



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Nomination 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 any 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 WCF&N Center Point Depot and Substation
other names/site number Cedar Valley Road Center Point Depot; Center Point Depot

2. Location

street & number 700 Washington St. not for publication N/A
city or town Center Point vicinity N/A
state IA county Linn code 113 zip code 52213

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 19 Jan 2018
Signature of certifying official Date

State Historical Society of Iowa
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 commenting or other official 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):

Signature of Keeper Patrick Andrews Date of Action 3/7/2018

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 count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/rail-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum

RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Mission

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls STUCCO

BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other _____

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)

ARCHITECTURE

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1914-1956

Significant Dates

1914

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Waterloo, Cedar Falls & Northern Interurban

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: _____

WCF&N Center Point Depot and Substation
Name of Property

Linn County, IA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

LAT/LON References

(Place additional LAT/LON references on a continuation sheet) **NAD83**

	Zone	Latitude	Longitude		Zone	Latitude	Longitude
1	<u>15</u>	<u>42.19296</u>	<u>-91.78135</u>	3	<u>15</u>	<u>42.19249</u>	<u>-91.78151</u>
2	<u>15</u>	<u>42.19259</u>	<u>-91.78115</u>	4	<u>15</u>	<u>42.19266</u>	<u>-91.78160</u>

X 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

name/title Leah D. Rogers/Principal Investigator

organization Tallgrass Archaeology LLC date January 11, 2018

street & number 2460 S. Riverside Dr. telephone 319-354-6722

city or town Iowa City state IA zip code 52246

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.)

name Brent Olesen, Chair, Linn County Board of Supervisors

street & number 935 2nd St. SW telephone 319-892-5000

city or town Cedar Rapids state IA zip code 52404

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.

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7. Narrative Description

The WCF&N (Waterloo, Cedar Falls & Northern) Center Point Depot and Substation is in the city of Center Point in the northwest quadrant of Linn County, Iowa. The WCF&N was an electric interurban railway also known as "The Cedar Valley Road" and had plaques on the depots and main bridges carrying that name and logo. The Center Point building is located on the southwest side of the former WCF&N interurban grade, which is now part of the Cedar Valley Nature Trail. The former depot and substation building currently functions as a historical museum operated by the Center Point Historical Society and as a rest stop for trail users. The trail and the building are owned by Linn County and maintained by the Linn County Conservation Board. In Center Point, the building is located east of Franklin Street. This is the main north-south route through town and is just south of Washington Street where that street intersects with the grades of the former interurban and the former main-line Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad. Neither rail line is extant, with only the grade of the interurban railway now part of the Cedar Valley Nature Trail. The former depot of the Rock Island Railroad was on the east side of the railroad tracks opposite the interurban depot, but the Rock Island Depot is non-extant.

The nominated property includes the building that housed the WCF&N passenger and freight depot and the electrical substation in three distinct sections of the building. The nominated property also includes the site surrounding all four sides of the building including the lawn area, remnant brick pavement, and the concrete pad where the outdoor electrical transfer structure once stood. Both the site and the building are counted as contributing to the nominated property.

The former WCF&N Depot in Center Point, Iowa, is one of eight that were built along the Waterloo to Cedar Rapids section of the WCF&N line. The other depots included those at Gilbertville, La Porte City, Brandon, Urbana, Lafayette, Robins, and Shaver (north side of Cedar Rapids).

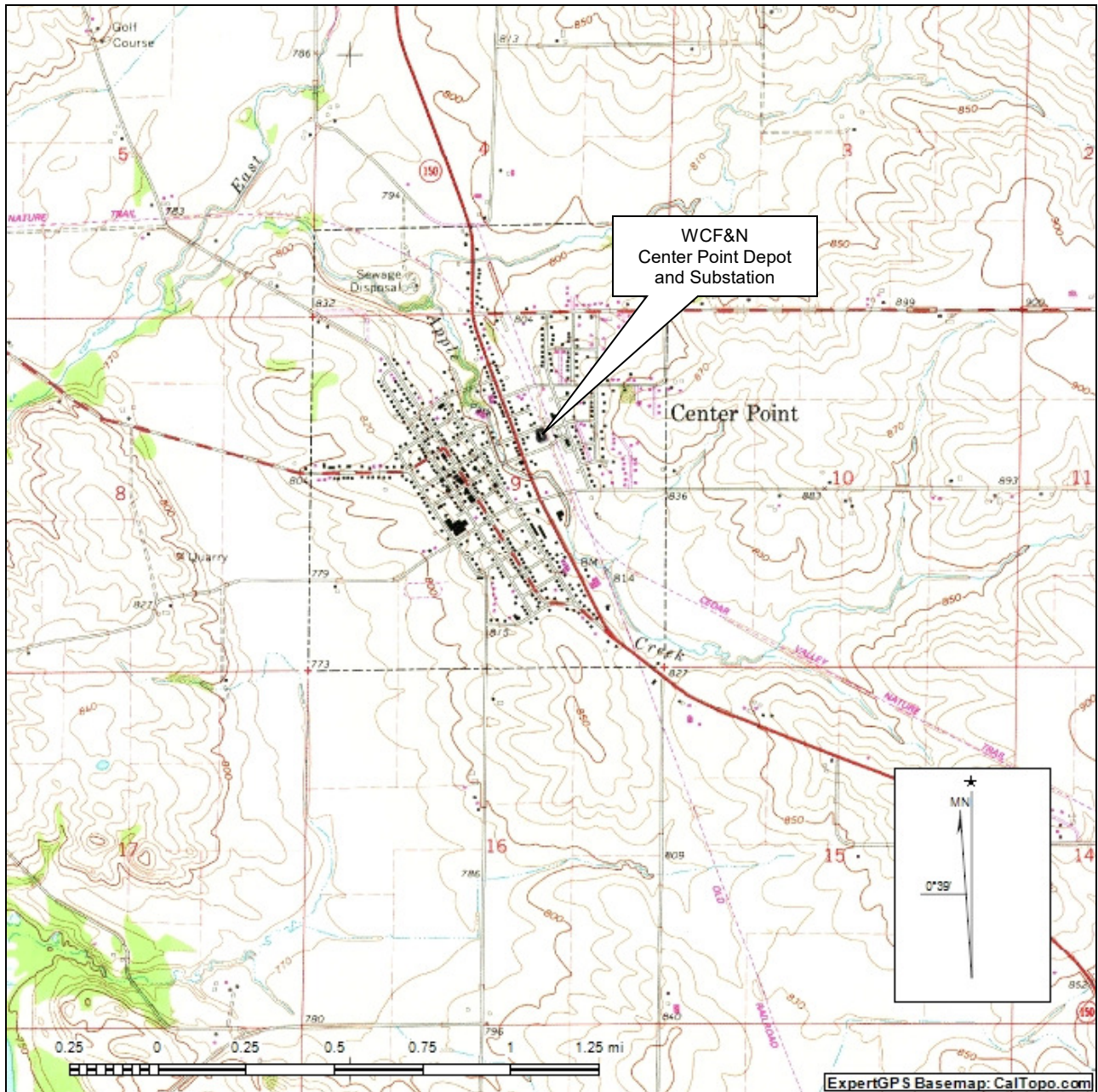
The Center Point depot is distinguished by a two-story, front-gabled substation room that occupies the south end of the building. The ticket office/waiting room was in the center section of the one-story, hip-roofed section on the north side of the substation. The freight warehouse occupied the north end of the one-story, hip-roofed section. The walls are built of tile blocks that are stuccoed on the exterior and painted white. The water-table level of the exterior wall is faced with rough-faced, dark red vitrified bricks, with the brick section capped with a concrete course and having a concrete footer to shed water away from the concrete foundation. There is no basement in this building but there is a crawlspace under all but the substation portion of the building. There are several windows with window wells for the crawlspace.

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Topographic map showing location of WCF&N Center Point Depot and Substation.

Source: USGS Center Point, IA Quadrangle, 7.5' Series, 1994, obtained from ExpertGPS mapping software, 2017.

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Aerial map showing the nomination boundary of the WCF&N Center Point Depot and Substation as a black dashed outline. Source for base map: 2014 aerial obtained from the Linn County GIS website accessed at <https://gis.linncounty.org/webapps/auditor/landrecords/>, 2017.

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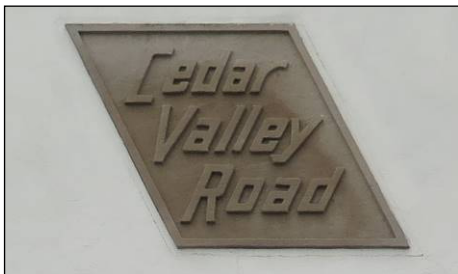
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WCF&N Center Point Depot and Substation looking NW. Photograph taken by Leah Rogers, December 31, 2016.

