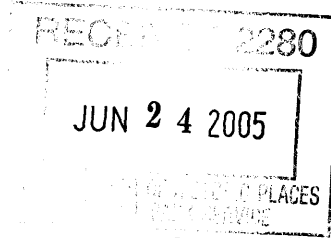


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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Canadian National Railways Depot  
other names/site number Baudette Depot

2. Location

street & number 420 North Main Avenue N/A  not for publication  
city or town Baudette N/A  vicinity  
state Minnesota code MN county Lake of the Woods code 077 zip code 56623

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Britta L. Bloomberg 6/21/05  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Britta L. Bloomberg, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Minnesota Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 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): \_\_\_\_\_

Edson Beall / 8/9/05  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s), district, site, structure, object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing and 4 rows: buildings, sites, structure, objects, Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: custom house
TRANSPORTATION: rail-related/ train depot

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS
VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century Movements:
Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls BRICK
roof ASPHALT
other WOOD

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

**Period of Significance**

1923- 1955

**Significant Dates**

1923

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Schofield, John (architect- attributed)

Bergford, F.N. (builder)

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property .092 acres

Baudette, Minn. -Ont., 1968

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

UTM grid with 4 rows and 3 columns (Zone, Easting, Northing). Row 1 contains values: Zone 15, Easting 382350, Northing 5396910.

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

Form with fields for name/title (Carmen Tschofen), organization, street and number (2667 Parkview Boulevard), city or town (Robbinsdale), state (MN), date (3/15/05), telephone (763-522-5709), zip code (55422).

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

Form with fields for name, street & number, city or town, state, telephone, zip code.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

United States Department of the Interior  
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Canadian National Railways Depot

Name of property

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**Description**

The Canadian National Railways Depot, built in 1923, sits at the foot of Baudette's Main Street. The building of cream-colored brick and limestone is characterized by its primary hipped roof, large ornamental roof brackets that support overhanging eaves along the track-side façade, and a cross-gable central second story with a hipped roof and pediments.

**Setting**

The Canadian National Railways Depot is located at the northern terminus of Baudette's Main Street. The Main Street asphalt ends approximately twenty feet away from the southern façade, and observations suggest that this area is frequently used for the loading and unloading of building materials associated with a neighboring lumber yard. The lumber yard and its retail store are located a quarter block off the southwest corner of the building, with storage of lumber extending toward the depot; a long storage shed for the lumber yard is located off the southeastern corner across a gravel drive.

The gravel drive sweeps to the east at an angle to the south side of the building, serving as an access road to several grain elevators located to the east that were once served by the railroad. One of these is a traditional "country style" elevator<sup>1</sup> constructed of wood, and two others are constructed of or covered with other materials but retain the traditional gable-roofed form. The Rainy River railroad bridge, which provides access to Canada, is visible to the east from the station's platform.

A tended grassy "lawn" is at the western end of the building. A pole-mounted sign with the words "CN Baudette" is located in this area near the tracks. A chain link fence closes off the western end of the "lawn" and continues on an east-west line along the tracks and across the outer quarter of the station platform, terminating several yards beyond the station's eastern end.

**North Façade**

The depot is rectangular, with its 104-foot length parallel to the tracks. It is 28.5 feet in width. The northern side of the depot faces the station's limestone platform and the Canadian National double tracks. This is the most decorative side of the building and it reflects all of the depot's multiple functions.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Wollenberg Grain and Seed Elevator – significance." *Buffalo as an Architectural Museum*. <http://ah.bfn.org/a/goodyear/133/sig/> Excerpt from 2003 National Register nomination.

<sup>2</sup> No original blueprints for the Baudette depot were located during research for this nomination. Dimensions were taken from "Baudette Yard Plan. Plan No. 40-7-B." (Port Arthur, Ontario: Canadian National Railways, Western Region, 1937. Amended 1941.) Correspondence on file at the Lake of the Woods County Historical Society indicated that in 1986, the Canadian National Railways Archives did not have plans for the building in their files. Inquiries in 2004 at the National Archives of Canada in Ottawa, where relevant portions of the Canadian National Railways archival materials are now housed,

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Canadian National Railways Depot

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The visually predominant second story is comprised of a central cross gable with a hipped roof. A wooden facing covers the roof's extended rafters ends. The north-facing gable's central, triangular brick pediment with returns is outlined in limestone, with a polygonal limestone keystone at the peak. The brickwork throughout the building is common bond. A diamond-shaped limestone inset provides a modest focal point at the center of the pediment. Three window openings are spaced evenly across the gable facade, with the eastern and western openings shaded by deep eaves. The window openings are supported by flat brick relieving arches and have simple limestone sills. A brick chimney with extensive flashing at the base penetrates the roof in the northeastern portion of this story.

Below the cross-gabled central story, the slope of the primary hipped roof extends to create a continuous deep eave sheltering the station's platform. Ends of the extended rafters are covered with a continuous wooden facing. Sharply angled roof returns wrap around the first quarter of the east and west facades. Eleven massive wooden knee braces support the overhang along the northern facade, with one additional brace each on the west and east sides of the building, supporting each roof return. The two additional braces at the building's northeast and northwest corners are mounted diagonally, aligned to meet the roof corner. A diagonal beam extends from the right angle of each brace to intersect the outer, curved portion of the brace and terminates in a decorative pendant. Large metal straps reinforce the right angle join. The braces sit on limestone supports that project from the exterior wall.

The odd number of braces on the northern facade is a consequence of the uneven spacing required to accommodate the many door and window openings along this trackside facade. Openings throughout the building have plywood infill. All single doorways have a low limestone threshold.

A large window opening on the eastern end provides light to the portion of the building devoted to customs activities. Moving west along the facade, two adjacent doors provide an exit and entry (respectively) for an immigration office, with a window just to the west providing light to this corner of the internally divided first floor of the depot building. Another larger window opening and single door provide light and access to the women's waiting room. Except for the large customs window, all windows terminate at the level of the water table and are without sills.

A three-sided bay projects from the center of this facade, with windows in each angle to the bay providing views to the east, west and north for workers in the depot office. Large metal washers embedded on the bricks to the east of the middle window mark locations where semaphore levers

indicated that no such plans have been electronically catalogued, nor were any found in Minnesota in local or state government files and archives. Depot functions and spaces were identified by former depot agent John Boretski during a building field survey and interview on October 22, 2004, and confirmed through primary and secondary source materials.

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Canadian National Railways Depot

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extended from the office to the exterior. The door west of the bay provides direct access to the office. Windows to the left and right of a further single door mark the general waiting area. An eight-foot wide opening with a metal threshold and metal plates protecting the lower edges of the opening's brickwork provides access to the freight storage and sorting portion of the building.

A limestone water table with a sloped top edge extends approximately four feet up the lower portion of all building facades.

Other details are also found on this façade. On the western third of this northern side, numerous bricks at approximately the five-foot height have been inscribed, possibly in pencil, by passengers. Names, hometowns, time of arrival, and dates ranging from the late 1920s through the late 1950s are included in the inscriptions.

