

# District Survey Form

<b>1</b>	<u>DISTRICT</u> Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha Railroad Car Shop Historic District	<u>SURVEYOR</u> R. LaRowe	<u>SHSW STAFF</u>
	<u>CITY</u> North Hudson	<u>COUNTY</u> St. Croix	<u>SURVEY</u> Hudson/North Hudson Intensive Survey

DATE  
2/14/84

FILM ROLLS/NEGATIVES

SC 9/26-32; SC 36/7-16; SC 38/21, 22

<u>STREETS:</u>	<u>NUMBERS:</u>	<u>STREETS:</u>	<u>NUMBERS:</u>
Monroe Street, North	N.A.		

**2** BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha Railroad Car Shop Historic District is described as follows: Commencing at a point 1350 feet south of the intersection of the south line of Sommer Street with the east line of Gallahad Road; thence east to the west line of Fourth Street, North; then south 495 feet; then west 150 feet; then south 150 feet; then east 150 feet; then south 592 feet; then west 100 feet; then south to the north line of St. Croix Street, North; then west to the west line of Third Street, North; then south 200 feet; then west to the east line of Gallahad Road; thence north to the point of beginning. Total Acreage: 27.32 acres (1,190,000 sq. ft.)

**3** BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION The Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha Railroad Car Shop Historic District is a cohesive collection of late 19th and early 20th century industrial buildings, clustered near the center of a basically rectangular district, united by architectural design, scale, materials, and workmanship. Standing, for the most part, a single story, the pilastered brick structures have gable roofs, some with monitors, with simple cruciform brickwork at the cornice. Historically, the complex was constructed on a 60 acre parcel which was secured and graded specifically for the building of the yards. For the purposes of the historic district, approximately 30 acres of vacant, wooded land to the

**4** SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. LaRowe, Hudson/North Hudson...Final Report, March, 1984.
- B. ...Annual Reports of the C., St.P., M, & O.Railway Co. (St. Paul: By Author, 1890, 1891, 1916)
- C. West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. Adaptive Reuse Strategies, (Eau Claire: By Author, 1982).
- D. "Occupied", Hudson Star-Times, March 20, 1891, p. 4.
- E. Easton, Augustus. History of the St. Croix Valley. (Chicago: H.C. Cooper, 1909).

**5** MAP REFERENCE

USGS quad: HUDSON/Zone 15  
scale: 1:24,000

<u>UTM references:</u>	
A. 518780/4982470	H.
B. 519000/4982470	I.
C. 519000/4982120	J.
D. 518760/4981940	K.
E.	L.
F.	M.
G.	N.
	O.

**6** OPINION OF NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY

date: 2/14/84 initials: RL

- eligible     not eligible     unknown  
 national     state     local



HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION  
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF  
WISCONSIN

C., St. P., M. & O. Car Shop Historic District -- Hudson/North Hudson, St. Croix County

Continuation Sheet #1

Boundary Justification (cont.):

north and south, have been excluded, strengthening the compact, cohesive feeling of the district. The Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha Railroad Car Shop Historic District is buffered from the surrounding residential neighborhoods by low-growing brush and maturing trees which physically define the district boundaries. As the nucleus of railroad car construction and repair activity from 1891 to the steady decline of railroad significance in the mid-1930's, the car shops are further defined by their historical character and integrity.

# 7 Description

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General character, building types, styles, environment, important natural and man-made features, qualities that distinguish district from surroundings, nature of intrusions and generally excepted properties.

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The Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha Railroad Car Shop Historic District is a basically rectangular industrial district located in the oldest section of the Village of North Hudson, two blocks west of State Highway 35. Situated on the back 30 acres of an open, flat site, the car shop historic district is comprised of thirteen buildings constructed of red brick with pilasters on granite foundations. The complex is adjacent to the west side of residential North Hudson, roughly bounded by Wisconsin Street North on the south, Gallahad Road on the west, and Fourth Street North on the east side to St. Croix Street North, then to Third Street North.

United as a cohesive district by design, scale, materials, and workmanship, the architecture represents late 19th and early 20th century industrial design. The pivotal buildings generally stand one story with slightly pitched gable roofs featuring simple cruciform brickwork at the cornices. The old storehouse/offices and an east side projection on the former paint and upholstery shop are the only two story structures in the shopyards. Some architectural elements are commonplace on the shop buildings; rows of segmental or rectangular windows with stone lug sills, and large wooden doors, either arched or rectangular, found on major railroad car construction or repair buildings. Three ancillary structures, also located in the complex, contribute to the historical character and integrity of the district and are distinguished from the ten pivotal buildings by their smaller scale.

