

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

 NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
 INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

 NHL  
 FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

 SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
 TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS
**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Philadelphia and Reading Railroad: Terminal Station and Trainshed

AND/OR COMMON

 Reading Terminal
**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

1115-1141 Market Street

--NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Philadelphia

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Pennsylvania

VICINITY OF

CODE

42

COUNTY

Philadelphia

CODE

101

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Philadelphia and Reading Terminal Railroad Company

STREET &amp; NUMBER

12th and Market Streets

CITY, TOWN

Philadelphia

VICINITY OF

STATE

Pennsylvania

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

City Hall, Department of Records

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Broad and Market Streets

CITY, TOWN

Philadelphia

STATE

Pennsylvania

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Philadelphia Historical Commission Files

DATE

1970

 FEDERAL     STATE     COUNTY     LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

City Hall, Philadelphia Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Philadelphia

STATE

Pennsylvania

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Reading Terminal is typical in layout of the "stub end" type of railroad terminal. It consists of two major building elements--a head house, containing passenger facilities and offices, and a train shed. The two sections of the building are joined by a concourse. The tracks approach the terminal on a system of viaducts, entering the shed at the second floor level.

The head house is eight stories in height over a high basement. It is 267 feet wide and 100 feet deep. The two stree facades are of pink brick ornamented with belt courses, window enframements, frieze and panels of richly molded cream-colored terra cotta. The first story and basement originally were faced with pink granite but have been covered with brown ceramic panels. The copper cornice and roof balustrade which originally crowned the building have been replaced with a plain brick parapet. The front corners and the central portion of the facade above the second floor level are deeply recessed. At the third story level, an elaborately ornamented oriel window fills the corner recess, and at the second story level, there was originally a high open arcade, also richly ornamented, which opened from the main waiting room. This has been replaced with enclosed office space, designed sympathetically with the original architectural treatment buck lacking its ornamentation.

The basement was originally occupied by market stalls. The first story contained railroad offices, as well as the passenger ticket office, lower waiting room and baggage rooms. The second floor was the primary passenger space, containg the main waiting room, ladies' waiting room, restaurant and toilet facilities, as well as the entrance to the tracks. The upper floors were, and are, occupied by the main offices of the Reading Company. In recent years, as the Reading's passenger business has turned entirely to commuter service, the lower portion of the station has been adapted to the new purpose. The offices have been removed and the stores raised to the first floor. The old ticket office and lower waiting room have been replaced by stairways and escalators to the train level and the baggage handling function has been eliminated. The second floor waiting room has been modernized and much of the restaurant and ladies' room space has given way to shops.

Behind the head house, over the baggage rooms, is a one-story, 50-foot-wide concourse connecting the waiting room with the train shed. This is basically unaltered but has lost its skylighted ceiling.

The train shed, to the north of the head house, covers the 13 tracks and 8 platforms of the terminal. Its structure is a series of wrought iron three-hinged arches spanning a width of 259 feet 8 inches and reaching a height of 88 feet. The shed is 559 feet long. The roof is of wood, originally broken by five longitudinal glazed ventilators, the combined width of the glass areas being 126 feet. The ventilators remain only in part and the roof has been resurfaced with composition roofing. Although the shed has lost its crystalline effect, the great supporting structure remains intact.

Below the shed and tracks is a large market hall occupied by numerous individual booths and stands. Although the stalls have seen frequent alteration, the market as a whole retains all of its original character.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
X1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
1900	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1891-1893

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Wilson Brothers

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Reading trainshed, attached to the rear of the station on Market Street at 12th, marks the apogee of the single-span, hinged-arch balloon shed in the United States. Together with the similar shed of the Pennsylvania Railroad's Third Broad Street Station (1892-1893), the Reading structure marked the triumph of the engineering skills of Joseph M. Wilson, its engineer. Wilson had sought to introduce the type in this country as early as 1867 in his proposal for the Pennsylvania's Pittsburgh Station. He submitted two more plans in 1872 for stations at Washington and Jersey City, but neither was built. His persistence finally bore fruit, however, and the Pennsylvania adopted the form for its second Jersey City Terminal (1887-92), built, however, not by Wilson, but by C. C. Schneider. Wilson got the chance to demonstrate his own virtuosity when he received the commission from the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad. The result was a structure that reflected the exuberance of railroad engineering at a time when the railroads were our most innovative technological sector. The Reading trainshed spans 259 feet 8 inches, making it the largest single-span, arched-roof train shed in the world. It was second in span width only to Wilson's other masterwork, the Third Broad Street Station, which reached 300 feet 8 inches and which was destroyed by fire in 1923.