On the platform just north of the central bay wall, a square metal cover protects a coal chute. Metal flanges attached to the braces on the eastern end of this façade were identified as brackets that held exterior lights.

**Eastern and western façades**

The eastern side of the building is accessible from a gravel roadway a few feet from this end of the building. In addition to the roof return from the northern façade, the sloping gable end of the hipped roof is visible here. A single doorway with a transom is centered on this facade. The doorway threshold is close to ground level with some deterioration of the limestone in this location. A single window to the south and a double window opening to the north are the only other openings on this side. The door and windows are supported with flat brick relieving arches. Centered above the door and immediately above the relieving arch is a large black rectangle painted directly on the brick, with painted white uppercase letters identifying the station as BAUDETTE.

The western end of the building has three square window openings with flat relieving arches and simple limestone sills. A painted sign that identifies the station as "Baudette" is the same as that on the eastern side. A large crack in the brickwork stretches from the northern end of the central windowsill through the limestone water table to ground level. A similar crack bisects the water table only a few feet to the south.

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**Southern façade**

This townside façade is distinguished by the same central cross gable with three window openings and triangular pediment that are found on the north façade. The shallower eave of the main story hipped roof is without brackets, and this lower roof shelters the eastern and western third of the building, but does not extend across the central third of the building. The first story of this side also has several functional door and window openings with flat brick relieving arches and simple limestone sills. Window openings set at the top of the water table are without sills.

The westernmost opening accesses the freight room; the next window-door-window grouping mirrors the waiting room openings on the north side, with a cement slab serving as a threshold step on this side. A wider, horizontal window is set above the water table's top edge to provide privacy to restrooms.

Moving eastward, a small window and door provide light and access to an interior entranceway and stairwell to the upper floor. The small window to the east of the door illuminates the basement stairwell. Windows on the eastern end of the building open to several divided spaces in the immigration and customs portion of the building; the height of the small windows centered on this end (and interior plumbing remnants) suggest additional restrooms.

Electrical conduits and wire are attached to the center portions of this façade. Heavy limestone window wells (filled with plywood) are found along the central third of the foundation.

The depot was re-shingled in 2003.

**Interior**

The building's interior generally retains the division of functional spaces indicated by window and door openings.

The interior wall of the freight area is lined with painted tongue and groove paneling. The freight doors on the northern side are of wood, with cross braces and horizontal divided lights in the upper portion.

Particularly notable is the curved ticket counter with multiple window openings, located on the interior wall opposite the office bay. The woodwork around the counter and windows is largely intact, with decorative brackets supporting the counter both inside the office and on the purchaser side. Across from the ticket counter is an interior access door to the stairwell. An etched glass window is located in the stairwell on the interior wall, with surrounding woodwork and railings along the staircase heavily varnished and in good condition. The rooms on the upper floor are paneled with narrow, varnished tongue and groove boards that are in good condition as well.



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The original women's waiting room space has been partitioned off from the depot portion of the building and opens instead into the customs and immigrations space. In the immigration space, the outline of a right-angled counter that guided the traffic flow through the close-set entrance and exit doors is visible in the cement flooring.<sup>3</sup> A door of metal bars, reportedly used to close off a basement storage space for confiscated materials, is found to the rear of this space.

The building's basement consists of two unconnected areas. As noted, one portion is accessible from the depot side of the building. The customs basement is accessed through a stair set in the center of this half of the building. Both basements are divided into several small rooms. Ceiling height in each room is variable, ranging from crawl spaces to less than six feet under the center portion of the building.<sup>4</sup>

Double hung sash windows with divided lights in the upper half are found in place throughout the building, although vandalism leaves them absent most glass panes. Plaster ceilings are severely deteriorated. Floors appear warped in several areas. Some interior walls have been covered with plastic paneling; walls in the customs area have been stripped to the studs as part of renovation efforts. Modern graffiti is also found in the building.

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<sup>3</sup> This "horseshoe counter" was installed during remodeling in 1954 to improve traffic flow through the immigration office. "Extensive Improvements to be Made to Baudette Depot." *Baudette Region*, April 7, 1954.

<sup>4</sup> The notoriously boggy conditions in this area that hindered the laying of track also may have affected the viable depth of the depot's basement.

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**Statement of Significance**

The Canadian National Railways Depot was built in 1923 in Baudette, a community on the border between the United States and Canada. The depot is nationally significant under National Register Criterion A under the Area of Significance of Politics and Government as the facility used by United States customs and immigration officers and the United States Border Patrol. The Canadian National Railways Depot, one of the rare depots in the United States served solely by a foreign railroad, was the last active depot on an unusual section of the Canadian National Railway that crossed into the United States, and it served as a symbol of international cooperation.

To the community of Baudette and the surrounding area, the depot is eligible under the Area of Significance of Transportation for the role the railroad's depot played in the settlement and economic development of this far northern portion of Minnesota by transporting mail, freight, passengers, lumber, fish and agricultural products. Because of the importance of maintaining a federal presence at the international border, the depot's period of significance is 1923 to 1955. The depot relates to the broad statewide contexts of Railroads and Agricultural Development (1870-1940) and Northern Minnesota Lumbering (1870-1930s).

**Railway Company Names**

The evolution of Canadian railroads led to many changes in the names for various lines and companies. The Canadian Northern Railway (CNoR) was the first to serve Baudette. In 1918, this line was incorporated into the growing Canadian National Railways (CNR) system, a government operation. In 1961, the company was renamed Canadian National Railway and began using the acronym CN. The company was privatized in 1995 and, following this change and a further decision related to brand identity in 2003, it now uses the CN acronym exclusively throughout its holdings, although the company is legally still called the Canadian National Railway.<sup>1</sup>

**The Canadian Northern Railway Line**

Although officially opened for settlement after land cession treaties with the Ojibwe in Minnesota in 1889, settlers had entered the central Minnesota-Canada border region near the town of Baudette several years earlier. Squatters took up land along the southern edge of Lake of the Woods and along the Baudette and Rainy Rivers. The rivers and the lakes provided the major transportation routes in the area, with various steam vessels operating to provide supplies, ferry passengers, and ship lumber and fish wherever water was deep enough. The rivers also served as frozen roads in the winter. The viability of this type of transportation may be one reason that the first effective push for a railroad in the area did not initially come from within the state or area speculators, but from a Canadian source.

<sup>1</sup> "Canadian National Railway" in *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. Jan 15, 2005.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian\\_National\\_Railway](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_National_Railway)

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Canadian railroad entrepreneurs William Mackenzie and Donald Mann began their ventures in transportation in 1896 with the purchase of the Lake Manitoba Railway and Canal Company in northwestern Manitoba, with the intention of building toward Hudson Bay. They soon focused instead on crossing the continent. During the next two decades, they became masters at procuring federal subsidies, land grants, and tax exemptions and using government-guaranteed bonds to parlay their initial investments into a notable railroad empire.