The façade of the building fronts the railway grade to the east and was the formal front of the building. The two-story section façade features a raised gabled parapet capped with concrete coping that peaks at the top and flares at each end. The attic-level of the gable end features a centered round-arched, 6/6 sash window with dark red brick round-arched surround featuring a quoined effect. In-between the attic level and the ground level of this section is an inset concrete plaque embossed with “Cedar Valley Road” and featuring the left-angled parallelogram logo of the interurban line. On the ground floor of the two-story façade is a centered double-wide, wood-paneled utility door with three rows of two-pane windows on each door. This utility door opens into the interior and provided entry into the substation for workers and was not for public access. The utility door is flanked by two single rectangular windows that have 6/6 sash windows that are replacement windows but resemble the original windows.



Name plaque and logo for the “Cedar Valley Road” on the façade of the WCF&N Center Point Depot and Substation.

Photograph taken by Leah Rogers, December 31, 2016.

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The façade of the one-story section of the building consists of two sections. The center section has a wood-paneled and six-lite entry door with a vertical three-lite transom window and flanked by two single 6/1 sash windows to the left of the rounded ticket office bay window. The bay window has a single 6/1 sash window in each of the three sides. To the right of the bay window is another door flanked by two windows identical to the entrance door to the left of the bay window. These entry doors were the public access into the ticket office and waiting room areas on the interior of the center section.

The facade of the east section of the one-story portion of the building has a centered, double-wide freight door that slides to the right on the interior. This door is a wood-paneled door identical to the look of the double-wide doors on the substation section of the building except the substation doors do not slide. There is a brass handle on the left side of the freight door for opening. The freight door is flanked by single 6/6 sash windows.

The north wall of the building has a double-wide, wood-paneled sliding door identical to the other sliding door, except that this door slides to the left on the interior instead of to the right. The west wall of the one-story section of the building has two single 6/6 sash windows on the freight room section. The ticket office/waiting room section has two doors identical to the wood-paneled doors with transom windows on the façade, but on the west-side the doors only have a single window to the right of one door and to the left of the second door. These windows are 6/1 sash type.

There is a single door with transom window on the north side of the two-story section providing worker access into the power room. This door and the single-pane transom window are modern replacements. This door is now the main entrance into the current museum from the west-side parking lot. The west gable-end wall has the same fenestration and raised parapet on the east façade of the two-story section of the building. The only difference is that the double-wide door is raised above ground level for loading off a wagon or truck backed up to the building. Both this door and the one on the east gable end open into the interior rather than slide like the freight doors. There are two concrete curbs/retaining walls that form the edges of a driveway leading up to the west-side door.

The south wall of the substation room has three single 6/6 sash windows centered on the wall and flanked by single 6/6 sash windows to either side. Directly above the three centered windows are three square openings halfway up the second story that house the glazed ceramic insulators through which the electrical conduits were threaded. These conduits connected the exterior electrical transfer lines to the interior power house and rotary generators.



Close-up view of the insulators that extend through the south wall of the substation section of the Center Point Depot looking North at the exterior.

Photograph taken by Leah Rogers,
December 31, 2016.

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The roof is covered with asphalt shingles in a pattern that resembles the original asbestos shingles on this roof. There is a corbelled dark red brick chimney on the roof ridge of the center section of the building. The hipped roof and the front-gabled roof both have wide eave overhangs and exposed rafter ends that are both plain and shaped with a curvilinear and angled profile. The soffits are faced with beaded board, with ventilation holes on the frieze board around the entire roofline. Most of the ventilation holes have small circular grate covers. A modern gutter system is attached to the fascia boards on all sides of the building.



Detail of beaded-board soffit, plain, shaped exposed rafter ends, and ventilation holes in frieze board at the NW corner of the Center Point Depot building. Photograph taken by Leah Rogers, December 31, 2016.

Other exterior features include the square concrete pad on top of which sat the metal superstructure that held the exterior electrical transfer equipment. This superstructure was bolted into the concrete pad. The metal structure was removed when the interurban ceased running in the mid-20th century. There is also a square concrete base for the former signal tower off the front of the building between the depot and the interurban grade. Three sections of brick pavers serve as walkways up to the main entry doors on the east side and are original; however, one is only partially paved with bricks and the rest with gravel. Grass is now between the sections of pavers where originally there was some type of pavement, either brick or gravel. One other original feature on the exterior was a wooden sign painted with "Center Point." This

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sign was above the ticket office bay window. The sign is extant but is now on the interior of the bay window rather than the exterior to protect it from weathering and vandalism. A bronze plaque is now affixed to the façade of the freight room section. This plaque reads “The Depot/Cedar Valley Nature Trail/originally constructed in 1914/was renovated/with funding from/The Glenn G. Herrick Estate/and/The People of the State of Iowa/1984.”¹ This renovation was the first to refurbish and restore the building, which had fallen into disrepair by the 1980s. Since that time, the building has undergone a second renovation in 1998 to again refurbish the exterior and to adapt the interior for use as the Depot Museum. One final detail of note on the exterior are the old interurban rails that have been cut into sections and set vertically into the ground at each corner of the building like fence posts. These rails serve to protect the corners of the building from being hit by lawn mowers and other machinery.



Photograph of the east side of the Center Point Depot showing the square concrete base where the signal post was once attached and some of the brick-paved brick sidewalks between the depot and the former interurban grade.

Note the rough-faced dark red brick veneer on the water table course of the building.

Photograph taken by Leah Rogers, December 31, 2016.

¹ The rehabilitation of the Gilbertville WCF&N Depot was also funded by the Glenn G. Herrick Estate.

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Photograph of the south side of the Center Point Depot showing the concrete pad (in foreground with two picnic tables on top) where the electrical transfer superstructure once stood next to the substation.

Photograph taken by Leah Rogers, December 31, 2016.

The interior is subdivided into three sections. As noted above, the two-story section on the south end housed the electrical substation transformer including two rotary converters. The interior space was open and was fire-proofed with a concrete ceiling, concrete floor, and brick courses where the rafters meet the main tile block walls. The three electrical conduits in the south wall still retain the large ceramic insulators, which are three in a row centered on the upper portion of the south wall.

The Center Point substation originally housed “two 650-volt, 500kv, 500-rpm Allis-Chalmer’s rotary converters, which were mounted on two wooden blocks” (“The Train Stations,” exhibit text WCF&N, Center Point Depot Museum, Center Point, Iowa).²

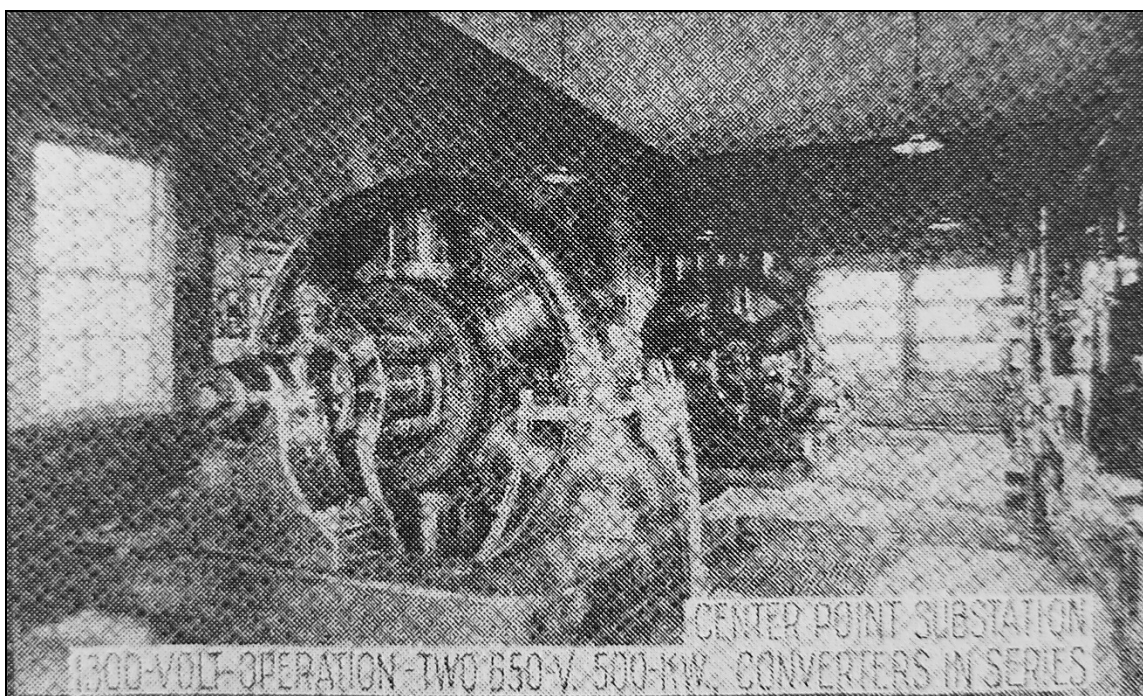
² The main powerhouse was in western Waterloo and generated the electrical power which was transmitted over the high-tension lines to the various interurban stations. An alternating current (AC) was produced by the powerhouse. The AC current was

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The substation converted the high voltage, sent from the powerhouse, into lower voltage using three Allis-Chalmer's 800/400-volt transformers. A Westinghouse electrolyte lightening arrester provided added protection for the substation ("The Train Stations," exhibit text WCF&N, Center Point Depot Museum, Center Point, Iowa).



