Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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DATE ENTERED

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC: Louisville & Nashville Railroad: Montgomery Union Station & Trainshed

AND/OR COMMON: Montgomery Union Station

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: NW side of Water Street, opposite Lee Street — NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN: Montgomery — VICINITY OF — CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Alabama	01	Montgomery	001

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	X PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
__BUILDING(S)	__PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	X COMMERCIAL	__PARK
X STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	X IN PROCESS	__YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	X YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	X TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME: City of Montgomery

STREET & NUMBER: North Perry Street

CITY, TOWN: Montgomery — VICINITY OF — STATE: Alabama

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Montgomery County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER: Washington Avenue

CITY, TOWN: Montgomery — STATE: Alabama

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE: L&N Railroad: Montgomery Union Station & Trainshed Emergency Recording Project

DATE: August, 1974 — X FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Historic American Engineering Record Collection, Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN: Washington, D. C. 20540 — STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
__GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
X FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

"The Union Station is an impressive Romanesque building located on the river front in a district of excellent late 19th century commercial buildings. Constructed of masonry, brick and wood, the building utilized the best available materials and is highly ornate. It consists of a central block three stories in height with a high pitched hipped roof from which projects a gable with two round headed windows. Wings on either side of this block are two stories in height, each with two projecting gable dormers.

The central block, with some modifications, is repeated at either end of the wings. These five sections make up the main structure. Two separate but connecting buildings located on either side of the main structure house the Mail and Express Building and the Baggage Room Building. A porte cochere projects from the front entrance, located in the middle of the central block. The opening for the entrance is formed by a Roman arch, a motif which is repeated throughout the building. This arch is subdivided into a rectangle which contains two double doors. The arched segment above the doors is filled with stained glass, and the wall around the arch is covered with terra cotta work. An identical entrance is located opposite this one and leads out onto the tracks. The waiting room in the central block is two stories in height and has a balcony supported by brackets which encircles the room at the second floor level. This balcony is of elaborately carved oak and opens into offices at either end. The floor is of inlaid mosaic tile and many windows are filled with stained glass."*

The trainshed sits behind the station building and provides shelter to passengers as they get on and off the trains. It covers an area measuring 600 feet by 94 feet 6 inches and is connected to the station by a sloped-roof portico. The roof of the shed is supported by 25 tricomposite Pratt trusses of timber, wrought iron and cast iron with cambered bottom chords. Its main span measures 77 feet 6 inches center to center on the columns, with an overhang on the north side of 13 feet 6 inches and on the station side of 3 feet 6 inches. The top chord of the truss is composed of 9x12 inch timbers except for the horizontal center beam which is a Phoenix column 8-5/8 inches in diameter and 20 feet long. The cambered bottom chord is composed of heavy eyebars joined at pinned connections. Two compression members, both wrought iron I-beams, join the bottom chord at the lateral pinned connection. The principal columns are built up from channels and iron plates riveted together. The only cast iron used is in the connecting shoes and couplings.

The roof is supported on longitudinal 8x18 inch purlins and 2x8 inch rafters (24 inches on center) covered with 1-1/4 inch sheathing. The roofing which is now of sheet metal and asphaltic paper was originally of metal covered with slate. A central monitor, 20 feet wide, runs the length of the ridge. Originally, it had a glass roof to admit light and lowered sides for ventilation. Both have been sealed up since the disappearance of the steam locomotive.

*Source: National Register Nomination, completed by W. Warner Floyd, 7/9/73.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION	
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE	
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE	
__1600-1699	X ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
__1700-1799	__ART	X ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER	
X 1800-1899	X COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	X TRANSPORTATION	
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		__INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1897-1898 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

"Montgomery's Union Station, one of the largest and most elaborate railway stations still standing in the State, is an excellent example of late 19th century commercial architecture. Situated on the Alabama River, not far from the city wharf, it served as the focal point of transportation into the city until the advent of commercial air travel. Its size, the ambitiousness of the design and the opulence of its materials make it a monument to the importance of rail transportation in the early 20th century.