At the same time, settlers were seeking to push farther west into Canada. The virtual monopoly of the Canadian Pacific Railroad along westward routes allowed this line to charge high freight rates, to the distress of farmers and the government.<sup>2</sup> In an effort to create an alternative, and with the Canadian government's support, Mackenzie and Mann purchased or leased charters from numerous small railroads, including the Minnesota and Manitoba Railway Company (M&MR), which offered a stretch of critical land. The M&MR right-of-way allowed Mackenzie and Mann to build tracks south around the more than 950,000 acre Lake of the Woods, a major obstacle between two crucial points: Canada's western prairies and the Great Lakes shipping connections at Port Arthur, Ontario (today Thunder Bay).

While a Canadian Pacific line ran north of the lake, MacKenzie and Mann's southern line, the Canadian Northern Railway, would not only provide competition, but also would serve interests on the southern and western sides of the lake on its way to Winnipeg and points west. The area was poised for growth, with nascent agricultural communities, ample timber, and a commercial fishing industry. There were also rumors of gold on the islands in Lake of the Woods.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, the need for Minnesota timber on Canada's empty western prairies was especially acute as more settlers headed west.

Completed in late 1900, the 45-mile U.S. section of Canadian Northern Railway track entered Minnesota from the west, near Middleboro, Manitoba, with the first U.S. station five miles from the border, in Warroad. The line crossed again to Canada while traversing a bridge between Baudette and Rainy River, Ontario, completed in 1901. Also in 1901, the critical stretch of track from Rainy River to Port Arthur was completed, and the entire line between Winnipeg and Port Arthur was completed on Jan. 1, 1902. By 1912, the line also connected to Duluth.

MacKenzie and Mann eventually realized their dream of a Canadian transcontinental line rivaling the Canadian Pacific Railroad. But by 1918, the company's finances began collapsing under the demands of WWI and overoptimistic estimates about new settlements and freight, and the line became part of the

<sup>2</sup> Mika, Nick and Helma. Railways of Canada: A Pictorial History. McGraw Hill Ryerson. Toronto: 1972. p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> "Railway rumbles the future of New Ontario," *Rainy Lake Herald*, August 10, 1899.

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government-owned Canadian National Railways system.<sup>4</sup> The Canadian Northern, however, had made its mark in northern Minnesota.

**The Railroad and Area Settlement**

Local history accounts indicate that surveyors for the Canadian Northern Railway line were in the Baudette area immediately following the company's inception in 1896. Tracks were laid from Winnipeg toward the southeast. By the spring of 1900, newspaper advertisements in the *Roseau County Times* called for "800 men and 200 teams to work on railway grading east of Warroad." A local history account notes:

What the planners of this grade could not possibly have known was that the workers were going to encounter one of the worst kind of ground to build anything on – muskeg. Only quicksand could be trickier. As the crew began advancing eastward from Warroad, it quickly became evident that parts of the country were too wet to use teams of horses. Consequently, much of the grade would have to be done with wheelbarrows, shovels, and sheer 'elbow grease'.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the swamps, what once was a transportation boon – the Rainy River – became an obstacle. The 1901 single-track bridge overcame this, and was equipped with a center-section pivot to allow the passage of boats.

The railroad brought considerable growth to this portion of Minnesota as communities were built to meet railroad needs.

Since all engines in 1900 were steam locomotives, the grade had to be widened and leveled every twenty-five miles to accommodate the necessary water towers and coal piles. There were sidings at closer intervals...enabling boxcars and gondola to be parked for filling or unloading...[W]herever there was a siding a settlement was soon to follow. There were seven sidings from Warroad to Rainy River. These were at Swift (Roseau County), Roosevelt, Williams, Cedar Spur, Graceton, Pitt, and Baudette [Lake of the Woods County]. Depots were built on the sidings. Some of the first depots were no more than sheds or were housed in other buildings. The first depot in Baudette was in Daniel Hyland's Pioneer Store.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Mika, p. 131. Most railroad historians use the date 1918 as the final year for the CNoR, although Mackenzie and Mann continued to receive government help with their interests until 1923.

<sup>5</sup> Lake of the Woods County. A History of People, Places and Events. Lake of the Woods County Historical Society, 1997, p. 168-9.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

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All of the depots named above were built in the decade following the railroad's completion. But the area's remoteness had an overall effect on development. Full-scale road building in the area did not begin until 1912, and road builders, encountering the same difficulties experienced by the railroad, had to dig extensive ditching and conduct continuous maintenance. The county's first blacktop road did not appear until 1936.

In the absence of roads, communities not on the rail line were clearly disadvantaged. A portrait of the county and its need for railroad development is revealed in a 1912 brochure published by Baudette forest ranger William Kilby, who urged homesteaders to consider relocating to the area:

With the exception of matured grain corn, every crop that is essential to farming has been grown with uniform success... as a dairying center... the phenomenal growth of native grasses will provide pasturage and hay for many hundreds of cattle and... ensure success in raising stock... There is an excellent supply of timber with which to build the settler's home...<sup>7</sup>

Kilby did not refer to the Canadian Northern line, but instead lamented the lack of railroad lines in the larger part of what was then the vast area of Beltrami County.<sup>8</sup> He used his treatise to put the area's disadvantages in the most optimistic light, and he provided a glimpse of the railroad's perceived importance to area settlement:

"[T]his wonderfully fertile area is not at present supplied with railroads and markets. There are always rumors afloat regarding railroad building here and there through new territory... Be that as it may, there is not the least doubt that this section, the largest in Minnesota not traversed by railroads, must of necessity be equipped with that facility very shortly... Beyond the villages of Baudette and Spooner there are no market places... The demand has about equaled the supply, but with increased settlement, it is known that more adequate markets will have to be sought... The fact that railroads and markets are not already established should not deter settlers acquiring a quarter section of this land. If these conveniences were there, the land could not be obtained for the purchase price of \$1.25 an acre and the period of residence required under the homestead law...<sup>9</sup>

Whether inspired or frightened by Kirby's descriptions, populations grew, but did not explode. The combined population of Baudette and the then-separate village of Spooner was 1,565 in 1910; by 1920 it

<sup>7</sup> Kilby, William. "Information Concerning the Largest Area of Homestead Land in Minnesota." Promotional pamphlet, ca. 1913, Minnesota Historical Society files.

<sup>8</sup> In November 1922, citizens voted to divide the county, with the northern part of Beltrami becoming Lake of the Woods County, the last formed in Minnesota.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

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had dropped to 1,531, although the surrounding townships doubled in population.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps this was due in part to the influence of frequent announcements about the imminent construction of additional rail lines in local parishes – lines that did not materialize.

The Canadian line through Minnesota could be viewed from two perspectives. The Canadian Northern owners built the line to get from one point to another. Aside from construction and maintenance issues, the boggy, roadless, sparsely settled condition of northernmost Minnesota was not necessarily a concern for them. Certainly profits were made from local freight and passengers, but Canadian Northern's focus remained on profiting from Canadian settlements and developments.

But northern Minnesota residents had another view. As Kilby's promotional treatise indicates, and other local accounts relate, the railroad was a critical lifeline for local entrepreneurs and boosters, who were eager to continue area development. Kilby was particularly supportive of any railroad development, as he felt that this would attract the "right" kind of settlers to the area. These he defined as those who would stay and invest their time and energy, rather than exploit resources and moving on.