Circa 1917 photograph of the interior of the Center Point substation and the two rotary converters.
Source: Westinghouse 1917:73.

When the interurban ceased operations, the machinery and transfer equipment was removed from the building both on the interior and the exterior. Today, this room is still open to the ceiling but has an enclosed two-story frame section centered on the north wall and extending out towards the center of the room. This added enclosure has office and storage space for the museum and includes a set of wooden stairs up to a second level. The museum exhibits in the substation room wrap around the office/storage addition.

converted to direct current (DC) at each of the substations along the route. Some of the towns along the route also benefitted from the electricity generated by the WCF&N including Denver, Glasgow, Gilbertville, La Porte City, Brandon, and Urbana. There were three AC lines that ran along the top of the vertical Western Cedar poles that lined the interurban line. The AC lines carried the current from the powerhouse to the substations. The lower part of the poles carried the DC current lines that powered the rail cars. The poles also supported the catenary trolley suspension and the telegraph and transmission lines ("Electrical Power," exhibit text WCF&N, Center Point Depot Museum, Center Point, Iowa).

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Interior of the substation power room section of the Center Point Depot looking WSW.

Note the row of three insulators in the wall to the left. Photograph taken by Leah Rogers, March 18, 2017.

From the substation room, one can enter the rest of the museum space through an original entry door that leads into one of the waiting room areas in the one-story section of the building. The waiting room space wraps around the ticket office, which is enclosed on the interior and has two ticket windows, one on the west end and one on the north wall. The waiting room areas were open and now contain museum exhibits, including an exhibit on the history of the WCF&N and the Center Point Depot and original artifacts from the WCF&N.

The interior of the ticket office includes built-in desk tops at each window, including the bay window where the original painted "Center Point" sign is now affixed to the edge of the desk below the windows. The ticket office windows on the west and north sides have the original wooden-framed, textured glass panes that slide up. There is also a set of cabinets below the west desk that have the original bead-board doors. The brick chimney visible on the exterior roof ridge is exposed on the northwest corner of the ticket office interior. The original electrical switch box is on the south wall of the interior of the ticket office. Each switch has written in chalk what room or machinery the switch controlled. Legible labels include ones that read "Semaphore," "Office," and "Freight Room." The panel board has two metal labels affixed that read: "Crouse-Hinds/Panels/Syracuse, N.Y. U.S.A./Cat. No. 50" and "Underwriters Laboratories, Inc./Inspected/ Panelboard/No. 19234." The panelboard has a metal door that can be locked.

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Interior of the waiting room looking ESE at the ticket office in the Center Point Depot.
Photograph taken by Leah Rogers, March 18, 2017.



Interior of ticket office of Center Point Depot looking west. Metal switch panel in ticket office.
Photographs taken by Leah Rogers, March 18, 2017.

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The interior of the freight room can be accessed on the interior from a door between the north side of the waiting room and the open freight room to the north. The wide wooden floorboards in the freight room are original as are the large sliding doors. The east half of the freight room remains open to the roof, with the rafters exposed as is the wooden truss system of the hipped roofline. The interior walls of the freight room consist of the exposed tile block walls as they were originally. Also of note are the vertical-board frameworks into which each of the two large doors slide when opened. These frameworks keep the doors from swinging off their tracks. Historical photographs show that originally, the north-side freight door was above ground, with the foundation exposed about one to two feet above the sloping ground surface. This raised freight door would have provided access for wagons and trucks to pull up to the north end of the depot for loading freight that had come off the trains. In later years, the ground was leveled on this side so that the doors are now at ground level.

The west half of the freight room is now occupied by two modern restrooms and a mechanical closet. The framing and paneling of this modern addition can be removed if there was ever a desire to restore the space back to its original open space. However, the current freight room space functions well for trail users, with picnic tables in the open space and the restrooms for public use.



Interior of freight room looking SSE at tile block wall and roof truss and rafters. **Interior of freight room looking NNW at sliding doors.**
Photographs taken by Leah Rogers, March 18, 2017.

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All the windows and doors on the interior are framed with oak that was refinished and refurbished in the late 1990s renovation. The mopboards and picture railing in the waiting room area are also oak. The hardwood floors have been replaced in the waiting rooms. The concrete floor of the substation is now carpeted.

By the 1980s, the Center Point Depot had sat vacant and neglected for many years. The roof leaked, and trees and shrubbery had become overgrown around the building. Much of the original exterior stucco was beyond repair and had to be removed and all but two of the windows had to be replaced. Photographs taken during the 1983-84 renovation show the stucco removed and the tile block walls exposed on the exterior. Most of the windows were boarded over, while others were missing the glass panes or had broken panes. On the interior, water damage from the leaking roof had damaged and destroyed much of the original plastered walls.



WCF&N Center Point Depot and Substation as it looked in the 1980s prior to the first rehabilitation.
Photograph on file Center Point Depot Museum collections, Center Point Historical Society, Center Point, Iowa.

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Gable-end of WCF&N Center Point Depot and Substation in the 1980s prior to first rehabilitation. Window panes in the gable-end are missing as are some of the panes in the freight doors, with the flanking windows boarded over.



Interior of WCF&N Center Point Depot and Substation in the 1980s prior to first rehabilitation.
Photographs on file State Historical Society of Iowa, Center Point Depot files, Des Moines, Iowa.

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Photograph from the 1980s rehabilitation showing the stucco removed from the exterior of the Center Point Depot.
Photograph on file Center Point Depot Museum collections, Center Point Historical Society, Center Point, Iowa.

A second restoration effort was undertaken in 1998-99 to convert most of the interior into space useable for a historical museum. The design work was performed by Martin Design, P.C., of Marion, Iowa. Funding for the project came from a Revitalization Assistance for Community Improvement (RACI) grant in the amount of \$10,000. This grant is a program of the Prairie Meadows Racetrack and Casino. The Center Point Historical Society also contributed money from their general operating fund along with donations from the City of Center Point and Linn County. Others contributed their labor to the project (*Linn News-Letter*, August 25, 1998). The exterior rehabilitation portion of that project was not fully completed until 2013. The project plans were executed through the Iowa Department of Transportation's Project Development Division (Project No. STP-E-57(37)--8V-57) under the review of the State Historic Preservation Office.

The various renovations included: the installation of new hardwood floors in the ticket office and waiting room space and drywall on the interior walls of the substation room and the ticket office and waiting rooms; the of addition of an interior office/storage room to a portion of the power room space; the replacement of the concrete floor in the power room with two inches of new concrete with carpet installed on top of the concrete floor; the addition of rest rooms and a mechanical closet to the west half of the freight room; the repair of the roof and chimneys; and the repair of all loose and defective masonry and stucco. The interior of the substation was taken to the tile block walls, with new metal studs and drywall put in place. The original metal conduits were removed from underneath the concrete floor.

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The architectural style of the Center Point Depot reflects influence from the Mission style and the Prairie/Craftsman styles of architecture, all popular in the early 20th century. Most of the WCF&N depots built around the same time were more influenced by the Prairie/Craftsman styles, with the Center Point Depot being notable for its Mission influence. This is seen in the raised shaped parapets, the round-arched windows, and the stuccoed exterior. The other depots were faced with brick on the exterior and had hip-roofed substation sections rather than the front-gabled section of the Center Point Depot. Only the La Porte City original depot and substation was of a different style defined as "Georgian Revival" in the National Register nomination for that property (Bowers 1979). However, that station in its original state had some Mission elements in an arcaded porte-cochere across one end and corbels under the eaves. The porte-cochere and corbels had been long-removed prior to the nomination of that property.

Seven Aspects of Integrity

The WCF&N Center Point Depot and Substation retains integrity with respect to the following seven aspects of historic integrity:

Location - The WCF&N Center Depot and Substation retains integrity of location because the building is at its original 1914 site and on its original foundation. Unlike many railroad depots in Iowa, this building was never considered for moving and fortunately did not meet the same fate as the nearby Rock Island Railroad Depot, which was demolished.

Design - The building also has integrity of design because it retains its original form, plan, space, structure, and style. Comparing the depot today to historical photographs shows that by the 1980s, the building was badly deteriorated but had been little changed other than losing most of its windows. The renovations to the building in the 1980s and 1990s followed the original design and plan of the building and restored wherever possible and replaced only where needed and then with like materials and in like design. The only modifications have been the modern interior additions to make the interior useable for the museum and recreational activities. However, those additions were built so that they can be removed if a more complete restoration of the depot to its original state is ever desired.