The C., St. P., M., & O. Car Shops, constructed between 1890 and 1916, originally occupied a rectangular site of 60 acres. Since the railroad discontinued their operation in 1957, the land was sold as individual parcels to individual concerns. Most of the original site remains industrial, although owned by four separate ventures.

The shops are concentrated near the western edge of the middle-lower section of the original site. They are buffered from surrounding residential neighborhoods and transportation routes by low-growing brush and trees. With rivers and lakes as prime residential and recreational locations, coupled with the close proximity of the Twin Cities, residential use of outlying land is expected to increase.

The architectural integrity of the C., St. P., M., & O. Car Shops has, to some degree, been compromised. Many windows have been sealed with concrete block and a 1983 metal addition has been added to the east side of the old wood machine shop. But these intrusions have not reduced the significance of the district, which is strictly historical, and efforts to rehabilitate the former freight car shop are currently in progress. The C., St. P., M., & O. Railroad Car Shop Historic District has been determined eligible by the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, on August 23, 1983.

Although not all interiors were accessible to the surveyor, most interiors retain elements of their historic character, including exposed brick interior walls, skylights, wooden rafters, and large areas of structurally undivided space supported by wooden beams. Losses of interior integrity include re-siding interior walls, some new partitions, and, at least in one case, sandblasting interior brick.

# 8 Significance

## Areas of significance

architecture: Type and period of construction (late nineteenth and early twentieth century industrial architecture) history: Industry  
Transportation  
Period of significance: 1890-1934

## Historical development and statement of significance.

### Significance

The old "Omaha Road" car shops are associated with the industrial development of North Hudson and the entire vicinity. The arrival of the West Wisconsin Railroad in 1871 provided efficient and inexpensive overland transport of raw materials which prompted the local lumber industry to reach an apex. In 1874, the North Wisconsin Railroad built a line connecting Lake St. Croix at North Hudson with Lake Superior at Ashland with a branch to Bayfield. The North Wisconsin absorbed a Hudson-River Falls company and the St. Paul, Stillwater, and Taylor's Falls line, placing their management in the hands of the West Wisconsin Railroad with offices in Hudson. During a reorganization of the system in 1878, these lines were incorporated to form the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha Railroad. The "Omaha Road", as it was commonly known, became a subsidiary of the Chicago-Northwestern Railroad (1882), which continues to occupy part of the historic district, but was maintained as a separate line.

Significance: Associated with the Industry

The impact of railroads in the vicinity of North Hudson reaches deep into local industrial development. During the 1870's, lumbering in the lower St. Croix River Valley was booming. Prior to the advent of the West Wisconsin Railroad in 1871, felling timber was a seasonal vocation and logs were sent down river to mills waiting in Hudson. Railroads allowed the transport of raw materials overland at a reasonable expense which, in turn, lengthened the cutting season and eliminated the hazard of sinking logs. Rail lines were also utilized to export lumber products as an expedient way to meet the increasing demand for milled lumber essential to the nationwide building boom of the later 19th century.

The construction of the Omaha car shops in North Hudson affected local industrial development long after the death of lumber milling in 1917. Originally, car construction and repair shops were built by the West Wisconsin Railroad on the north shore of Lake Mallileau, a broad expanse of water formed by the damming of the mouth of the Willow River. A series of fires destroyed these shops in the late 1880's, by which time the C., St. P., M., & O. Company had assumed ownership of the yards. After considering other communities for shop reconstruction, the Omaha Railroad Company decided to rebuild in North Hudson. Through the efforts of a local committee, spearheaded by railroad land commissioner and industrialist William H. Phipps, a new 60 acre site, directly north of the old yards, was secured and graded for the new complex.

Between 1890 and 1891, six large red brick industrial buildings, a wood dry kiln, and a small brick oil house were erected on the lower third of the acreage. The shop buildings were very specialized and primarily single story structures; a wood machine shop and engine room, blacksmith and iron machine shop, passenger and freight car "erecting" shops, a paint shop, and a two story storage/office building. Large arched doors were placed in every bay on the south side and generally on the north side of major buildings. These doors expedited the conveyance of railroad cars from one structure to another.