For those who were settled near the Canadian Northern line, either before or after its completion, advantages were numerous. With roads still rare, settlers used the tracks to walk from place to place. River traffic diminished, but the railroad brought regular and more frequent mail delivery, and provided a telegraph service both for their own use and as an income-generating service for the public by stringing wires along the track clearings.

As a further advantage, reflected in one of the city's most notable events, the railroad saved lives. Beginning October 3, 1910, disastrous fires moved through the drought-stricken county, burning several towns along the Minnesota portion of the Canadian Northern tracks. Those people living close to the tracks were evacuated by railroad to Baudette. But the fires continued to burn, and by October 7, Baudette itself was threatened. Most of the town was evacuated via railroad, as well as boat, across the river to Rainy River. The town's first depot, built in about 1902, escaped the fire due to a sudden shift of wind.

Ironically, although the railroad saved hundreds of lives, the Canadian Northern was held responsible for the fire, as engine sparks had started earlier grass fires. The company subsequently provided some compensation for settlers. But peat bogs (where fires could not be extinguished), strong winds, and budget cuts to fire-fighting resources in the area had also contributed to the fire problem.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Lake of the Woods, p. 60.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 260.

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There were some who found the railroad to be a threat to personal property in another sense. In the late 1800s, settler Thomas Cathcart squatted on a forty-acre tract of land on the west bank on the Rainy River, in what became an early townsite, "Old Baudette." This early site was logically accessible for river traffic, and in 1903, Cathcart filed a homestead claim for the parcel, which was approved by the land office in Crookston. But the General Land Office in Washington, D.C. noted that the railway had acquired title to the land by Congressional Act. Lawsuits between Cathcart and the railway soon followed.

Cathcart was not the only individual affected by this issue. About fifty families also lived in the railway's right-of-way, and the ensuing court case dragged on well after Cathcart's death in 1919. During this time, families were often instructed to move their homes off the property, but few evictions actually took place.

In 1923 – the same year the current depot was constructed - Cathcart's son, William, finally settled the right-of-way lawsuit. The Cathcart family received land south of the tracks, and the railroad claimed a right-of-way parcel north of the tracks. Still, evictions from "Old Baudette" were slow. The last families were finally forced off the disputed parcel in 1926.<sup>12</sup>

**The Depots in Baudette**

References to a depot in the Hyland Store (at the junction of the riverbank and the northern edge of the tracks) likely refer to a time period between the completion of the tracks and the construction of an "official" depot by the Canadian Northern Railway in 1902.<sup>13</sup> This first official depot burned in 1907, and by 1908 had been replaced by another wooden depot. Maps from 1913 and 1915 place this depot about three blocks east of the current site, presumably in the same location as the first. Photographs from the time period provide background glimpses of the 1908 depot, an impressive two-story building with a hipped roof, central cross gable, and multiple eyebrow dormers.

Both the appearance of the second depot and local accounts indicate that the Canadian Northern depot gave status to Baudette and advertised its significance on the line. A newspaper reported:

The new Canadian Northern depot is larger, and cost more in construction than any other depot on the line between Winnipeg and Port Arthur. The freight business at this station amounts to more than a millions lbs. a month, and the passenger business is correspondingly large.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 62.

<sup>13</sup> A hand drawn-map of "Old Baudette" based on the reminiscences of M.J. Carlson (located in the Lake of the Woods Historical Society) identifies both the store and the first depot.

<sup>14</sup> "Baudette, a live village." *Rainy River Region*, Feb 27, 1908.

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This second depot was also a victim of fire, although not unexpectedly. A 1922 newspaper account of the final conflagration reported:

The fire that destroyed the building was the second to occur in a week. The building caught fire from a defective chimney on Thursday of last week, but the blaze was put out without much damage...It has had several very narrow escapes from fire in the past, and it was a standing joke in Baudette that it was absolutely fire proof.<sup>15</sup>

The ashes had not cooled before the newspaper reported:

Officials of the C.N.R...have also made the statement that it will be agreeable to them to locate [the new depot] several blocks closer to the business district than the present site. The new building is likely to be located either at the foot of Main Street or at the foot of Lewis Avenue, a block west of Main.<sup>16</sup>

The partially burned building was deemed fit enough for use with a temporary roof. In February, the village council approved a motion to locate the new depot at the foot of Main, much to the displeasure of the residents of Spooner. This village across the Baudette River was locked in a struggle with Baudette for local business and development.<sup>17</sup> The relocation made access to the railroad services more difficult for Spooner residents. However, with the combined forces of property disputes, other home and business relocations following the 1910 fire, and the shift away from the river as a focus of transportation, a small phenomenon had occurred: over time, the entire city of Baudette shifted its center of growth away from the riverbank and several blocks to the southwest. The location of the city's third railway depot corresponded to this change.

One newspaper anticipated "the building of an entirely new industrial section" near the depot. New water lines had to be laid to the area, and the Cross-Dodd lumber yard was relocated (likely to its present

<sup>15</sup> "C.N.R. Depot was Destroyed by Fire on Sunday Afternoon." *Baudette Region*, December 15, 1922. This depot had narrowly escaped the 1910 fire.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Village Minute Book*, Village of Baudette, April 14, 1916- Dec. 15, 1930. Resolution, Feb 5, 1923, and *Village Minute Book*, Village of Spooner, 1922. At the same time, a vote was taken to relocate the road bridge between Baudette and Spooner one block to the south, again reflecting the shift away from "Old Baudette." Spooner business owners were disgruntled by this change as well, as the new bridge meant their businesses were no longer on the main thoroughfare. "Bridge Scrap Causes Fury" *Baudette Region*, Dec. 15, 1922.



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location) “about 150 feet” away. The paper also noted the need to remove sidetracks and a loading platform from the new location.<sup>18</sup>

The depot occupied a location not only convenient for freight, but, reflecting its role in transporting passengers, also one near a significant hub of social and civic activity. A 1913 map shows a school building on Block 4 of the Cathcart Addition, just southeast of the depot. 1923 Village Council minutes suggest that this building or another in this location was used as a village hall and fire department at the time of the third depot’s construction.

Newspapers did not record much information on construction progress, but noted, for example, an unexplained change from the original plans with the use of white brick instead of red. They also noted which railroad officials were involved with the construction, listing W.T. Moody, superintendent of the western divisions of the Canadian National Railways, Canadian National Railways building superintendent Thomas Graham, and Canadian National Railways roadmaster John Gordon. F.N. Bergford became the building’s contractor, and the newspaper assured citizens of his qualifications, noting that he “built the Manitoba parliament buildings at Winnipeg... a contractor who does work on a big scale.”<sup>19</sup>

A celebratory banquet attended by railroad officials and numerous townspeople heralded the depot’s opening in January 1924.