Setting - The building retains integrity of setting because the railroad association of the building is still recognizable in its current setting. The grade of the old interurban line is still visible as a gravel-paved pedestrian and bike trail. The grain elevators typical of railroad hubs are still present across the tracks to the northeast of the depot. The only real loss to this setting was the demolition of the Rock Island Railroad passenger and freight depots, which were two separate buildings located across the tracks to the east and southeast of the WCF&N depot. To the north and west of the extant depot are dwellings of historical age, many of which either pre-date the WCF&N Depot or were contemporaneous with the depot in their construction. The major modern change to the setting was the construction of a paved parking lot to the west and south of the depot building. This parking lot is both for the museum and for users of the trail and is considered a low impact to the depot's setting.

Materials - The building retains integrity of materials because enough of the original materials are still in place and have been refurbished. These materials include: the tile block structural walls; the exterior brick veneer at the water table; the wooden trusses and rafters of the roof structure; the concrete parapets; the original window fenestration; many of the original doors; the original floor boards in the freight room; some of the original interior oak woodwork; the ticket office

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desks, cabinets, and switch panel; and the large glazed ceramic electrical insulators embedded in the south wall of the substation section of the building. The 1980s-1990s rehabilitation projects had to remove and replace the deteriorated exterior stucco; replace most of the windows; remove and replace the damaged hardwood floors in the waiting rooms and ticket office; and remove the damaged interior plaster and replace with drywall.

Workmanship - The building retains integrity of workmanship because the original structure and design of the building is still extant. The building still conveys the workmanship that went into its original design and construction as evidenced in the masonry work, the woodwork, and the roof structure as well as the overall style of the original building.

Feeling - The building also retains integrity of feeling because it evokes a sense of time and place as a railroad depot. It is immediately recognizable as a depot and its affiliation with the Cedar Valley Road is still proclaimed by the original sign plaque. The fact that this was an electrified railway is also evidenced by the retention of the electrical insulator conduits in the south wall of the building.

Association - Finally, the building retains integrity of association because it is immediately recognizable for its historical association with the former Cedar Valley Road as proclaimed by the name plaque on the building and for its association with rail transportation in general.

Future Plans

The NRHP nomination of the WCF&N Center Point Depot and Substation is being completed as the culmination of the years of restoration and rehabilitation to its current state. It is also being nominated to recognize the architectural significance of this building and its historical association with the WCF&N Interurban Railway. The nomination will also assist in future efforts to maintain this historic building. The continued maintenance and use of this building is a joint effort by the Linn County Conservation Board and the Center Point Historical Society, with both the county and the historical society committed to this building in the long term. It is certainly a landmark in the Center Point community and one of only two restored depots on the Cedar Valley Nature Trail. The other depot is in Gilbertville.

The nomination effort has been funded by Linn County and completed by the consulting firm of Tallgrass Archaeology LLC of Iowa City. Shaun Reilly of the Linn County Conservation Board, Sharon Hannen of the Center Point Historical Society, and the Linn County Historic Preservation Commission assisted with this study and provided historical information concerning the WCF&N and the Center Point Depot and personal knowledge of depot restoration efforts through the years. Architect, David Martin of Martin Gardner Architecture, P.C., shared his knowledge of the depot rehabilitation in the 1990s-2000s.

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8. Narrative Statement of Significance

The WCF&N (Waterloo, Cedar Falls & Northern) Center Point Depot and Substation is locally significant under Criteria A and C for its historical associations and architectural distinction.³ The depot is one of three of the WCF&N depots, outside of Waterloo, that retain good integrity and only one of two located alongside the original interurban line that have been restored. The other two depots are those in Gilbertville and in La Porte City (listed in the NRHP). The depot in La Porte City has not been restored as a depot building but is maintained and still in use as the city hall. Thus, the depot in Center Point is one of only a few that still convey their historical association with the WCF&N, which was one of Iowa's major interurban lines in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This interurban line is significant for its innovation as an electrified line built to steam railroad specifications so that freight could be exchanged with the connecting steam railroads. The Center Point Depot was also designed in the Mission style of architecture more so than the Prairie School and Craftsman styles, which were more typical of the WCF&N "standard" depot designs. The Center Point Depot also provided residents with additional access to the urban centers of Cedar Rapids and Waterloo at a time when automobile transportation was just beginning to develop and expand. The period of significance for this building is from 1914, when the depot was built and officially put into operation, to 1956 when the last passenger interurban run was made through Center Point. The significant date is 1914. This date also conveys the period when the WCF&N expanded from Waterloo to Cedar Rapids providing a true metropolitan interurban connection.

Construction of the Waterloo, Cedar Falls and Northern Interurban Rail Line

The Waterloo, Cedar Falls and Northern (WCF&N) interurban rail line (aka, the "Cedar Valley Road") was an electric rail line that provided passenger and freight service between Cedar Rapids, Waterloo, Cedar Falls, and Waverly, Iowa. When completed, this line was considered among the better built interurban lines in the state and was called "a steam railroad with a trolley wire over it" because of the substantial nature of its construction (Donovan 1954:186). This interurban was distinctive because it was built to steam railroad specifications so that freight could be interchanged between the steam railroads and the electric lines (*Trains*, January 1949:13). Interchange connections were made with the Illinois Central, the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific, and the Chicago Great Western railroads ("The Cedar Valley Road," exhibit text for the WCF&N, Center Point Depot Museum, Center Point, Iowa).

When Westinghouse wanted an outstanding example of the electric freight haulage in the heyday of the interurban it chose the WCF&N. As a result the manufacturing concern published an attractive 84-page book title *The Story of the Cedar Valley Road* to show what could be done to build up a lucrative freight business. Later *Electric Traction* conducted speed contests to stimulate faster running. A score of electric roads were listed each year, but only one appeared from Iowa. That was the "Cedar Valley Road." It ranked ninth in 1929 and in 1930. The average speed for both years was 45.9 m.p.h. on the 64-mile Cedar Rapids-Waterloo run (Donovan 1954:186).

The rail line had its roots in the Waterloo Street Railway Company, which began running horse-drawn streetcars between E. 4th and West Bluff streets in 1885. This initial streetcar service suffered when two major railroads, the Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Northern and the Illinois Central established depots in the downtown area. In 1892, a group of Waterloo businessmen, including lawyer and developer, James E. Sedgwick, and G.A. Whitney took over the street

³ With additional research, it may be possible to argue that the Center Point WCF&N Depot has statewide significance.

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railway, ran a new line out to Elmwood Cemetery, and announced plans to extend the line to the Cedar River Park. Streetcar service was soon extended to other recreational spots including: Sans Souci, Electric Park, Chautauqua Park, and Home Park. The street railway company built Electric Park, which was an electrified amusement park, and a hotel at Sans Souci to promote ridership. In 1895, the company was purchased by a group of investors from Bremer County led by C.J. Fosselman and J.H. Bowman of Waverly as well as the three Cass brothers, Louis S., Claude D., and Joseph F., who “provided both funds and management expertise” (Long 1986:23). The new owners renamed the company, the Waterloo & Cedar Falls Rapid Transit Company and “immediately embarked upon an ambitious set of improvements” (Long 1986:23). “The Cass leadership exploited and in some cases created transportation needs in three areas: commuter ridership, freight traffic, and leisure-time travel” (Long 1986:23).

Louis S. Cass headed the newly-formed road, and in 1896, purchased the Waterloo Street Railway, which was then a horse-car line with two miles of track. Cass electrified this line and added four miles of track reaching Cedar Falls in 1897 but failed to get a franchise to operate downtown. “To overcome this obstacle the ‘interurban’ ran a short distance over the tracks of the friendly Chicago Great Western Railway” (Donovan 1954:187). The following year, the line purchased the Cedar Falls street railway, with the local line also converted to electricity.

Constructed with 56-pound rails on private right of way, the intercity line was more or less of an interurban. As the century drew to a close, it even hauled some freight. This consisted of bricks shipped from a plant near Cedar Falls to Waterloo by regular interurban unit pulling a flat car. The operation was conducted between midnight and early morning, and delivery was made in the city streets. In 1900 the first electric locomotive was purchased, and the following year another was added (Donovan 1954:187).

It was in 1900, that Louis S. and Joseph F. Cass bought “from the administrator of the C.J. Fosselman estate the block of stock in the Rapid Transit Company formerly owned by Mr. Fosselman, amounting to 2,997 shares” (*Semi-Weekly Iowa State Reporter*, June 15, 1900). In doing so, the Cass brothers now held all but three shares of the company, the other three still belonging to Peter Fosselman and Mrs. C.J. Fosselman. Their brother, C.D. Cass was noted as soon to succeed Fosselman on the board of directors and will “take an active part in the management of the road” (*Semi-Weekly Iowa State Reporter*, June 15, 1900).

Beginning in 1897, and culminating in 1916, Waterloo businessmen and the Cass Brothers built a 7.5-mile interurban beltline that serviced a series of factory sites. This beltline came to encircle the northern extent of Waterloo’s east side and extended to Cedar Falls providing “extensive intra-city service” (Jacobsen 1988:E-14).

