

79001216

HISTORIC NAME: Winona and St. Peter Freight Depot

APR 16 1979

COUNTY: Brown  
CITY/TWP.: Sleepy Eye

CURRENT NAME:

LEGAL DESC.: See attached

ADDRESS: Oak Street N.E.

<b>CLASSIFICATION:</b>	<b>CONDITION:</b>	<b>SIGNIFICANCE:</b>	<b>THEME/S:</b>
Building <u>X</u>	Excellent _____	Local <u>X</u>	Primary <u>Transportation</u>
Structure _____	Good <u>X</u>	State _____	Secondary _____
Object _____	Fair _____	National _____	Others _____
District _____	Deteriorated _____		

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No X Restricted \_\_\_\_\_  
 VISIBLE FROM THE ROAD: Yes X No \_\_\_\_\_  
 OCCUPIED: Yes X No \_\_\_\_\_

PRESENT USE:  
Office/Warehouse

DATE CONSTRUCTED: ca.1887 ORIGINAL USE: Combination depot  
 ORIGINAL OWNER: Winona & St. Peter Railroad ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Winona and St. Peter Railroad

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: Joseph S. Pietrus  
 610 First Avenue North S.E.  
 Sleepy Eye, MN 56085  
 LOCAL CONTACT/Org.: Brown County Historical Society  
 27 No. Broadway, New Ulm, MN 56073  
 FORM PREPARED BY: Dennis Gimmetad.  
 DATE: January 1979

ACREAGE: Less than one acre X  
 UTM REFERENCE:  
 15 / 362690 / 4906260  
 Sleepy Eye Quad

**DESCRIPTION:**

The Winona and St. Peter Freight Depot in Sleepy Eye remains at an original trackside location on Oak Street Northeast. The rectangular frame building utilizes vertical board and batten siding and heavy brackets under a wide overhang of a gable roof. One window on the west end has been eliminated and a doorway has been moved from the south end of the west side to the west end of the south side; otherwise, distinctive framing and original fenestration appear to be intact (some windows have been fitted with removable board coverings). Large freight doors are located on both the street and track sides of the main (freight) room of the building. A "warm-room" lean-to, added at an early but uncertain date, covers a third large freight door on the east end.

The interior of the freight room retains original features, including timbered framing. The office area of the interior at the west end has been remodeled to accommodate later use of the building as a private office and warehouse.

According to local tradition, the building was utilized as a combination freight and passenger terminal until the neighboring brick station was built in 1902. Physical evidence suggests that what is now a larger office room and smaller storage room at the west end could once have been two equal-sized rooms, possibly to accommodate a waiting room and a depot office. If so, the resulting plan (dividing the three rooms by walls in a "T" shape) was a departure from the usual linear three-room plans of combination depots.

**SIGNIFICANCE:**

The role of the railroad in establishing the community network and in the agricultural development is discussed in the Historical Description and Significance sections of the MRN. The Winona and St. Peter Line, extending lengthwise across the county, was one of the first to reach western Minnesota in the early 1870s. With the exception of a short spur line extending northwest from Sleepy Eye, the Winona and St. Peter remained the only rail line in the county until the turn of the century.

No "initial" railroad buildings (that is, those built at the time the tracks were constructed) remain along the Winona and St. Peter in Brown County. The Sleepy Eye Freight Depot is the earliest known building along that line, as well as the only surviving wooden depot in Brown County. (Other known extant railroad buildings are limited to the masonry New Ulm and Sleepy Eye Depots and the frame Comfrey Section House - gone are all the other frame depots and section houses as well as a large round house/shops building at Sleepy Eye.) The structure is significant as the earliest known surviving building clearly associated with the important early years of railroad development in the county.

Winona and St. Peter Freight Depot -- Brown County -- Sleepy Eye, MN

Legal Description:

That part of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$  Sec. 29, T110,R32 bounded as follows:  
Commencing at the intersection of the west line of Third Street and the NW line of Oak St., SWLY along said NWLY line of Oak St. a distance of 304' to POB; thence NWLY at right angles to last described course a distance of 40' more or less to a point distant 8.5' SELY measured at right angles from the center line of CNW RR Co. Spur track I.C.C. #40 as said Spur track is now located; thence SWLY parallel with said Spur track center line a distance of 95'; thence SELY at right angles to last described course a distance of 40' more or less to a point on NWLY line of said Oak St.; thence NELY along said NWLY line of Oak St. a distance of 95' more or less to POB.