

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received JUL 9 1984
date entered AUG 9 1984

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Belfast Railroad Depot

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number U. S. Highway 431 N/A not for publication

city, town Belfast N/A vicinity of

state Tennessee code 047 county Marshall code 117

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mrs. Robert Orr

street & number P. O. Box 22

city, town Belfast N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 37019

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Marshall County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town Lewisburg state Tennessee 37091

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A N/A federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date 1935

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Belfast Railroad Depot, built by the Duck River Valley Narrow Gauge Railroad about 1874, is a small rectangular frame structure in the center of the small Marshall County town of Belfast, about six miles southeast of the county seat of Lewisburg and ten miles west of Petersburg. The building is located next to the old right-of-way and adjacent to the highway connecting Lewisburg and Fayetteville in the center of the little town. The Belfast Grain Mills and a row of small Victorian shop-buildings face the depot across a sort of town square.

The depot is constructed in the popular bracketed railway style of the late nineteenth century. The rectangular board-and-batten structure, about ninety feet long by twenty-five wide, is constructed of yellow poplar and topped with a shallow-pitched gable roof of standing-seam tin. The building rests on posts cut from old telegraph poles, and the area between the floor sill and the ground is covered in part by vertical boards. The building follows a common depot plan of the period: a large room served as a freight station, and the other end of the structure contained a ticket office and separate waiting rooms arranged around a central flue.

The north side faced the railroad tracks, and a wooden platform still extends across most of the front. On the east half of this front two four-panel doors set inside chamfered frames with two-light transoms are set between high 4/4 light sash windows; both the doors and the windows are topped with a four-light transom and heavy molded cornice; the broad door opens into the freight room inside.

The south elevation faces the Lewisburg-Fayetteville road; this front has one four-panel door with transom set between 4/4 light windows, matching in design the elements on the opposite side. Another heavy sliding freight door opens on the western end.

The east, or Fayetteville side of the building has two 4/4 windows, and the west or Lewisburg end is quite plain but for the "Belfast" signboard.

The freight room occupies the western part of the building; the inside is unfinished except for wide poplar boards nailed to the inside walls to a height of about five and one half feet. The freight section has an interesting king-post truss roofing system. In the center of the building is the old white waiting room, and at the eastern end are a ticket office and the old colored waiting room; these three rooms are arranged around a central brick flue and are covered with beaded interior siding and vertical beaded wainscoting.

About 1935, the depot was pulled by train about twenty feet to the southeast, in order to provide right-of-way for the new U. S. Highway 431. The building is still located on the old DRVNG RR rail line, although the tracks were taken up in the 1970s.

The building has never been altered. The building has been abandoned for more than twenty years, and suffered some deterioration. But the structure is being repaired today by Mrs. Robert Orr of Belfast. Mrs. Orr has cleaned the building, repaired the sagging platform, and has repainted the building pale red and beige, the colors of the NC&St.L.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 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 1870s **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Belfast Railroad Depot is nominated under National Register Criteria A and C for its significance in the architecture and for its associations with the Duck River Valley Narrow Gauge Railroad and with the development of the new town of Belfast. The Belfast Depot is the best surviving structure of the Duck River Valley Narrow Gauge Railroad; the small Victorian rail station is an excellent board-and-batten frame structure. The DRVNG RR, which ran between Columbia and Fayetteville, was the main impetus for development of many of the communities along the line. In the case of Belfast, the original community, which was located about two miles to the northwest, was abandoned and moved to the present side in the early 1870s; the town centered on the new Belfast Depot.

The Duck River Narrow Gauge Railroad Company received its charter from the Chancery Court at Waverly on November 4, 1870, under provisions of the new State of Tennessee Act of 1870. The Company was granted the rights to build a line "from at or near a point near Johnsonville, Tenn., in Humphreys County, to a point at or near the town of Fayetteville, in Lincoln County, with the right, power, and privilege to extend said road from Fayetteville to the Nashville & Chattanooga RR". The railway was subsidized in part by municipalities along the line: The City of Columbia invested \$50,000, Maury County \$1,500, and Marshall County \$115,000.

Narrow gauge railways have some advantages over the heavier standard gauge lines. Narrow gauge railways can round sharper curves and demand less space for right-of-ways. Use of lighter rolling stock enabled these lines to use lighter rails, bridges, and trestle.