Maps from 1906 and 1916 show the development of five routes reaching virtually all parts of the city, including the factory areas of Litchfield, Rath Packing, and Westfield. By 1916 most of the city’s 155 factories were located on the completed electric railway, in addition to having access to steam-powered rail service (Jacobsen 1988:E-14).

Cass proposed an innovative measure to help finance construction of the new lines in Waterloo and Cedar Falls. Specifically, he proposed sale of residential lots along the routes.

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Waterloo residents were in effect asked to buy a stake in the company's future. Although early sales were less than brisk, the requisite amount for construction (\$57,000) was raised and construction was completed. It was just the beginning (Long 1986:24).

This measure evolved as the rail line expanded beyond the Waterloo-Cedar Falls vicinity, with the company expecting residents of towns to be served by the interurban to purchase stock in the company. This was sometimes met with a lukewarm reception but did result in sufficient stock sales to generate financing for rail line improvements and extensions.

In 1897, the *Waterloo Daily Courier* (March 13, 1897) ran a long article about the construction of the Waterloo & Cedar Falls Rapid Transit Co.'s new "electric line" between Waterloo and Cedar Falls. The line was surveyed by "City Engineer Newton" and extended through the Cedar River Park and Rownd's Park along the way. It included construction of a steel bridge across the Cedar River. The materials for the bridge were to be furnished by the Universal Construction Co. of Chicago and the bridge "erected by J.B. Marsh, of Des Moines" (*Waterloo Daily Courier*, March 13, 1897).⁴ The grading for the rail line was conducted by George T. Lehmann of Waterloo (*Waterloo Daily Courier*, March 13, 1897).

In 1901, the railroad was extended thirteen miles north to Denver, Iowa, with a 22,000-volt transmission line built along the route to supply power to the new rail line. It was reportedly the "first high-tension line in Iowa" (Donovan 1954:188). At Denver Junction, the line connected with the Chicago Great Western and over that line secured trackage rights to Sumner via Waverly. This line carried both freight and passengers. In 1904, the company name was changed to the Waterloo, Cedar Falls & Northern Railway (Donovan 1954:188).

A successful collaboration between the Cass brothers' company and that of A.B. Stickney's Chicago Great Western (GCW) company proved beneficial to both until the CGW went into receivership. Thus, the Cedar Valley Road ceased operating over the CGW line from Denver Junction to Sumner.

The interurban thereafter built its own all-electric line from the junction to Waverly.⁵ It subsequently built south from Waterloo to Cedar Rapids. This extension had catenary construction of overhead wires, 85-pound rails, easy curves, and no grades over 1 per cent. Originally of 650-volt current, it changed to 1,300-volt in 1915 (Donovan 1954:191).

Stickney's CGW company had even invested in the WCF&N, and although the two remained separate companies, Louis Cass as president of the WCF&N "became an assistant to Stickney in 1905" (Long 1986:26).

The relationship lasted until 1909 when the Great Western had financial problems. But the pattern in Waterloo was set. Cass' electric railroad controlled most of the freight transfer and switching in Waterloo. By 1912 this

4 This steel bridge was replaced by the concrete-arched Sans Souci Bridge in the 1920s. The concrete-arched bridge was also later replaced.

5 While the Waverly line "was never a big passenger carrier" it did carry sufficient freight "to employ a special, unusually large car, the 'Waverly car'" (Long 1986:25).

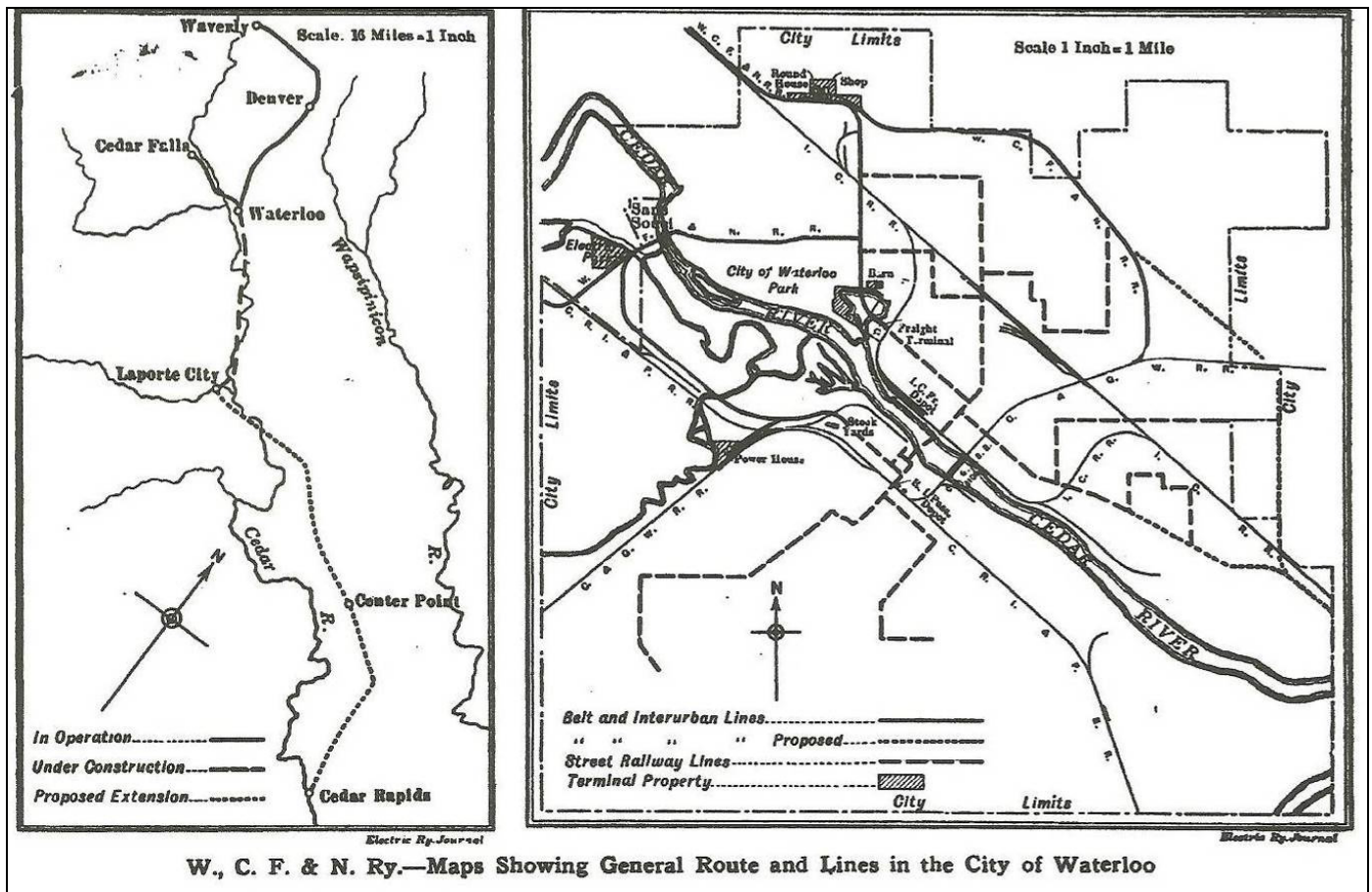
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control involved 40,000 cars of freight a year. But it was not until 1927 that freight revenues surpassed passenger receipts. Such electric dominance--and the early cooperation between steam and electric interests--was unusual; most steam railroad companies saw the new technology as a threat to their dominance (Long 1986:26).

The extension of the WCF&N between Waterloo and Cedar Rapids was completed in 1914. The Waterloo to La Porte City section had been built in 1912, with that from La Porte City to Urbana begun in 1912 and completed in 1913. The section between La Porte City and Brandon was fully completed on September 28, 1913. The Urbana to Cedar Rapids section via Center Point was completed the following year (Bryant 1984). Below is a 1912 map showing the planned progression of the WCF&N construction.



WCF&N Railway 1912 maps showing the general route in operation, under construction, and proposed construction (left) and the lines in the City of Waterloo (right). Source: *Electric Railway Journal*, August 24, 1912.

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The August 24, 1912 article in the *Electric Railway Journal* further noted that:

Owing to financial restrictions the bridges on the original lines were of the timber-trestle type, except the bridge across the Cedar River, which is a reinforced highway bridge. In recent renewals and on new extensions the timber construction has been replaced with reinforced concrete arches or steel girders when the span required. A renewal of the Cedar River bridge in the near future contemplates a series of reinforced concrete arches with a double-track roadway.

The contemplated “near future” concrete-arched, double-tracked bridge that was to be a “renewal of the Cedar River bridge,” was not actually built until 1921. The “Cedar River bridge” that was to be replaced refers to the steel bridge at the Sans Souci branch, designed by Marsh and noted above. The delay in its replacement may have been caused in part by the WCF&N’s takeover by the federal government during World War I.