The new yards were an expanded and more complete version of their predecessors. Erected at an overall cost of \$250,000, the buildings, excluding the dry kiln,

Significance: Associated with . Industry

have 16 inch brick walls with a course of cruciform brickwork at the cornice, 25 foot ceilings, and spacious open interiors with 12 to 18 inch square wood support columns. The walls are pilastered and rest upon stone foundations. Extra light and ventilation were provided by large windows and monitors which ran the length of the building.

Increasing production warranted the construction of a paint and upholstery shop with a two store section on the east side and annexes to the passenger car shop, storehouse, and wood machine shop around 1904. The buildings and additions constructed at that time were similar in design, but the massive doors became rectangular and iron framing was used on the warehouse addition to the storehouse and trimmed the doors to the paint shop.

In 1916, there was a period of large scale expansion. A machine shop was added to the south end of the blacksmith shop, a wheel shop connected to the freight car facility, and a handcar repair shop was built near the south end of the yards. These structures had rectangular doors and large square windows. During the expansion, all buildings were converted from steam to electric power. A water closet, centrally located between the passenger car shop and the paint/tin shop, and other secondary buildings was erected in 1916. The ancillary structures are contributing factors to the C., St. P., M., and O. Railroad Car Shops Historic District.

The "Omaha" was one of the few lines to build all its own cars. Sixty-five percent of the work concentrated on freight cars and approximately 35 percent on passenger cars. Cycle repairs, also known as periodic or heavy repairs, covered general overhaul of a car after a specific number of years. Light or running repairs took care of minor damages.

When the new shops opened, nearly 160 men were on the roster of employees. But the company hoped to eventually employ between 500 and 700 workers. That number varied over the years. In 1909, Augustus Easton wrote of 400 men working under master car builder John Muncy. (Easton, History of the St. Croix Valley, 1909, p. 835) By 1956, the number had dropped to 16.

Employment in the Omaha car shops had several disadvantages including long hours at low pay. In 1914, for example, a man might start at 14 cents per hour with a chance of earning a 2½ cent raise in six months. Lead poisoning was a particular hazard for those who worked in the paint shops. Working with heavy machinery brought its own risks. There was no sick or vacation days and even when business was good, the threat of layoffs, without unemployment compensation, prevailed.

In July, 1907, the workers demanded a ten percent increase in wages, complaining that those in the North Hudson shops were the lowest paid by the C., St. P., M., and O. Railroad. When the company refused, about 150 men walked off their jobs. The strike was brief, lasting about a day and a half, when an increase was granted and the men resumed their duties.

A 1922 wage strike lasted much longer, generated great animosity, and left bit-

Significance: Associated with . Industry (Cont.)

ter feeling throughout the community. This fact illustrates the significance and effect the shops had on the entire vicinity. In light of this, it is somewhat ironic that only two brief articles appeared in the local press. With some local "scabs" and trainloads of students from the University of Minnesota, the company was able to keep the shops operating. When the strike ended, employees gave credit to their fellow worker S. Klavis Warfield, although not much was gained. Employees returned to work on a wage scale fixed by the Railroad Labor Board. Unions grew stronger over the course of the early twentieth century and worker's benefits rose to include shorter hours, a one week vacation after five years and two weeks after ten years, hospitalization, and insurance.

The railroads steadily declined in the middle decade of the present century despite financial reorganization. The Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha Railroad suffered major economic problems in the 1930's. By the early 1950's, passenger car work was discontinued and layoffs became more frequent. In 1956, the Omaha railroad applied to the Wisconsin Public Service Commission for authority to remove and close the North Hudson shops permanently. But the Village of North Hudson and the City of Hudson brought suit against the railroad to prevent the closure.

Two hearings were held jointly on January 22 and 25th, 1957 to debate the issue of whether shop abandonment was in the best interest of the public and its impact on shop employees. After stressing the consideration to economize and consolidate, the railroad company proposed its removal of the shops to Clinton, Iowa citing North Hudson's adverse climate and geographic location. Finally, after tense and heated debate, the decision to close the shop yards, the vicinity's economic and industrial mainstay for nearly a century, became a reality.