**Depot Structure and Functions**

Both the Canadian Northern Railway and the Canadian National Railways strongly promoted the development and use of standard plans for their depots. Such depots saved construction costs and offered a visual advertisement for the lines. When the Canadian National Railways took over the Canadian Northern, it also adapted many of its plans for its own use. The Baudette depot shares many similarities with the Canadian Northern Railway depots in Warroad, Minnesota, built in 1914, and in Rainy River, Canada (1918), as well as with Canadian National Railways Third Class depots.

<sup>18</sup> “New Depot for Baudette Sure,” *Baudette Region*, April 20, 1923, and “Work on a New Brick Depot was Commenced on Wednesday,” *Baudette Region*, August 17, 1923.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. The Canadian Northern Depot in Warroad is attributed to architect John Schofield, who began his career with the Canadian Northern in 1907. It is possible that he also served as the architect for the Baudette depot. “Just after the Canadian National Railway formed in 1920, Schofield held the position of architect in Montreal. As the main architect, he was involved in almost every design of the CNR stations and hotels. John Schofield retired in 1948.” Information in part from: Martin, Edward J. *Railway Stations of Western Canada*, White Rock, BC: Studio E Martin, 1980, p. 61, as quoted on a message board of the *Railfan.Net* website. <http://www.railfan.net/lists/rshdepot-digest/200307/msg00060.html>. Oct. 10, 2004.

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Particularly the functions and structures on the western end of the Baudette building correspond to that of Canadian National Railways Third Class depots: a line of spaces formed by the freight house, waiting room, and depot agent's office. An upstairs area provided rooms for the depot agent and, sometimes, his family.<sup>20</sup> Such depots were "combination depots," as they served multiple railroad functions. This was typical for smaller towns; generally only larger cities required separate facilities for freight and passengers.

Other standard features reflected the persistence of certain design elements through the evolution of Third Class designs of the Canadian Northern Railway, the Canadian National Railways, and an updated version of the Third Class station that the Canadian National Railways began using in 1915. These elements can be seen in both the second and third Baudette depots, as well as the Warroad depot, and include a hipped roof, some form of central gable over depot agent's quarters, and brackets supporting a deep roof extension over the platform. One characteristic that can be seen on the Baudette depot is attributed solely to 1920s Canadian National Third Class design: the high concrete foundation, which extends to the window sills. This was typically found on stuccoed Canadian National Railways depots, but likely served the same function in protecting the brick masonry of the Baudette depot from "errant vehicles."<sup>21</sup>

In spite of many standard features, the Baudette and Warroad depots are considered "special status" depots due to their deviation from standard plans. For example, while the size of Third Class depots varied, railroad historian Charles Bohi considers a Third Class depot built in Alberta in 1921 "certainly longer than most" at 68 feet.<sup>22</sup> With an approximate length of 104 feet in Baudette, and 115 feet in Warroad, these depots are, then, exceptionally long. But this unusual size is also easily explained, as the depots also housed facilities for customs, immigration, and, in Baudette, the U.S. Border Patrol, reflecting their unique location on the Minnesota/Canadian border. Border-related functions occupied the entire eastern half, and later the upper floor, of the building in Baudette, and were interspersed among the railroad's functional spaces in Warroad. Their existence required and explains the stations' "special status" designs.

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<sup>20</sup> Newspaper accounts of the 1922 depot fire refer to an agent and his wife who occupied the upper floor of that depot and suffered property losses. A similar space on the upper floor in the third depot received sporadic residential use.

<sup>21</sup> Bohi, Charles. Canadian National's Western Depots. The Country Stations in Western Canada. Railfare Enterprises, Toronto: 1977. pp. 36, 58.

<sup>22</sup> Bohi, p. 37.

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**Federal Agencies at the Depot**

Minnesota's northern border was subject to over 125 years of survey, confusion and negotiation. While the Rainy River had long been accepted as the border in the Baudette area, confusion stemming from incorrect assumptions about the course of rivers and early mapping in the area that is now the Angle Inlet remained. These differences were finally resolved by a treaty agreement directly with Canada (instead of Great Britain, as in earlier treaties) in 1925. Official survey reports, however, were not completed until the 1930s.<sup>23</sup>

Baudette's location on an international border was a facet of everyday life. Early settlers from both sides of the U.S./Canadian boundary crossed over regularly in boats and on the ice to conduct business, shop, and socialize. At the same time, various events and government developments on national level heightened awareness of border area roads and railroads as international conduits, and led to the policing of the borders throughout the United States by various federal agencies. Until the opening of the international road bridge in 1960, such federal agencies were housed in the Baudette depot through cooperative lease arrangements.<sup>24</sup>

Whether federal border-related functions were an element of the first Baudette depot is unclear, but the history of border relations and immigration policy suggest that the depot or another location in "Old Baudette" near the river would be the likely site for an early customs officer. A photograph of the second depot confirms this with a door on the eastern end labeled "Customs." Oral accounts also place immigration and customs officers and, later, Border Patrol officers in the third Baudette depot.

*Customs*

The idea of collecting fees on goods entering the country inspired the creation of the nation's first federal government agency, created in 1789. "For nearly 125 years, Customs funded virtually the entire government, and paid for the nation's early growth and infrastructure."<sup>25</sup> The desire for customs

<sup>23</sup> Lass, William. Minnesota's Boundary with Canada. Its Evolution since 1783. Minnesota Historical Society Press: St. Paul, 1980.

<sup>24</sup> John Boretski, Canadian National Railway depot agent in Baudette, 1948-1985, provided oral accounts of the depot in the 1950s and 1960s. (Interview with author, October 22, 2004.) Boretski indicated that the U.S. customs and immigration agencies and the Border Patrol leased the space in the depot. Other accounts of these agencies suggest that leased space in privately owned buildings was a typical arrangement for small posts.

<sup>25</sup> "U.S. Customs Service. Over 200 years of History." From: *U.S. Customs and Border Protection. U.S. Department of Homeland Security.* Jan. 15, 2005.

<http://www.customs.ustras.gov/xp/cgov/toolbox/about/history/history.xml>

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collections along Minnesota's northern border began during the fur trade era, with customs agents stationed on the east and west sides of the Red River at the Canadian border as early as 1851.<sup>26</sup>

By the time the new rail line crossed the border at Baudette, formal customs facilities had been constructed at several locations along the Minnesota's northern border.<sup>27</sup> Customs agents in Baudette were responsible for checking the contents of freight cars; generally, these contained grain, pulpwood, and lumber.<sup>28</sup>

As World War I began, customs administrators began focusing on smuggling by seamen at ocean ports. With the passage of national, comprehensive narcotics legislation in 1914 and the 1919 Prohibition amendment, smuggling became a concern at land borders as well.<sup>29</sup>

Local accounts in Baudette refer to the smuggling of alcohol via train, usually in the passenger compartments in an attempt to avoid customs searches, both during Prohibition and in later years. Whether inspecting trains or road vehicles, customs agents were watchful. A local history notes:

Baudette... had a first on the international scene. *The Baudette Region* of February 27, 1920, reported the first arrest of importing liquor from Canada, when Andy Stockinger was taken into custody by local customs officers. The evidence, 114 quarts of liquor, was stored in the vault of the first National Bank for safekeeping.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Schrader, Lydia. Custom House Survey in Minnesota. National Society of the Colonial Dames of America: St. Paul, 1971.