The 1912 article was accompanied by a photograph of a “double-track concrete bridge” on the “Cedar Falls line” and only shows two arches (photo below). Another article dating from December 1911 included the exact same photograph identified as the “new W.C.F. & N. Concrete Bridge over Cut-Off at Sans Souci” (*Electric Railway Journal*, August 24, 1912; *The Waterloo Evening Courier*, December 30, 1911).



WCF&N concrete-arched bridge at Sans Souci. Source: *Electric Railway Journal*, August 24, 1912

Another double-arch concrete bridge was built along the line in Brandon and is the only such bridge still extant along the former interurban line.

By 1917, the WCF&N was making passenger runs between Waterloo and Cedar Rapids in 2.5 hours making all the stops along the way. The service was performed using 35-ton motor cars “equipped with four 100 horse-power Westinghouse motors, and when traffic demands a 25-ton trailer is hauled” (Cole 1917:424).

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Passenger traffic interchange arrangements enable the Waterloo, Cedar Falls & Northern Railway to sell tickets to all points in the United States and Canada. Another special service is the handling of complete trains, consisting of sleepers and baggage cars, from connecting steam lines (Cole 1917:424).

The freight service was optimized by having reciprocal switching arrangements between the WCF&N and all trunk lines in cities served by the electric line. This enabled business from industries located on other roads to be served as if they were on the electric line. In addition, a milling-in-transit arrangement permitted “grain coming from points on the electric line, its trunk-line connections and also other points in Iowa and surrounding states, to be milled in transit, and then sent to destination on its original way-billing as a completed product” (Cole 1917:421).

The Waterloo, Cedar Falls and Northern Railway follows standard steam practice in handling its freight service. The freight trains are hauled by five 60-ton locomotives, each equipped with four 250 hp motors, which make the run between Waterloo and Cedar Rapids in three hours. These locomotives can each handle an 800-ton train at 24 miles per hour.

On the main line or Cedar Rapids division there are two regularly scheduled local freight trains per day, one each way. The train from Cedar Rapids to Waterloo is on the road from 7:40 A.M. to 2.05 P.M. It acts as a way freight, picking up all local cars and less-than-car-load freight, and generally handles about 900 tons.⁶ The train from Waterloo to Cedar Rapids is on the road from 5.35 A.M. to 12.25 P.M. This train picks up stock along the road for next morning delivery at Chicago, and twice a week a butter and egg loading car is picked up for the Eastern market. This train also handles all l.c.l. Eastbound freight. Two regularly scheduled time freight trains are also run per day. These are both heavy tonnage trains and handle all through cars such as automobile, machinery and coal shipments, etc., amounting usually to about 900 tons load daily. The train from Waterloo to Cedar Rapids is scheduled so that the Cedar Rapids transfer is reached with home bound empty cars in time to have them “set out” before midnight, thus eliminating any chance for additional per diem charges. Shipments over the Illinois Central and the Chicago & Great Western Railroads route by Waterloo are handled on these trains.

The freight service on the Cedar Falls and Waverly divisions is handled by three 40-ton motor package cars..., which not only handle l.c.l. freight, but haul freight cars for car-load shipments from the East, delivered at Waterloo by the Cedar Rapids trains, as well as outbound freight. Two local freight trains make round trips twice a day on each of these divisions (Cole 1917:422).

In addition, the railway operated a freight belt line around the factory district of Waterloo serving “all of the important manufacturing plants in Waterloo” (Cole 1917:422). The line delivered raw materials to the plants and took away finished products. Products carried over the rail line included: hogs, grain, quarried rock, cans of cream and many other miscellaneous products (Miller 1964). Another service of the railway company was to sell electricity to the surrounding towns, such as La Porte City and Gilbertville, at a time when these towns did not have their own power plants.

As mentioned above, the WCF&N came under government control during World War I because of the importance of this rail line to industrial production in Waterloo. “By this time, the freight beltline served 155 factories” (Conard and

⁶ Less-than-carload, or l.c.l. or LCL, refers to freight cars that were not filled to capacity or to the full weight of freight that a standard boxcar could hold.

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Nash 1993:8). However, the line “was poorly maintained” under the government’s two years of stewardship from 1918 to 1920 and “this condition, combined with a recession, put the company in precarious financial shape after its return to private ownership” (Donovan 1954:191). Louis Cass returned to the presidency of the company, but he resigned (or retired depending on the source) in 1923 and was succeeded by C.M. Cheney, who ran the railroad for mortgage bondholders “since the company was unable to pay its first mortgage bonds” (Donovan 1954:191). In 1940, the company was reorganized, with Cheney made receiver. The reorganization was completed in 1944, with the company name changed to the Waterloo, Cedar Falls & Northern Railroad. Cheney became president and general manager.

Despite the financial problems, the WCF&N was by far the most important of Iowa’s five surviving interurban roads. Revenues in 1947 totaled \$2,105,102; the Fort Dodge, Des Moines & Southern had the next highest, \$1,261,435, for the same period. But the ascendancy of automobiles and trucks and the decline of Waterloo’s factory base hurt the interurban company. They clung on into the 1950s (Long 1986:27).

Passenger service steadily declined on the WCF&N and railroads in general by the mid-20th century due to the ever-increasing use of automobiles and buses for private and public passenger transport. This despite the bold 1917 prediction by C.D. Cass, general manager of the WCF&N, that “there never will come a time when every citizen owns an automobile, and there always will be a great many citizens who must ride on street cars” (*Electric Traction*, January 1917). Unfortunately for Cass and the WCF&N, the demise of the streetcar was already in motion.

In 1949, on the eve of the construction of the nation’s interstate highway system, the WCF&N was holding on and still provided streetcar service from Waterloo to Cedar Falls. It still maintained an active freight belt around Waterloo serving the John Deere tractor plant and the Rath meat packing plant, among other shippers. The main line from Waterloo to Cedar Rapids also handled a “healthy freight business behind hefty freight motors pulling their power down a catenary overhead; and over this same line the big yellow-and-orange interurbans roll, making three round trips daily” (*Trains*, January 1949:13). The Waterloo to Waverly branch continued to offer freight and passenger service in 1949.

By 1954, the Cedar Valley Road was “a heavy-duty carrier with three daily time freights between Cedar Rapids and Waterloo” (Donovan 1954:192). Fifty-car trains were common, with 70-car double-headers “not unusual” (Donovan 1954:192). Daily round-trip passenger service ran between Cedar Rapids and Waterloo and between Waterloo and Waverly, although service into the downtown areas of Cedar Rapids and Waterloo had ceased by that time.

However, the construction of the interstate highway system in the mid-1950s quickly replaced the need for interurban rail transport, with Iowa’s cities now connected by an improved interstate and state highway system. Passenger service on the WCF&N was discontinued on February 20, 1956, in the wake of a major fire at the roundhouse in Waterloo two years prior (Bryant 1984). Freight service continued along the WCF&N, but by the mid-1950s, the freight tonnage transported along this line was in sharp decline.

Two reasons can be discerned: the expansion of the trucking industry as a result of the introduction of the interstate highway system and the declining use of coal (as opposed to the increased use of gas) to heat homes (Page 1992:E-10).

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The WCF&N interurban line was reorganized as the Waterloo Railway in 1958 by the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific and the Illinois Central railroads. The Waterloo line was fully integrated into the Illinois Central system in 1970 and continued to haul freight until the line was abandoned in 1973 and the tracks subsequently removed (Thompson 1989:211).

Although it came to rather an inglorious end, the significance of the interurban for the residents of the Cedar River Valley is hard to overestimate. For many years, it provided a reliable, safe, relatively easy way to get from home to places nearby, but also to other cities and even states. For many rural residents, especially, the line provided access to towns otherwise difficult to reach over muddy trails that passed for roads. At a time when many Iowa farmers lacked easy access to railroads and consequently markets, the farmers of rural Black Hawk and Bremer counties were fortunate to have such an efficient method of travel (Page 1992:E-10).⁷

The abandoned rail line was later developed into the Cedar Valley Nature Trail, which stretches from Cedar Rapids to Waterloo and is also part of the American Discovery Trail System. This trail system crosses 15 states for a total of 6,800 miles and is the only coast-to-coast, non-motorized recreational trail (<http://www.discoverytrail.org/>). The idea of the Cedar Valley Nature Trail began at a public meeting in 1977 by the county conservation boards of Black Hawk, Buchanan, Benton and Linn counties in cooperation with the Iowa Conservation Commission, now known as the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Interest was expressed by all involved parties to purchase the railroad right-of-way for use as a nature trail. However, there was opposition from surrounding landowners, and trail support stalled.

A private citizen's advocacy group, Iowa Rails to Trails, was subsequently organized and they began to publicize the benefits of the proposed trail. By 1980, they raised the necessary funds to begin leasing the southern portion of the former rail line near Cedar Rapids. Volunteers spent numerous hours clearing the trail of vegetation overgrowth, planking bridges and fixing fence lines (<http://www.linncountytrails.org/trails/cvnt/CVNThistory.html>). The Cedar Valley Nature Trail from Cedar Rapids to Waterloo was officially opened in 1984.