Railroad car construction and repair was the major economic support of the locality for over fifty years. The shop yards generated a thriving industry which exceeded the duration of any previously established counterpart. To date, the total acreage of the yards has been parceled to individual interests for warehousing and light industry while the southern portion remains under ownership of the Chicago-Northwestern Railroad. A few distinct changes have effected the architectural integrity of the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha Railroad Car Shops Historic District, but interested concerns attracted by the possibilities of tax investment credits are attempting to reverse the intrusions. The historical significance of the old shops as a major contributor to the industrial development of North Hudson and the entire vicinity has not been compromised by the alterations. The Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha Railroad Car Shops have been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior on August 23, 1983.

Significance: Architecture

The C., ST. P., M., and O. Railroad Car Shops Historic District is architecturally significant as a good example of late nineteenth and early twentieth century industrial design as adapted to the needs of a railroad repair operation. Like other industrial buildings of the period, the car shops are characterized by broad openings (windows and doors) to facilitate ventilation, light, and movement of the cars. Some of the buildings have monitor roofs, as well. Interior space is largely undivided (except where recent partitions have been built) with wooden rafters and beams and plain brick walls. Strictly utilitarian in design, the buildings are architecturally united by decorative cruciform patterns which ornament the cornices. As an intact example of industrial architecture of the period, the car shops are unique in the Hudson-North Hudson area.

Significance: Transportation

The C., ST. P., M., and O. Railroad Car Shops Historic District is the best remaining resource associated with the development and lasting impact of rail transportation in the Hudson- North Hudson area. The first rail line to reach the vicinity was originally chartered in 1863 and known as the Tomah and Lake St. Croix Railroad. By the time it finally reached Hudson in 1871, it had been re-incorporated as the West Wisconsin Railroad. The arrival of the line was a boom to the community by facilitating the transportation of lumber products as well as passengers. The impact was compounded the following year when the West Wisconsin line moved its car repair and construction shops from Eau Claire to North Hudson. By 1878, the West Wisconsin merged with various other lines to form the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha Road. As the new system expanded, the car shops in North Hudson were enlarged, and when new shops were built in the early 1890s, the increased capacity of the buildings reflected the company's increased business. The rail system continued to be the lifeblood of the community into the twentieth century, connecting Hudson and North Hudson with the rest of the nation as well as providing a major employment opportunity for its residents. Some structures associated with the rail system--including the original North Hudson railroad passenger depot--have been destroyed. The only remaining depot structures are a passenger depot built in the late 19th century to service the Hudson-River Falls line (a part of the C., ST. P., M., AND O. system) which was dismantled and rebuilt by 1900 and has recently been re-sided and adapted to commercial use (100 Commercial Street, Hudson). The main C. ST. P., M., and O. depot in Hudson also survives (on St. Croix Street). Built about 1892, further research is necessary to determine the structures role in Hudson history.

OWNERS LIST FOR

Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha R.R. Car Shop Historic District

MULTIPLE RESOURCES OF HUDSON AND NORTH HUDSON, ST CROIX COUNTY, WISCONSIN

Mr. Robert Dowden  
c/o St. Croix Ventures  
Monroe Street North  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

Mr. Lee Golike  
Bugatti, Inc.  
Monroe Street North  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

Mr. William Plourde  
U.S. Metal  
Monroe Street North  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

Management Offices  
Jones Chemical Corp.  
Monroe Street North  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

Chicago-Northwestern Railroad Company  
Hudson, Wisconsin Depot  
St. Croix Street  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