<sup>27</sup> For example, the Pinecreek border crossing in adjacent Roseau County was staffed by a customs agent occupying space in a local store beginning in 1894, and by 1899, as the Canadian Northern line was being constructed through Baudette, a separate customs facility had been constructed, suggesting a strong awareness of customs needs along the northern state border. Simmons, E.G. "The History of the Customs Service and Federal Building, Port of at Pinecreek, Minnesota." Unpublished manuscript, 1959.

<sup>28</sup> Boretski. In addition to international cargo, freight passed along the line from within the United States. During the 1940s and 1950s this included a daily carload of household and other supplies from Duluth. At the peak of area commercial fishing, one or two carloads of fish from Lake of the Woods were also shipped daily from the Baudette area to Chicago and New York.

<sup>29</sup> Saba, Anna. "The U.S. Customs Service. Always there...ready to serve." *U.S. Customs Today*. Feb. 2003. <http://www.cbp.gov/xp/CustomsToday/2003/February/reform.xml>

<sup>30</sup> Lake of the Woods, p. 307. Contraband was stored in the depot's basement, in a low room closed off by an iron grate (Boretski).

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Local historians have assessed such smuggling ventures as limited, and primarily focused on liquor intended for personal or local use. Even if liquor passed successfully over the border, the road between Baudette and more populated southern regions passed two further customs check points (near Indus and International Falls) and offered the risk of federal roadblocks by Prohibition officers. Local stills also provided a liquor source without the added risk of a border crossing.<sup>31</sup>

In 1940, a *Saturday Evening Post* reporter traveled along Minnesota's northern border, reflecting on the difference between these border crossings and those in Europe. After visiting Baudette's neighboring cities of Warroad and International Falls, he wrote:

Canadians and Americans who live adjacent to the border and cross frequently are familiar to the customs and immigration men. When one of them pulls up at a stop sign, the inspector sticks his head out the windows and calls: "Hello, Joe. Got anything?" Joe grins and shakes his head and is waved on. The inspector knows well enough that Joe may be taking advantage, in a small way, of the fine old tradition of skinning the Government. He knows that Mrs. Joe may be sneaking in, one piece at a time, a full set of English spode [sic] china. But both governments look the other way at this type of penny-ante smuggling. The inspectors are there to stop commercialized cheating, which, since the repeal of our Federal Prohibition Law, is nearly non-existent in this region.<sup>32</sup>

In spite of the potentially quiet posting, customs agents were a continuous presence at the Baudette depot.

*Immigration*

People, as well as goods, crossed the international border via train in Baudette. They fell under the jurisdiction of immigration officers.

The Immigration Act of 1891 created the Office of the Superintendent of Immigration within the Treasury Department. Soon after, immigrant inspectors were stationed at major ports of entry throughout the United States.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. On the other side of the border, Canadian customs officers contended with the smuggling of inexpensive American cigarettes. "Taxation and Smuggling." *International Development Research Centre*, copyright 1995-2004. Jan 15, 2005. [http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-28824-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-28824-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)

<sup>32</sup> Alexander, Jack. "Border without Bayonets." *Saturday Evening Post*, Vol. 212, No 28, 1940.

<sup>33</sup> "U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. Populating a nation: a history of immigration and naturalization." *U.S. Customs and Border Protection. U.S. Department of Homeland Security*. Jan. 15, 2005. [http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/toolbox/about/history/ins\\_history.xml](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/toolbox/about/history/ins_history.xml)

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Historian Marian L. Smith notes:

A large number of immigrants came to the United States via Canada during the mid- and late nineteenth century ... The always-growing number of immigrants who chose this route in the late 1800s finally convinced the United States, in 1894, to build and operate the bureaucratic machinery necessary to document the many thousands who each year entered at points along its northern border...

In 1894 the U.S. Immigration Service entered into an agreement with Canadian railroads and steamship lines serving the Canadian ports of entry to bring those companies into compliance with U.S. immigration law... Canadian railroads agreed to carry only those immigrants who were legally admitted to the United States to U.S. destinations... [B]etween 1895 and 1906 the U.S. placed inspectors at northern land border ports of entry... Railroads required all passengers who landed in Canada within the last thirty days to present their Certificates of Admission before boarding a U.S.-bound train. Then, when the train stopped at the border, another U.S. inspector boarded the train and collected the Certificates of Admission.<sup>34</sup>

Border awareness was heightened during World War I, when Canadian soldiers were stationed on the Baudette railroad bridge in response to rumors of German sabotage.

By 1915, fifty-two men were guarding the bridge, and all who tried to cross were turned away... Canadian soldiers traveling from east to west were not allowed to pass through the United States on the Canadian line... as the permission of such action would be a breach of U.S. neutrality. The Canadian Pacific Rail line or North line had to be used instead.<sup>35</sup>

After the war, immigration officials were active in Baudette, both on the rail line and the river. Stricter immigration laws in 1921 and 1924, including quotas, brought more attention to immigration along land borders. Just as work on the 1923 depot commenced, the *Northern News* reported that "a party of seven immigrants arrived Tuesday from Sweden, but were denied entry... on account of not having had their passports viced by the American consul before leaving Sweden. They returned to Port Arthur..."

By 1924, the Bureau of Immigration and the Bureau of Naturalization had come under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor. In 1933, these agencies were united as the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

<sup>34</sup> Smith, Marian L. "By Way of Canada: U.S. Records of Immigration Across the U.S.-Canadian Border, 1895-1954 (St. Albans Lists)." In: *Prologue, a publication of the U.S. National Archives and Records Administrator*, Fall, 2003, Vol. 32, No. 3.

<sup>35</sup> Lake of the Woods, p. 302. (The United States abandoned its policy of neutrality in 1917.)

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During the Depression of the 1930s and in later years, Canadian men who hopped a freight car were surprised to find themselves routed by the U.S. officials, as they did not know the line passed through two border checks.<sup>36</sup> Some accounts suggest some flexibility on the part of officials:

In the late 1920s, boxcars filled with human cargo on 'harvest trains' carried hundreds of workers west. These late summer migrations were a common sight. In the 1930s, when the Depression struck full force, men often hitched rides in and on top of boxcars to other cities, where, hopefully, there would be work. The custom officials at the depot in Baudette would often turn their heads as these trains passed through.<sup>37</sup>

By 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt transferred the INS to the Department of Justice as concern about "enemy aliens" rose. The national INS workforce doubled during World War II, from 4000 to 8000 employees. Concerns about illegal aliens resulted in stronger border controls by immigration officials following the war as well.<sup>38</sup>

*Border Patrol*

While border policing by mounted guards began along the United States' southern border immediately after the turn of the twentieth century, the U.S. Border Patrol was officially established in 1924, with the goal of securing borders between customs and immigration inspection stations.<sup>39</sup> Local accounts first place the Border Patrol in the Baudette depot in the 1950s, when it began using the space on the upper floor of the depot. These upper rooms had received limited use as an apartment for depot agents, and provided offices for agents and holding cells for detainees.