Portions of the Cedar Valley Nature Trail were badly damaged during the June 2008 Cedar River flood. the multi-span concrete-arched bridge at Elk Run was destroyed and the ruins subsequently removed. A new concrete bridge is now in its place. The longer multi-arched concrete bridge known as the McFarlane Bridge was also damaged and subsequently replaced. That bridge was documented prior to its demolition (Rogers 2012). The loss of these historic bridges has made the surviving historic properties, including the Center Point depot all-the-more significant as representations of the WCF&N's history.

Influence of the Waterloo, Cedar Falls and Northern Interurban Railway on the Region's Development

The *Cedar Falls Daily Record* (December 3, 1914) claimed that the "transformation of the territory traversed by the Waterloo, Cedar Falls & Northern interurban line from un-tenanted prairie land, stock range and large farms to districts bristling with suburban towns in the making, small farms, orchards, truck and berry farms—all dotted with modern

⁷ While the reference is to Black Hawk and Bremer counties, the farmers of southwest Buchanan, northeast Benton, and northwest Linn counties also benefitted from the interurban line.

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homes, churches and schools—is an illustration of what the interurban is as a developer.” While certainly an idealized description, the potential of the interurban to promote and facilitate suburban development in the region was realized.

In 1915, it was noted that “the developing influence of a railway on the territory it serves is evidenced by the growth which a number of the small towns on the new Waterloo-Cedar Rapids division have experienced since the advent of the electric road” (*Electric Traction*, May 1915). Nearly all the small towns along the route had no direct rail service prior to the construction of this line. Brandon is one such example. This town had a population of 250 prior to the interurban. By 1915, the population had risen to 500, “its streets are electrically lighted, it has two grain elevators, while its new homes are numbered by the score” (*Electric Traction*, May 1915).

There was active agitation by the citizens and representatives of these towns for the line to be built through their respective communities. The towns certainly anticipated the benefits of having the rail service and all that came with it. Large delegations and celebrations welcomed the opening of the rail line in nearly every town (*The Waterloo Times-Tribune*, December 22, 1912). The towns along the rail line included: Cedar Rapids, Robins, Lafayette, Center Point, Haynes, Urbana, Brandon, La Porte City, Gilbertville, Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Denver, and Waverly. The stations and substations along the completed rail line included: Wardville, Cheney, Welsh, McShane, Glory, Lamb, Burk, Golinvaux, Elk Run, Alladin, Fosselman, Cedar Heights, Normal, West Tower, Farmer, Glasgow, Knowles, Center, Denver Junction, Baskins, Rust, Mills station, and others as needed through the years (Page 1992:F-5 to F-6; Westinghouse 1917:8).⁸

However, the building of the interurban was not without opposition. In order to build the road, “townspeople who would be served by the line were expected to buy shares of the company stock and farmers were expected to give up land” (Center Point Historical Society 2004:13). A slow-down of the construction between Center Point and Urbana was caused by landowners refusing to give up right of way, with others in Center Point feeling that the town already had sufficient rail access to Cedar Rapids. Of course, it basically came down to the money involved, with some feeling that Cass and the WCF&N should come up with more money for the project. But “in the end, the people of Center Point subscribed to \$50,000 worth of stock” (Center Point Historical Society 2004:14).

In addition to promoting the growth of existing towns along the way, the interurban facilitated the development of new suburban plats in the Cedar Rapids and Waterloo-Cedar Falls environs. Among the suburban plats in the Waterloo-Cedar Falls vicinity that were developed along the line and/or were promoted as having direct streetcar service included: Galloway (platted in 1909 and advertised in 1910 as having the streetcar “assured”); the Christie Addition (platted in 1910); Prospect Hills (platted in 1909, with an advertisement including an assurance from C.D. Cass that the interurban line would be completed to the plat by the next spring); Kenwood Park Addition (platted in 1909); the Soash Park Addition (platted in 1910, see ad below); Cedar Heights (platted in 1908); the Highland Addition (platted in 1908); Elk Run Park (platted in 1912); Castle Hill (where the houses fronted on the WCF&N tracks); Kingbard Hill (platted in 1916); and Pfeiffer Place (platted in 1916) (*Cedar Falls Record*, September 28, 1916; Long 1986:26, 85; *Waterloo Daily Courier*, August 24, 1908, September 15, 1908; *Waterloo Daily Times-Tribune*, May 7, 1910, May 15, 1910,

⁸ Note that the smaller stations established along the interurban line after it was built were named after officials of the WCF&N, such as Cheney, Fosselman, Lamb, Rust, Mills, Burk, and Welsh, among others.

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August 14, 1910; *Waterloo Evening Courier*, September 27, 1909, October 20, 1909, May 14, 1910, December 7, 1912). In addition to benefiting new suburban plats and additions, the interurban also spurred development of existing neighborhoods, such as along West Third Street in Waterloo (Long 1986:85).

LIKE HALEY'S COMET

The New Denver Line is Coming Our Way. Also a Double Track Car Line to Chautauqua Park Division

BOTH WILL HIT Waterloo's NATURAL BEAUTY SPOT

We will build you a house or a pretty bungalow on monthly payments to harmonize with the surroundings. Two-thirds and more of Soash Park lots are being paid for by well satisfied buyers. There's a Reason. More is being done to improve this naturally beautiful addition than was promised the lot buyers in their contracts. Trees are now being set out throughout the Addition. Native forest trees on some of the lots. Building and other improvements are now under way. All city improvements a certainty. Sewer this Season. Gas, electricity and cement walks are now in as far as the addition. Kiel street is to be paved.

Study this plat. Note the ideal location. Adjoining Chautauqua Park. Five Blocks West of Litchfield. Just across the River from Galloway. Beautifully located alongside the only natural parks of Waterloo. The prettiest part of the Cedar river. Finest driveway system in the city. Note the new Lafayette boulevard now being extended. This means a 20 minutes walk from downtown to Soash Park. But you don't have to walk. Best Car Service in Town. Waverly-Denver line coming our way too. Waiting station, up-to-date new grocery store, meat market and bakery are within four blocks of the farthest lot in the addition. Good soil. High and dry. Perfect drainage. The well water is by far the best in the city, being unusually soft. No cisterns are needed. No enormous outlay of money is required to make this addition a "beauty spot." Boating, fishing, swimming, hunting, picnicing etc. together with all the advantages of the parks and factories and the conveniences of the city! Can you beat it for a homesite or an investment in any part of the city from an all-around viewpoint?

The remaining lots on payments of one dollar a week. No interest. No taxes for 4 years. Most of the lots are \$250 to \$350, some less. A few more.

Phone, write or call to see us. Get a copy of our talking points, giving you a Dozen Good Reasons why you ought to get a slice of this choice property next to the parks, close to the factories. Only a few slices left.

W. L. BARRETT, Owner and Agent

Advertisement for Soash Park suburban addition highlighting (in yellow) the addition's position on the interurban lines. Source: *Waterloo Daily Times-Tribune*, May 15, 1910.

In 1921, the car fare for regular patrons of the WCF&N between Waterloo and Cedar Falls was reduced to help encourage suburban growth. The suburban plats of Cedar Heights and Castle Hill benefited from this move. However, the railway company was also feeling some impact from the introduction of the motor bus interurban service and while denying a correlation between the two, it is likely that this was a factor in the rate reduction. The announcement also made note of the adverse impact of "highway railway rates instituted by the government," which had reportedly placed such a burden "to men and women living in the suburban towns and working in Waterloo" to the point that that "many have given up their suburban homes on this account" (*Waterloo Evening Courier*, February 19, 1921).

The interurban also facilitated the development of recreation by servicing several city parks and assisted in the development of the Iowa State Teachers College (now known as the University of Northern Iowa) by providing freight and passenger service directly to the college campus (*Semi-Weekly Iowa State Reporter*, June 15, 1900; *Cedar Falls Daily Record*, December 3, 1914). Not only did the WCF&N provide passenger service to existing city parks along the route, the railway company opened an electrified amusement park called "Electric Park," which was located on the interurban line between Waterloo and Cedar Falls. A subsidiary company called the Waterloo Amusement Company

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operated the park. The railway company provided the lighting facilities, with the electricity purchased from the railway by the Waterloo Amusement Company (*Electric Traction*, July 1913).