As a monument in the history of engineering, Reading Terminal is of major importance. It is one of the grand products of a period in which railroads vied with one another in the production of impressive passenger terminals and it is significant that the impressiveness was gained not through the elaboration of architectural detail or richness of materials that characterized the great stations of the 20th century, but through the creation of an astonishing engineering feat in bold iron, the material of which the railroad itself was created. As such, it foreshadowed the development of the new aesthetic principles which were slowly evolving at the turn of the century: the rediscovery of simplicity, the emphasis of volume rather than mass, and the concept of open space as an architectural material. All three were derived from a desire to make form adhere more closely to the characteristics of the building material, in this case, iron. Wilson himself expressed his desire in a paper on the Reading Terminal. "Now it has come to be recognized," he said, "that this is the proper form of roof for a large railway station, reducing to a minimum the destructive action to the iron or steel construction from the sulphurous vapors emitted by the locomotives, and adding essentially to the comfort and satisfaction of travelers by increased ventilation and improved aesthetic effect. In designing such a roof, it is an object to mass the material together as much as possible, avoiding a great number of small pieces and leaving wide open spaces; also to provide ample light and ventilation.

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The Reading Terminal is a symbolic reminder, then, of the critical role played by the railroads, their engineers and their architects in the development of architectural modernism. In spite of its neglected condition, it still demonstrates why the early advocates of that creed had so much faith in the idea that a functional building could also be beautiful.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Wilson, Joseph M., "The Philadelphia and Reading Terminal Railroad and Station in Philadelphia", in American Society of Civil Engineers Transactions, vol XXXIV, pp. 115-184, August 1895.

Meeks, Carroll L. V., The Railroad Station, New Haven, 1956.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 4.1

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 8	4 8 6 3, 8 1 0	4 4 2, 2 3, 0 1 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Dennis M. Zembala, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Historic American Engineering Record

DATE

July 30, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

National Park Service

TELEPHONE

523-5460

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

DC

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL \_\_\_\_\_

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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Wilson, William B., History of the Pennsylvania Railroad, Vol. I, Phila., 1899.

Berg, Walter, Buildings and Structures of American Railroads, New York, 1893.

Morrison, Craig, National Register Nomination, April 21, 1972.