The time frame of the Patrol's move to the depot may reflect federal legislation of 1952. In this year, Border Patrol agents were permitted "to board and search a conveyance for illegal immigrants anywhere in the United States. For the first time, illegal entrants traveling within the country were subject to arrest." In the same year, shifts in personnel likely affected operations in the Baudette area, with sixty-two Border Patrol units transferred from the Canadian border to southern border states "for a large-scale repatriation effort."<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Boretski.

<sup>37</sup> Lake of the Woods, p. 172.

<sup>38</sup> "U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service."

<sup>39</sup> "U. S. Border Patrol History." *U.S. Customs and Border Protection. U.S. Department of Homeland Security*. Jan. 15, 2005. [http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/border\\_security/border\\_patrol/history.xml](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/border_security/border_patrol/history.xml)

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

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By 1960, all three federal offices housed in the Baudette depot relocated to new quarters adjacent to the much-heralded International Bridge roadway across the Rainy River. The change reflected the nationwide shift in focus from rail to road transportation, and the shift would add to uncertainty about the Baudette depot's future.

**Transitions in Depot Use**

Prior to 1960, the ongoing importance of the Baudette depot to both international cooperation and local commerce was reflected in the staffing and longevity of the station's operation. In 1948, it still provided 24-hour service with three full-time railroad operators. The depot also underwent "extensive remodeling" in 1954, with Canadian National Railways officials committing several thousand dollars to expand the customs and immigration space into the ladies' waiting room, to "rearrange" the general waiting room and office, and to redecorate.<sup>41</sup>

In contrast, as early as the 1920s, other stations along the Minnesota portion of the Canadian National Railways line began limiting operations or closing down completely. Several factors contributed to this attrition. The first factor included economic downturns related to WWI and the Depression era. A second factor was the increased building of roads in the Baudette area. Although slow in coming, new roads enabled farmers and others with freight to facilitate transportation of their goods, either to a larger regional, rather than local, station, or by eliminating the need for rail transport completely. A third factor was the decline of the timber industry, as areas proximate to the rail line were logged out. As a final blow, railroad technology evolved, including a change to diesel engines in the late 1950s. These engines eliminated the need for the frequent water and coal stops around which many of the area's towns had developed.

Such changes occurred along a 45-mile stretch in small steps over a remarkable length of time, with a span of fifty years between the first depot closings and the last. The 1923 construction of the large depot at Baudette was essentially the "last hurrah" in development along the line. In the same year, the Canadian National Railways removed the depot at Cedar Spur, Minnesota, and relocated it to Saskatchewan.

The Canadian National Railways also tried to close the station at Pitt, Minnesota, in 1927. In a further reflection of the railroad's importance to the area, the town won a reprieve via lawsuit, one challenged repeatedly by the railroad in the coming years. The gist of Pitt's temporarily successful argument was not only that the income generated by the station met the minimum set by the railroad itself, but also the not-entirely-tacit argument that because the railroad was the reason for the town's existence, the company had a responsibility to assure the town's survival.

<sup>41</sup> "Extensive Improvements to be Made to Baudette Depot." *Baudette Region*, April 7, 1954.



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Slowly but surely, however, the stations were closed as passenger and freight needs dropped off. The Pitt station's depot agent was finally removed in the 1930s. In August 1977, the Canadian National Railway ended passenger service along the line, after a three-month delay due to protests by the Ontario government.<sup>42</sup> In 1979, stations at William, Warroad and Roosevelt were closed.

The Canadian National Railway had also planned to close the Baudette station at this time. However, appeals by area shippers and Lake of the Woods County resulted in hearings, with an examiner recommending that the Baudette depot remain active.<sup>43</sup> The Minnesota Department of Transportation agreed, and its subsequent order kept the Baudette depot open and staffed until 1985, the last active station on the Minnesota portion of the line.<sup>44</sup> The Baudette depot at last became obsolete with the implementation of computerized dispatching to control trains traffic, with the trains along the track dispatched first out of Winnipeg, and currently out of Edmonton.

**The Depot as Cooperative Symbol**

Throughout its history, the Canadian National Railways Depot in Baudette represented the high level of cooperation between the Canadian railroads and U.S. border officials and citizens. When the citizenship of employees on the Canadian National Railways became a concern as talks lead to the 1918 government take-over of the privately-owned Canadian Northern Railway, the *Baudette Region* reassured its readers of the new owners' reasonableness, reporting: "[T]he [Canadian] government will absolutely control the board of directors... So far as possible, the service of capable men now in the employ will be retained."<sup>45</sup>

And newspaper reports of the Baudette depot's 1923 opening focused on international cooperation with the following account:

The [speeches] took on an international aspect, and they all showed the good feeling existing between the Canadian National and the citizens of Baudette... Altogether the banquet was a great success and served to still further cement the cordial relations existing between the company and the village.<sup>46</sup>

From 1923 until about 1960, the depot provided office facilities for government employees from both sides of the border. Depot agents and other railroad workers were employees of the Canadian National Railways, and the U.S. government employed customs and immigration officials, as well as the Border

<sup>42</sup> "The last passenger train." *Baudette Region*, August 3, 1977.

<sup>43</sup> "Three CN stations will close Friday." *Baudette Region*, Jan. 24, 1979.

<sup>44</sup> "Baudette depot: Looking back...and to the future." *Baudette Region*, March 25, 1987.

<sup>45</sup> "The Canadian Government Buys C.N.R." *Baudette Region*, August 2, 1917.

<sup>46</sup> "Big Banquet Marks Opening of Depot," *Baudette Region*, Jan. 11, 1924.

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Patrol. Although the CN, as it came to be called, was privatized in 1995, the dual nature of the railroad's national affiliations were still noted in a 1997 area newspaper article:

Due to labor restrictions, only United States citizens are allowed to work [on track maintenance from Baudette to Warroad], however, the neighbors to the north can transport equipment and supervise machinery. One crew member lives in Canada but holds dual citizenship so he is able to work here.<sup>47</sup>

Today, the depot building is owned locally by the Depot Preservation Alliance, which purchased it from CN. The Alliance currently leases the land under and around the building for a yearly sum from CN. CN freight trains continue to cross the border almost hourly, running to the east and west past the town's grain elevators and along the tracks on the north side of the depot. The line is one of only four sections of track in the United States dispatched from outside of the United States.<sup>48</sup>

The Canadian National Railways Depot in Baudette is unique due to a number of factors. While various railways owned by both Canadian and American interests served trans-border traffic, the construction of independent depots on foreign soil was limited, and appears uncommon for the Canadian National Railways. Additionally, the housing of United States agencies within this foreign-owned structure appears to be largely unique in the United States.<sup>49</sup>

The depot is a physical reminder of Baudette's growth and development, with the railway long providing a primary transportation route for settlers and residents. The depot's longevity, both in its service and its structure, sends a clear message about its importance to the town and its history. The

<sup>47</sup> "Workin' on the Railroad," *The Northern News*, April 9, 1997.