Prior to its construction in 1898, the city had been served by a small two-story frame structure built in 1860. By 1894, forty-four passenger trains were serving the city daily and the present station was planned and constructed to accommodate the heavy load. The station, which cost $200,000, was designed for the Louisville and Nashville Railroad by Benjamine Bosworth Smith, a local architect.

With the decline of passenger service during the past few decades, the station has fallen into relative disuse and tentative plans by the Landmarks Foundation of Montgomery and other city groups call for its restoration as part of a convention center complex. The Montgomery County Commission has designated Union Station and Lower Commerce Street as historic districts."*

The trainshed is one of the most important aspects of the complex. Although constructed in 1897-1898, its character and structure are of an earlier type. The gable form of the Montgomery shed is a rare example of the type of structure built by the railroads in the 1870s as the desire to improve the comfort of passengers became a matter of engineering pride. Gable-roofed sheds gave way to arched balloon sheds in the 1890s as railroads vied for the position of having the longest span trainshed.

In the case of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, however, a variety of factors combined to produce a number of trainsheds whose structure made them, in Carl Condit's words, a "comprehensive museum of nineteenth century building technology." While the L&N never experienced the volume of passenger traffic that large northern railroads did, the officers felt compelled to upgrade their station facilities as a matter of pride. Most of the larger stations along the L&N's mainlines, including those in Louisville, Nashville, Birmingham, Montgomery, and New Orleans, were replaced by architecturally distinguished stations with equally impressive trainsheds during the last quarter of the 19th century to improve the railroad's corporate image and thus increase public patronage. The first such complex, at Louisville (1888-91) set the style for the rest, including the one at Montgomery. The Louisville trainshed was reportedly built with

*Source: National Register Nomination, completed by W. Warner Floyd, 7/9/73.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Interview with Dan Powers, President of the Cradle of the Confederacy Railroad Museum, Montgomery, Alabama.

"New Passenger and Freight Station at Montgomery, Alabama, L&N R.R.", Engineering News, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 8, 1897.

Pocket Map of the City of Montgomery, State Abstract Co., Oct. 23, 1899.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3 acres

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A			
B			
C			
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

UTM Coordinates: 16.564480.3582620

EG CRGIS 12/3/96

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/Eric DeLony, Principal Architect

ORGANIZATION — DATE

Historic American Engineering Record — August 2, 1976

STREET & NUMBER — TELEPHONE

National Park Service — 523-5460

CITY OR TOWN — STATE

Washington, D. C. 20240

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ 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

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at least some salvage parts from the iron bridges, which were then being replaced by steel structures. Whether this was the case at Montgomery is uncertain. It can be said, however, that the design of the members of the Montgomery trainshed trusses is certainly typical of iron bridge construction from 1868 to 1885. The Phoenix column, for example, patented in 1862 by Samuel Reeves, was a significant advance over the cast iron column and contributed to the feasibility of long-span bridges. The large metal eyebars used as tension members were also characteristic of iron bridge construction. These were subsequently replaced by riveted box and plate girders and are now exceedingly rare.

The structure of the Montgomery trainshed reveals the important role played by railroad engineers in the evolution of modern building techniques. Both in bridge construction and shelter structures, the railroads evolved a grammar of metal-framed construction which led directly to modern building practices. The Montgomery trainsheds illustrates the degree to which bridge techniques were adaptable to building construction and stands as a direct link in that evolution.

