle measuring 140' east and west, and sixty-six feet north and south, centered on the subject building. This rectangle allows for a twenty foot extension in each direction.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nomination includes only the depot, excluding adjacent trackage, water tower and any other buildings or structures.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By Written and researched by Ms. Verlene McOllough

name/title James E. Jacobsen, Chief
organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date May 14, 1988
street & number 600 E. Grand Ave. telephone 515-281-4358
city or town Des Moines state IA zip code 50309

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The Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railway (later acquired by The Rock Island Railroad) passenger depot was built in 1898 by A. H. Connor & Company, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. It is the principal surviving structure in Wright County associated with the important role played by the railroad in the history of Clarion, Iowa.

In 1868 settlers were coming into Clarion but Clarion did not even have a store. In 1886 the Mason City and Fort Dodge Railroad was built through Clarion. In 1890 when the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railway line was built through the village, Clarion began to prosper, causing steady growth. This fact is documented in The History of Wright County by Thorson (note bibliography pg. 59).

An indication of the impact of the coming of railroads on Clarion in the 1880's was the gradual upsurge in the population of the county seat. At the same time these railroads encouraged the settlement of more farmers throughout the county and subsequently increased the retail sales of merchants and shopkeepers in towns. In 1870 the U.S. Census listed 37 living in the village of Grant (later renamed Clarion). In 1880, 147 lived in Clarion. In 1900, 1,475 lived in Clarion and in 1910, 2,065 was the official population.

The one event which gave a tremendous boost to Clarion's retail life was the arrival of the Burlington, Cedar Rapids (BCR) and Northern (N) Railroad tracks in the town in 1880. This happening brought manufacturing enterprises in the town between 1883 and 1900. There was sharp contrast to the retail business that prevailed in the town in 1876, on the eve of the Spanish-American War. After this period the Railroads brought relatively brisk business interest.

Passengers were dispersed to and from several daily trains. At one time, 14 mail and passenger trains arrived and left Clarion depots daily. All of these aforementioned facts were destined to affect the economic structure and population growth of Clarion, Belmond, and Eagle Grove and adjoining farmland tremendously when the time came.

The second major stem of the BCR and N Railway was the branch line that it constructed between 1884 and 1900 north to connect with the Cedar Rapids-Clarion-Emmetsburg-Sibley-Watertown main branch line at Estherville.

Clarion became a division point for Chicago Great Western (CGW) Railroad furnishing employment for 145 men. The CGW depot was bulldozed in the 1970's as were all other depots in the county except the Dows depot which is smaller than the Clarion Depot and has been purchased by a real estate company.

During the early decades of the twentieth century, not only did the BCR and N Railroad service Clarion's needs, (fruits, vegetables and retail supplies all came into Clarion by train. Produce and livestock were herded into town by farmers or foot and loaded in box cars and farmers rode along with them into Chicago markets.

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The people who had contracted to build the railroad had guaranteed to have it running into Clarion by January 1, 1881. But they did not reckon on such bad weather and it looked like their promises were destined to fail. The 1st of January was drawing near and the road building contract could not be extended. The builders had promised that the road would enter Clarion before end of 1880. To make it worse, a freezing rain fell. This created a sheet of ice over the entire surface of the land. The freezing rain, proved a blessing. Falling on the deep snow, it formed a crust several inches thick. The men laid the railroad ties directly on the ice and snow, then secured the steel rails to them, just as they would have done on a finished roadbed. On December 15, 1880 the railroad went into Clarion. The news went out "The train is coming." Then something unique happened even for pioneer days. The rich, poor, the fleet, the lame went rushing out of their homes, down the street to see that first train come into Clarion. They climbed on the engine, some in the cab, cowcatcher, caboose all along the route and rode in town in style. The next day a feast was held at the courthouse square with railroad dignitaries and 500 people. Farmers furnished the turkeys, chickens and bread.

The Burlington Depot, when completed in 1898 was noted as being "the best depot on the Burlington line north of Cedar Rapids which local sentiment concluded to be both a "credit to the company" by doing "the right thing by our people" and " a matter of pride to every resident of this community." (Wright Co. Monitor September 7, October 12, 1898.)

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Bibliography

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- Wright County Monitor, June 22, 1892. News item titled "Be On Hand."
- July 13, 1892. News item titled "Hand in Names."
- August 17, 1892. News item titled "Coming."
- September 7, 1892. News item titled "DIED."
- September 21, 1892. News item titled "ARRIVED Delegation of children."
- September 21, 1892. News item concerning R. R. Duffy adopting child.
- September 1898. News item titled "A New Depot."
- October 14, 1898. News item titled "New B.C.R. & N Depot."
- December 21, 1898. Picture and Caption concerning new B.C.R. & N. Depot.

Depot Committee--Clarion, Iowa 50525