<sup>48</sup> Code of Federal Regulations, Title 49, Volume 4. Revised as of October 1, 2003 (49CFR241). Page 669-676.

<sup>49</sup> Other stations in the U.S. constructed by foreign lines appear to have been constructed prior to the creation of the Canadian National Railways, although because of the range of shareholders in each line, it is difficult to say which were truly "foreign." The Canadian Grand Trunk railway constructed and incorporated many cross-border lines in the eastern U.S. and Canada, and is attributed with the construction of numerous inland depots, particularly in Maine and Michigan, prior to its amalgamation with Canadian National Railways in 1923. A Grand Trunk station was constructed near the border crossing in Port Huron, Michigan (1891). Initial reviews do not indicate the presence of U.S. federal agents in this building. The nearest comparable cooperative instance was found in Surrey, British Columbia, where a depot for the New Westminster Southern Railway, a subsidiary of the Great Northern Railway, also served as a Canadian customs office along the border between Washington state and British Columbia in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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depot also represents an enduring legacy of cooperation between Canadian and American residents and interests in this northern Minnesota community.

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

Property includes all land south of fence (erected 10 feet from outside rail of tracks) up to Dodd's Lumber and also all land north of gravel road, with fence extending 160 feet west of west edge of depot and 150 feet east of east edge of depot.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary is defined by Canadian Railway Properties Lease No. 685134 and includes that parcel that retains integrity and that has historically been associated with the property.



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**Figure 1: Transcontinental Railways ca. 1915 (2nd Edition, 1915, Atlas of Canada)**

The map below shows a portion of Canada's transcontinental rail network ca. 1915, including the Canadian Northern Railway line south of Lake of the Woods and through Baudette, and the Canadian Pacific line north of the lake. Connections from Port Arthur south to Duluth are not yet depicted. [http://atlas.gc.ca/site/english/maps/archives/2ndedition/economic/transportationandcommunications/page39\\_40](http://atlas.gc.ca/site/english/maps/archives/2ndedition/economic/transportationandcommunications/page39_40)



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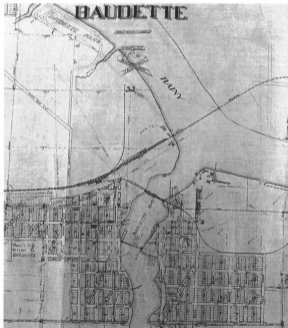
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**Figure 2:** Portion of Baudette map compiled by E. J. Burgeoise, Bemidji, Minnesota, 1913. Amendments undated. Depot depicted in the 1923 location.

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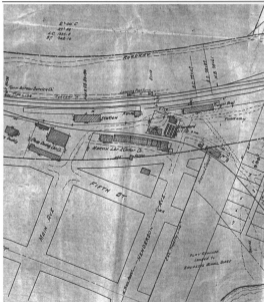


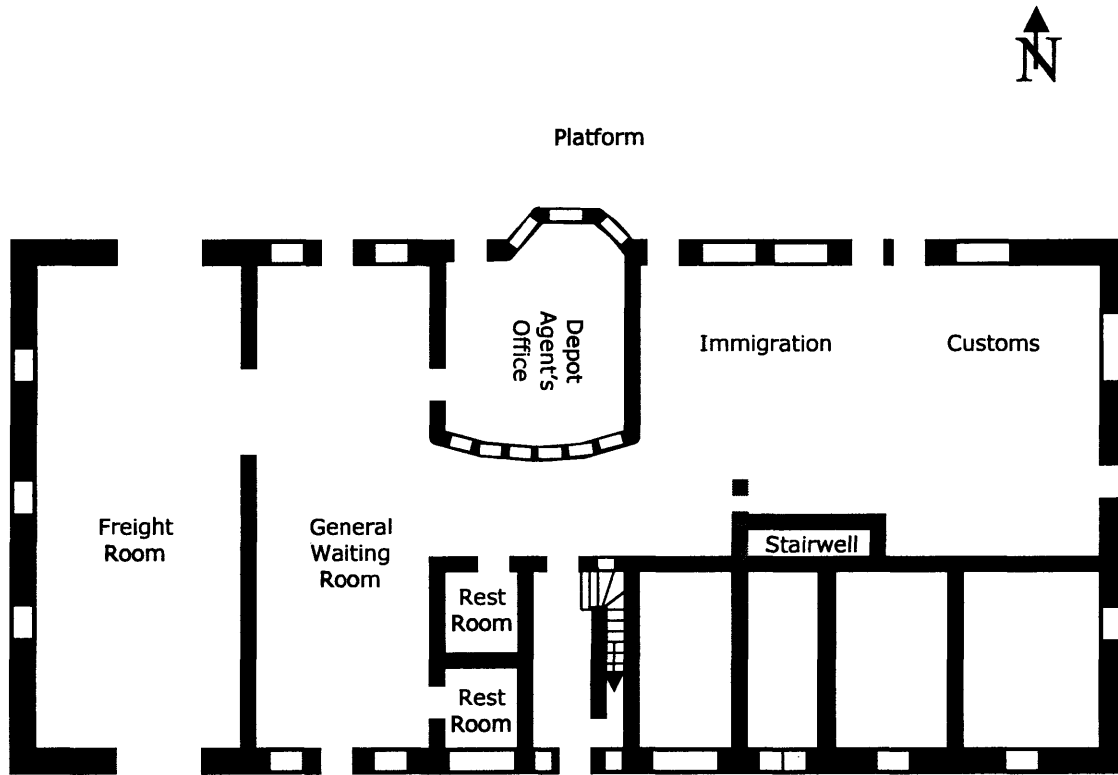
Figure 3: Portion of Baudette Yard Plan. Plan No. 40-7-B. Port Arthur, Ontario: Canadian National Railways, Western Region, 1937. Amended 1941. Fish house on east end of platform and freight shed to east not extant.

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**Figure 4:** Approximate first floor plan of Canadian National Railways in Baudette; not to scale.

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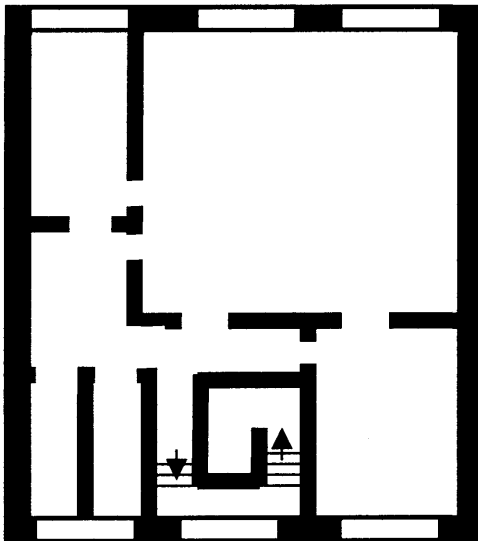
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**Figure 4:** Approximate second floor plan of Canadian National Railways in Baudette; not to scale. These spaces received limited use as a railroad employee apartment and, beginning in the 1950s, served as offices and holding cells for the United States Border Patrol.