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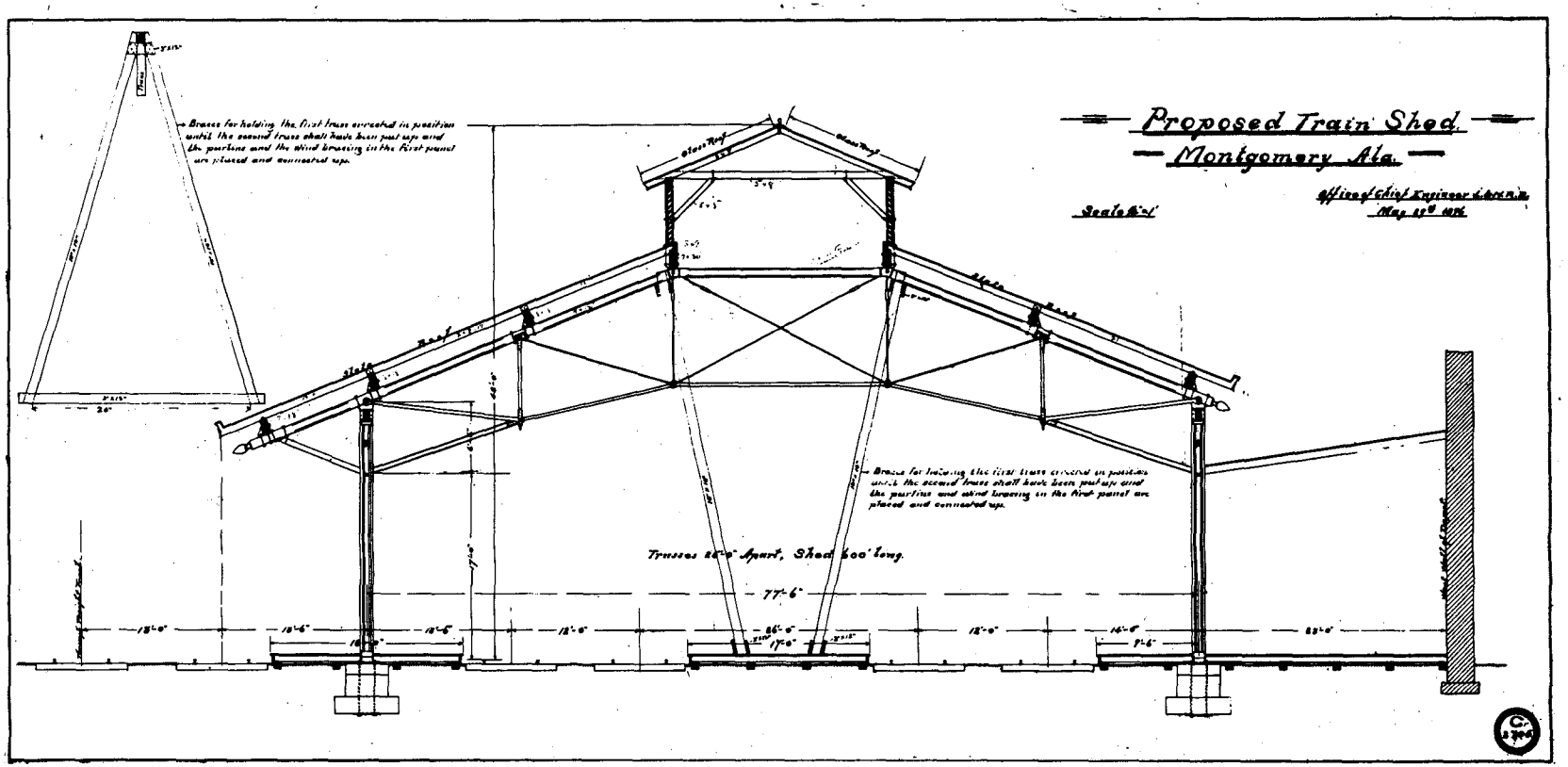
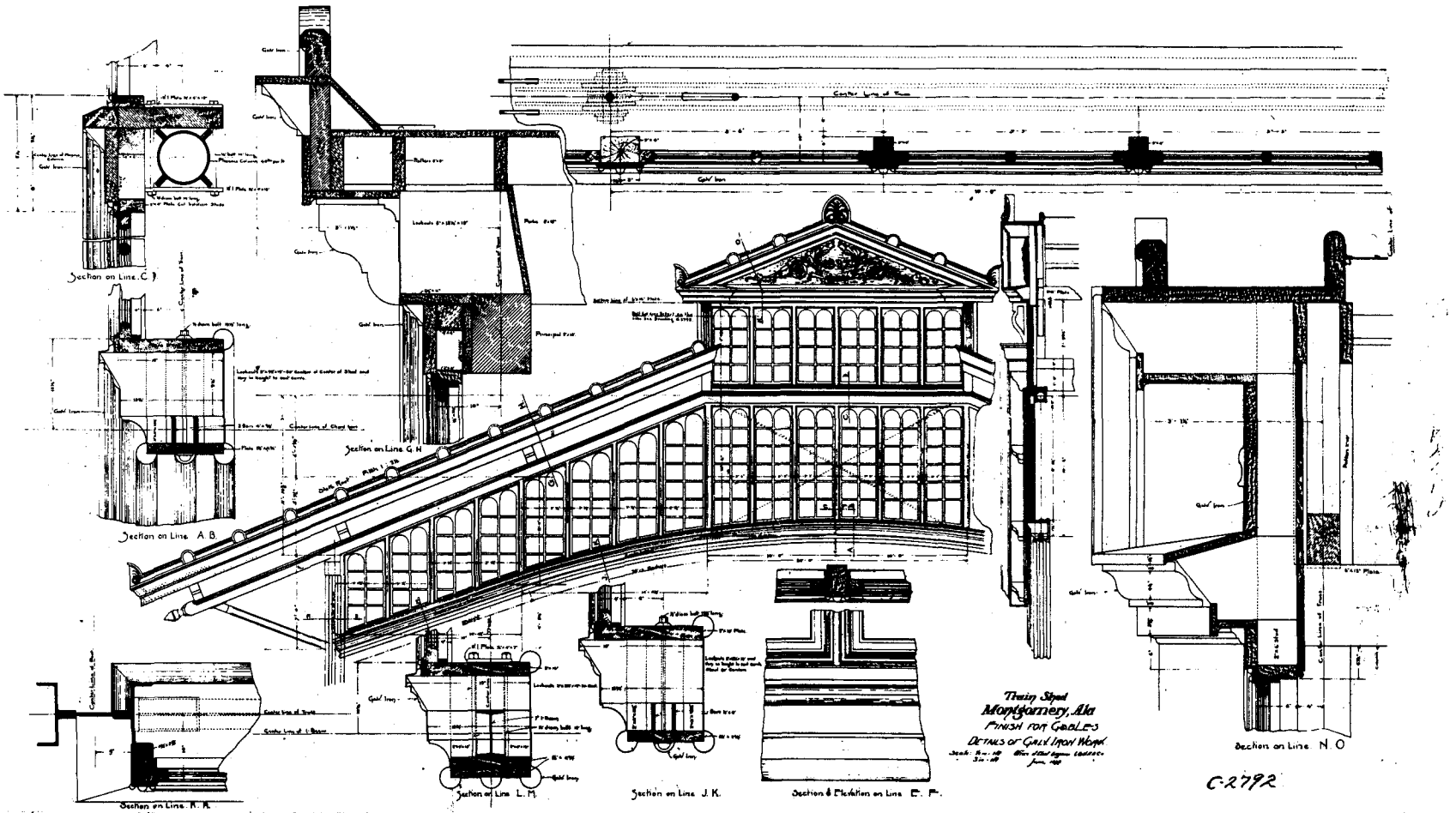
Condit, Carl, "Trainsheds Preserved in Stations of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad," Railroad History, No. 127 (Oct. 1972) pp. 5-21.

Floyd, W. Warner, National Register Nomination, July 9, 1973.



Montgomery Union Station, Montgomery, Alabama
NW side of Water Street, opposite Lee Street

1974



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NW side of Water Street, opposite Lee Street

Photo: Jack Boucher
1974