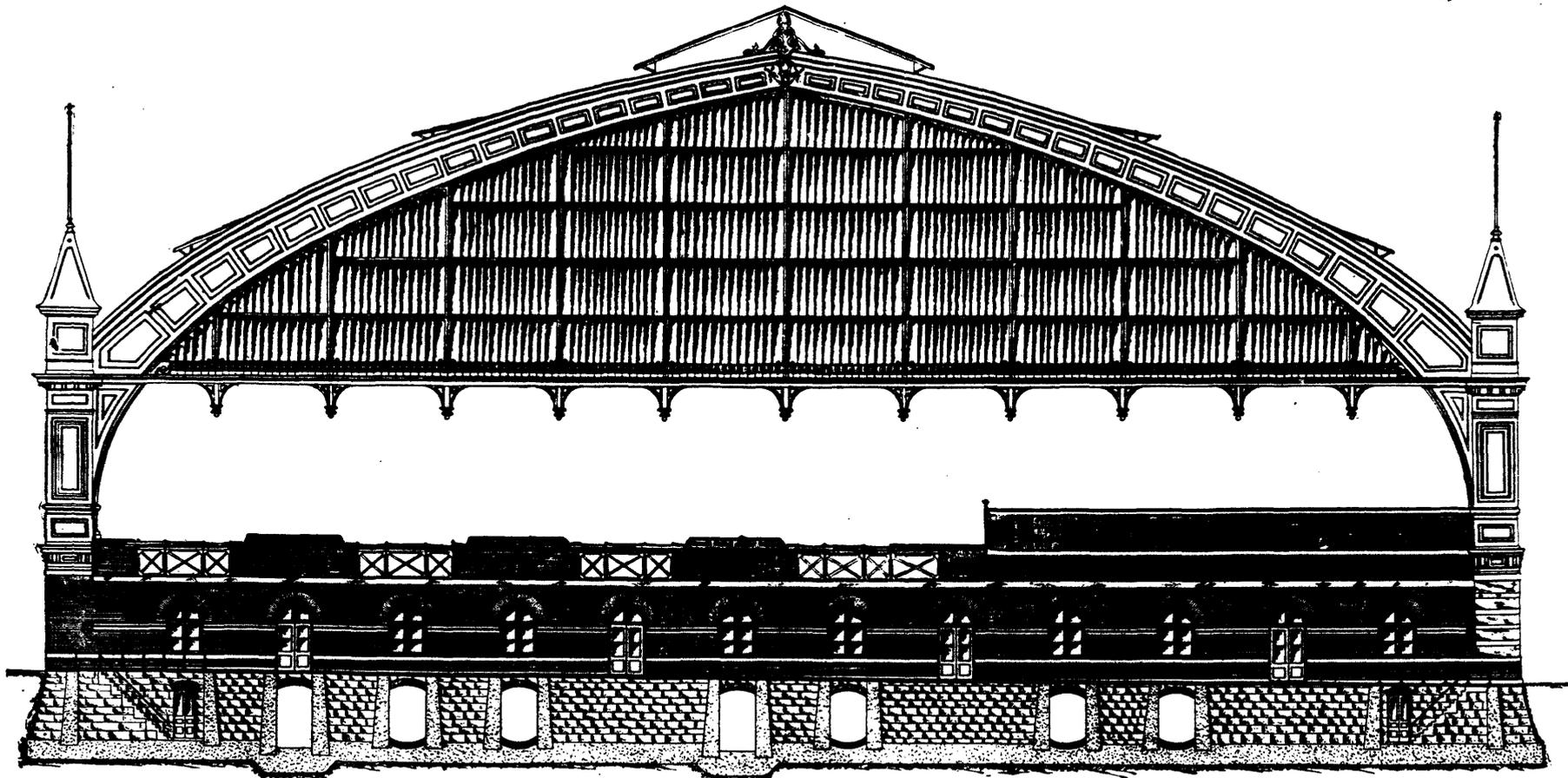


FIG. 687.—END ELEVATION OF TRAIN-SHED.

Reading Terminal, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
1115-1141 Market Street