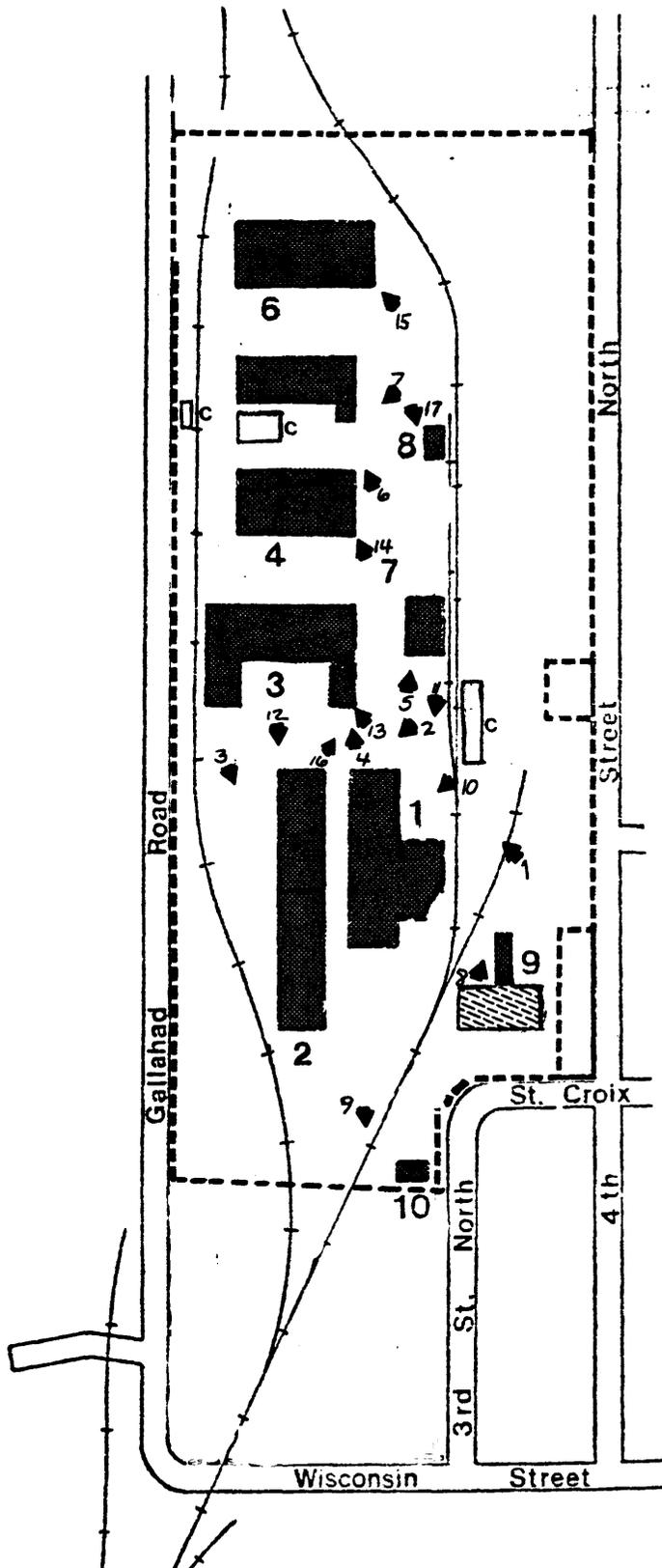
KEY: P= Pivotal  
C= Contributing  
NC= Non-Contributing

CHICAGO, ST. PAUL, MINNEAPOLIS, and OMAHA  
RAILROAD CAR SHOP HISTORIC DISTRICT

<u>Photo/Map Code</u>	<u>Map No./Building Letter/Original Use /Class.</u>
9/26,27; 38/21	1 Building "A"/Wood Machine Shop-P
9/28,29	2 Building "B"/Blacksmith and Iron Shop-P
9/30; 36/8	3 Building "C"/Frèight Car Shop-P
36/9	4 Building "D"/Passenger Car Shop-P
36/10	5 Building "E"/Paint and Tin Shop-P
36/13,14	6 Building "F"/Paint and Upholstery Shop-P
36/16	7 Building "G"/Storehouse-P
36/15	8 Building "H"/Oil House-P
9/31,32	9 Building "I"/Dry Kiln-P
38/22	10 Building "J"/Hand Car Repair Shop-P
38/19	Secondary/(Storage)-C
36/11	Secondary/(Water Closet)-C
36/12	Secondary/(Hose House)-C

# C.St.P.M. & O. RAILROAD CAR SHOPS HISTORIC DISTRICT

Hudson/No. Hudson  
Intensive Survey  
AUGUST 1983



## LEGEND

- ▲ Photo view
- Non-contributing  Pivotal 
- Contributing 
- District Boundary
- 1- Wood Machine Shop
- 2- Blacksmith & Iron Machine Shop
- 3- Freight Car Shop
- 4- Passenger Car Shop
- 5- Paint & Tin Shop
- 6- Paint & Upholstery Shop
- 7- Store House
- 8- Oil House
- 9- Dry Kiln
- 10- Hand Car Repair Shop
- c- Contributing Shed

## NORTH HUDSON



NOT TO SCALE