By 1874 the railroad was complete from Columbia to Belfast and Petersburg some ten miles beyond, for a total distance of 34.3 miles, but service was not begun. The Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railway, interested in the prospects of reaching Columbia via Fayetteville and the DRVNG line, in 1879 offered to lease the narrow gauge line and all appurtenances for forty years. Merchants along the line criticized the plan, claiming that the NC&St.L, already under the influence of the Louisville & Nashville RR would never complete the line, but the lease was granted on October 2. Ten months later all work ended on the Petersburg-Fayetteville segment, and the workers were discharged.

Work was resumed in August 1881, and a locomotive was finally purchased. Heavy rains and flooding held up the work, but the line was completed and the last spike driven on March 16, 1882. There were two locomotives at this time, but both had to be shipped to Nashville for rehabilitation. The first train ran the entire line on April 17, 48 miles in three hours. Engine #1 was returned from Nashville in May, and regular service began. But the break of gauge at Fayetteville, where trains departed for Decherd and the main NC&St.L line, proved to be a major problem for the Duck River line, as passengers and freight had to be unloaded and shifted, resulting in delays. On November 23, 1887, the Duck River Valley Railroad was purchased by the NC&St.L Railway; NC&St.L agreed to convert the line to standard gauge by December 31, 1888, and assumed the DRVNG mortgage bonds.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Orr, Mrs. Robert. Personal Interview. March 1984.

Sulzer, Elmer G. Ghost Railroads of Tennessee. Indianapolis: Vane A. Jones Co. Publishers, 1975.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.3 acres

Quadrangle name Belfast, TN

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	6	5	2	7	0	6	0	3	9	1	9	4	5	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is triangular in shape and is bounded on the southwest by U. S. Highway 431 and on the north and east by a dirt road. This boundary includes enough property to protect the historical setting and integrity of the Belfast Depot.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard Quin, Historic Preservation Planner

organization South Central TN Development District date April 1984

street & number P. O. Box 1346 telephone (615) 381-2040

city or town Columbia state Tennessee

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.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Sulzer

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

date 7/2/84

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
Entered in the
National Register

date 5/9/84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation sheet Belfast Railroad Depot

Item number 8

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In the early 1900s, freight shipped on the line included cedar logs and pencil slats; livestock, with many lambs in season; cotton, poultry, and crimson clover. By 1921 a second train was placed in service on the line.

But highway improvements and increased numbers of automobiles and trucks led to a rapid decline in use of the railway. On November 12, 1945, the Interstate Commerce Commission approved a NC&StL application to abandon 18.26 miles of the 19.4 mile Lewisburg-Columbia segment, retaining short stem lines at either end for switching and to serve industries. One mixed train daily made the Fayetteville-Lewisburg run. Operations were cut back; the Belfast depot staff were discharged, and only an emergency telephone was left at the depot.

The Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis Railway was merged with the Louisville & Nashville Railroad on August 30, 1957. On December 31, 1959, the L&N filed an application with the Interstate Commerce Commission to abandon the remaining line from a point 1.22 miles west of Fayetteville to a point 2.88 miles east of Lewisburg. Heavy protests from users along the line delayed the abandonment, and the L&N agreed to keep the six miles of track between Lewisburg and Belfast open, as industrial development in the area seemed likely. But the Fayetteville-Belfast segment was abandoned in 1961, the last mixed train making the trip on Monday, August 28. The railway was dismantled by the Hyman-Michaels Company of Chicago.

Construction of the Duck River Valley line was the main reason for the new settlement of Belfast. The original town of Belfast was settled some two miles to the northwest about 1810, while the area was still a part of Bedford County. The village was a quiet country town at the Farmington-Beech Grove crossroads, the center of a lightly populated farming area. But with the coming of the new railway about 1874, most citizens decided to abandon the community and move up the valley to the area around the new depot. The old town of Belfast is today marked only by the crossroads and a couple of old frame structures. The new town was established around a sort of open square between the depot and a small group of frame store-buildings. The Presbyterians and other churches erected houses of worship, and a new post office was opened. Many citizens erected attractive frame structures after the various Victorian styles of architecture.

The Belfast Depot is the best surviving structure of the old Duck River Valley Narrow Gauge Railroad. The board-and-batten building features a shallow-pitched gable roof supported by decorative wooden brackets, molded door and window cornices, and chamfered door and window posts. The interior remains unaltered, and the plan of ticket office, separate waiting rooms, and freight area is still quite evident. The depot has suffered from twenty-three years of abandonment, but is now being rehabilitated in a sensitive manner by Mrs. Robert Orr.