Photo: Walter G. Berg  
c. 1892

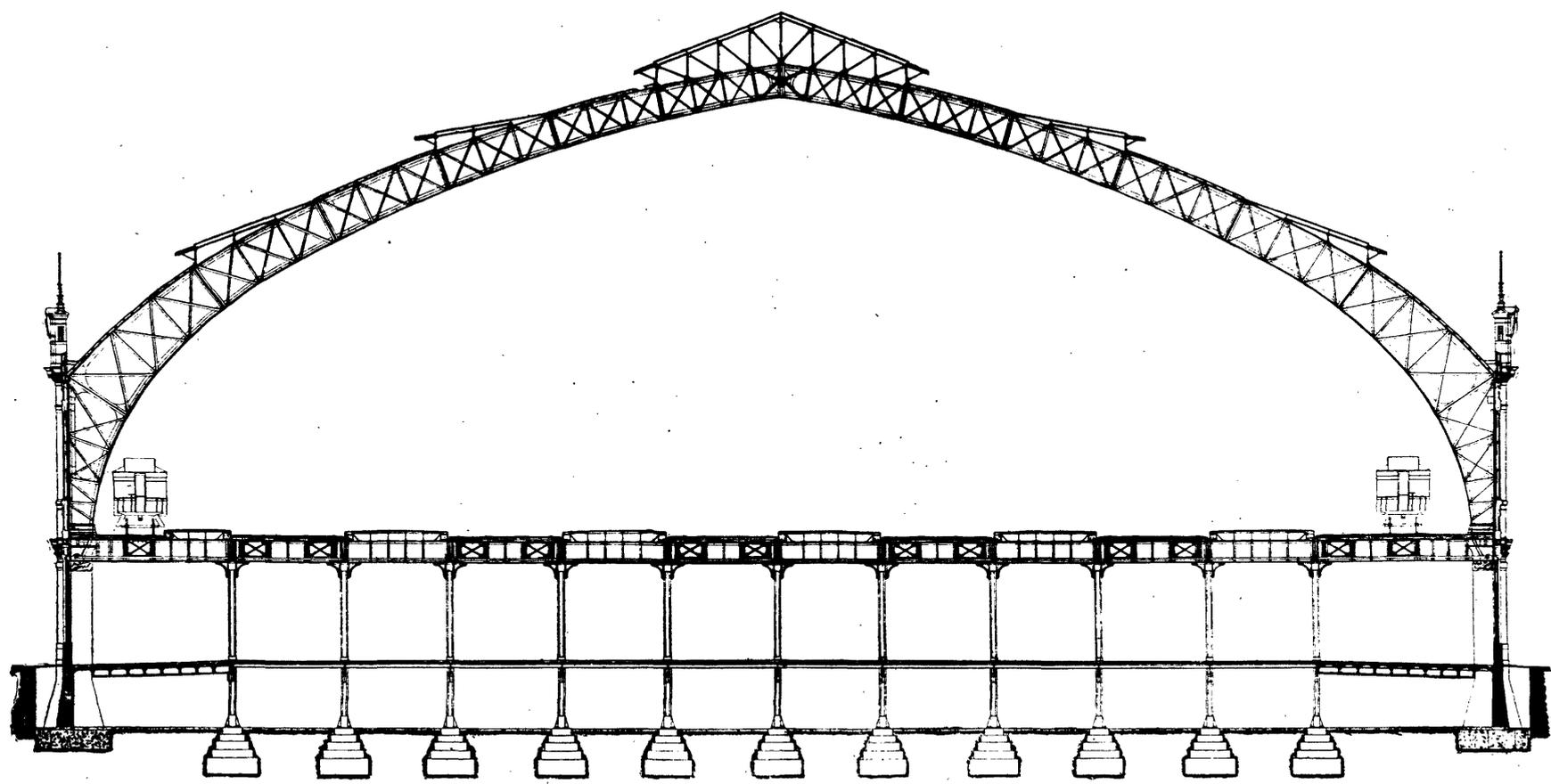
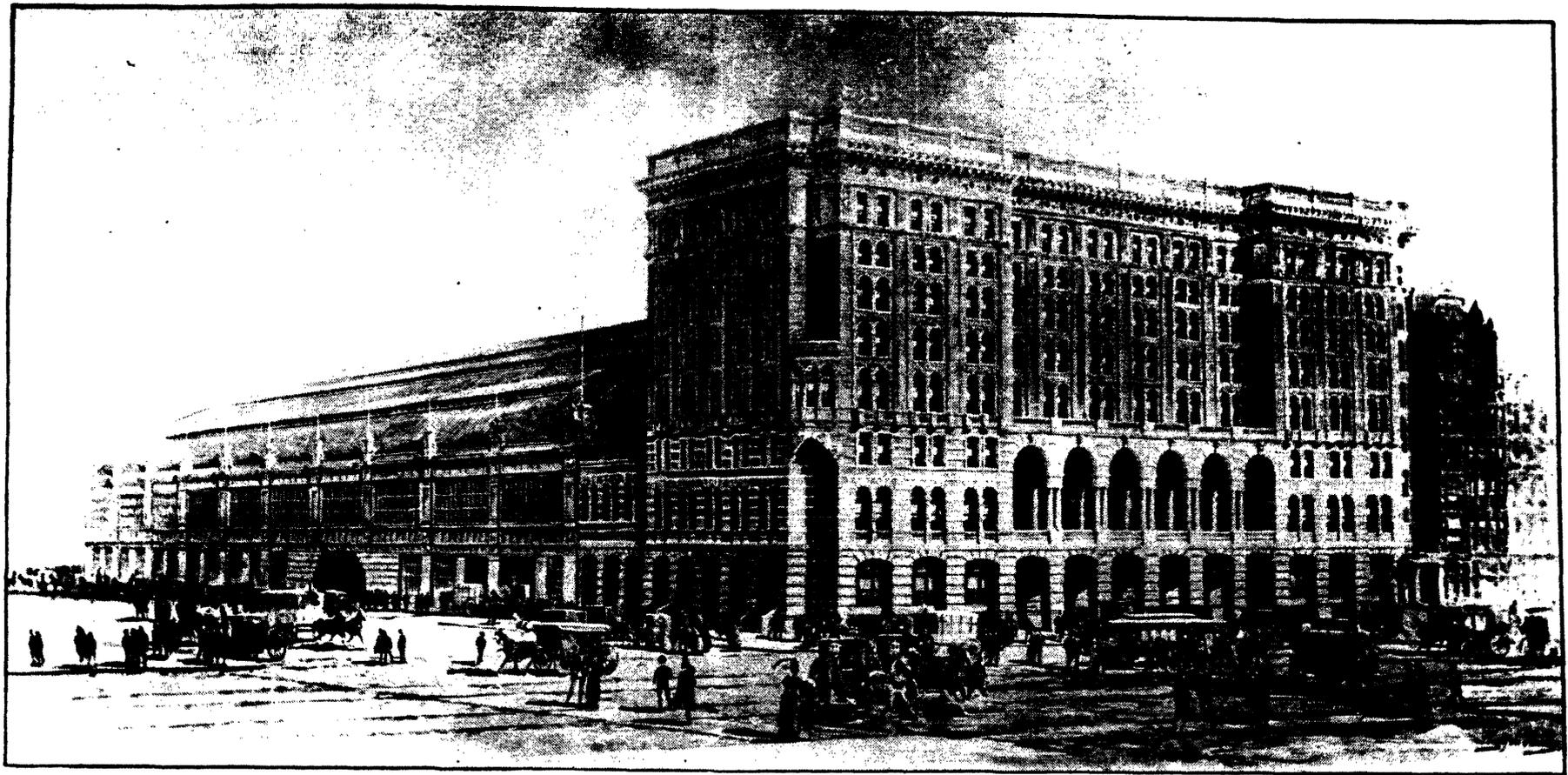


FIG. 688.—CROSS-SECTION OF TRAIN-SHED.

Reading Terminal, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
1115-1141 Market Street

Photo: Walter G. Berg  
1893



TERMINAL STATION OF THE PHILADELPHIA AND READING RAILROAD, at Twelfth and Market Streets.

Reading Terminal, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Twelfth and Market Streets

1937