In 1915, the *Waterloo Evening Courier* (June 5, 1915) reported a potential downside to the interurban's impact on the smaller towns along the route. It was noted that in La Porte City, the pessimists had "said it would ruin the town, that half of the trade would go to Waterloo, as the larger city is only ten miles or so distant" but the optimists "prevailed and the interurban was built." Since then, La Porte City grew like "never known before" (*Waterloo Evening Courier*, June 5, 1915). The article reported a 20 percent gain in the population of La Porte City in five years, "nearly all of which was made since the trolley cars came" and that "the interurban builds up rural communities" and is a "great benefit to towns of any and all sizes" (*Waterloo Evening Courier*, June 5, 1915). While the interurban did not initially have the pessimist's negative impact, the cumulative effect of both the interurban and more importantly, the automobile, would result in the impact feared in 1915—that of greater, quicker access to the services and opportunities of the larger cities drawing businesses and populations away from the small towns. In the long run, the smaller towns declined in population in the mid-to-late 20th century as services and population consolidated in the large towns and cities. However, in recent years, the trend has reversed again with smaller towns booming in population as they increasingly become suburban residential communities, where people work in the city but want to live in a smaller town or country setting. The lower tax rate in towns outside of the major urban areas is likely a contributing factor in this trend.

Significance of the Waterloo, Cedar Falls and Northern Interurban Rail Line

The significance of the Waterloo, Cedar Falls & Northern Railway has been noted in previous studies in the Black Hawk/Bremer county area including a planning study conducted by PHR Associates for Silos and Smokestacks in 1993 (Conard and Nash 1993:8) and by the Dunbar/Jones Partnership for the Black Hawk and Bremer Counties Preservation Partnership project in 1992 (Page 1992:F-5). In both instances, it was concluded that the WCF&N line and its appurtenances had potential for NRHP listing. One property along the line, the depot in La Porte City located at Main and Depot Streets and later used as the City Hall, has been individually listed in the NRHP. The depot in Center Point was previously determined eligible for the NRHP. Other extant depots along the line are at Brandon and Gilbertville. The Gilbertville Depot retains very good integrity and has been refurbished. The Brandon depot has been altered in the modern era but is still recognizable as a WCF&N Depot.

The entire line is no longer eligible as a historic district because of the damage and loss of significant structures from flooding along the Cedar River. These included the so-called Evansdale and McFarlane concrete-arched bridges both demolished after the 2008 flood. The bridges were documented prior to their removal from the river. Both were noted as having had statewide significance under Criterion C for their design and construction and local significance under Criterion A for their association with important events within the contexts of transportation and engineering "over the period of time from construction in 1912 to last use as an interurban line in 1956" (Cavan 2008).

Electrified inter-urban railroads provided an important supplemental form of transportation during the early part of the 20th Century. The Waterloo, Cedar Falls and Northern Railroad (Cedar Valley Road) was one of the first and most successful of the Iowa interurban lines (Cavan 2008).

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It was further noted that “management under the stewardship of Lewis S. Cass made use of technology to gain competitive advantage,” and that Cass “held a prominent place in Iowa railroading” (Cavan 2008).

The WCF&N interurban was one of five major electric interurban lines that once operated in the State of Iowa. The other lines included: the Fort Dodge, Des Moines & Southern Railway, the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railway (CRANDIC), the Des Moines and Central Iowa Railway, and the Clinton, Davenport and Muscatine Railway. In 1913, it was reported that returns to the state department indicated that the WCF&N had been the “big money maker of Iowa interurbans” that year (*Waterloo Times-Tribune*, June 25, 1913).

The net profits of this line are given as \$206,803 for 1912, as against \$166,526 for 1911. Next comes the Fort Dodge, Des Moines & Southern with profit of \$127,516. The Cedar Rapids & Marion line made \$107,276 profit in 1912 (*Waterloo Times-Tribune*, June 25, 1913).

The rise in profits for the WCF&N was probably tied to the extension of the line in 1912-13 from Waterloo south towards Cedar Rapids, but would have been offset to some degree by the costs of that expansion. Therefore, despite these major expenditures, the WCF&N was operating at a high profit level compared to other interurbans in the state. The WCF&N was considered “quite successful because of the importance it placed on freight operations, allowing it to provide top-notch and high speed passenger service” (“Iowa Interurbans and Streetcar Railroads,” accessed at <http://www.american-rails.com/iowa-interurbans.html>, May 2012). The WCF&N was also the last of the major interurbans to provide passenger service keeping that service until 1956.

The Fort Dodge, Des Moines & Southern was the longest of the interurban lines extending 150 miles in length and hauling a tremendous amount of freight at its peak. This line was also taken over by the federal government in World War I along with the WCF&N (Thompson 1989:122-125). Together the WCF&N and the CRANDIC lines represented “the second longest interurban route between major cities” in the state (Thompson 1989:124). While these two roads operated independently, they interchanged passengers at a station that they jointly built on Fourth Street in Cedar Rapids (Thompson 1989:124). William Thompson, in his history of transportation in Iowa, noted the significance of these interurban railways as follows:

Electric interurbans played an important role in the transportation structure of the state. They provided fast and frequent service on short or medium distance routes not serviced by main or branch line railroads and influenced the development of cities and towns within their territorial boundaries. Their value was enhanced by interchange agreements with major steam railroads and coordination with street railways in the joint use of trackage, stations, repair shops, and power facilities. Although often steam powered initially, interurbans were converted to electrification through ownership by electric utilities. Built primarily for passengers, they soon found freight, especially coal traffic, to be a profitable source of revenue. Freight traffic was a principal reason why two of the largest interurbans were brought under federal control during World War I. As measured by their operating ratios, their financial condition was quite satisfactory until 1918 but was seriously undermined by inflationary forces during and following the war years. Passenger traffic peaked in 1918, thereafter succumbing to the same trends which forced abandonment of street railways (Thompson 1989:131).

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The CRANDIC line has survived largely intact into the modern era. Today, this line between Cedar Rapids and Iowa City continues to haul freight as a diesel-powered short-line system but has added limited passenger service during University of Iowa home football games. This service is reminiscent of a past joint service of the WCF&N and the CRANDIC, which offered service from Waterloo to Iowa City for special occasions, such as homecomings for the various colleges in the area including University of Iowa, University of Northern Iowa, Coe College, and Cornell College (Danek 1980:53). A notable segment of the Fort Dodge, Des Moines & Southern Railway survives today as the Boone & Scenic Valley rail line, which is a re-electrified tourist passenger line.

The WCF&N also stands out among the other five interurbans for having had so many concrete-arched bridges constructed along its route from single spans and double-arched spans over small creeks to the three large multi-arch spans. The multi-arch spans, all spanning the Cedar River, included the five-arched Sans Souci Bridge (demolished in the late 1970s), the six-arched Elk Run or Evansdale Bridge (demolished in 2011), and the nine-arched McFarlane Bridge (demolished in 2012). One of the single-arched bridges still stands in Cedar Falls over N. Hackett Road and one of the double-arched bridges still stands just east of Brandon. The wooden trestle and concrete and corrugated metal culverts that remain are more typical of railway construction across the state, with most of the wooden trestle bridges replaced. The replacement of many, if not all, of the old WCF&N wooden trestle bridges occurred from 1958 into the 1960s to strengthen and upgrade these bridges to carry heavier freight car loads and heavier diesel locomotives after the WCF&N became part of the Rock Island and Illinois Central railroads.⁹

The loss of the Evansdale, McFarlane, and Sans Souci bridges along the old WCF&N leaves only the Brandon Lime Creek bridge as the sole surviving multi-arched concrete bridge on the historic WCF&N rail corridor. This raises the significance of the Brandon bridge, which can hopefully be maintained and refurbished as needed in the future.

Past studies in the Black Hawk/Bremer county area identified other significant properties associated with the WCF&N as including: the Buzzard's Glory Quarry site between La Porte City and Brandon (where all the ballast for the railway's roadbed was quarried and crushed); grain elevators that once serviced the line at Gilbertville, La Porte City, Brandon, and Urbana; a stand-alone substation one mile northwest of Denver, Iowa; the interurban main station and carbarn in Waterloo; the site of the WCF&N locomotive repair shops in Waterloo; and an electrical booster station east of Waverly (Page 1992:F-4 and F-5). All of these resources were still standing in part, or in whole, in the early 1990s (Conard and Nash 1993; Page 1992:F-5). It is also known that the depots in Gilbertville, Brandon, Center Point, and the first depot in La Porte City are still standing as well as some of the Waterloo and Waverly area properties.

Operation of the WCF&N Interurban Section between Waterloo and Cedar Rapids

In 1914, 13 interurban trains were operating on the Waterloo-Cedar Rapids section of the line. Of the 13 trains, six were "locals" and seven were "limiteds" ("Train Operation," exhibit text for the WCF&N, Center Point Depot Museum, Center Point, Iowa). The local trains stopped at all stations including Elk Run, Gilbertville, Burk, La Porte City, Lamb,

⁹ While the WCF&N had been originally built to steam railroad specifications, the modern freight railroad required stronger trestle bridges along this line.

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Glory, Brandon, Welsh, Cheney, Urbana, Center Point, Lafayette and Robins. Limited trains only stopped at Center Point and La Porte City on their journeys between Waterloo and Cedar Rapids ("Train Operation," exhibit text for the WCF&N, Center Point Depot Museum, Center Point, Iowa). The cost of passenger service per mile was two cents in 1914, "with an additional charge of ½ cent per mile [added] for riding in the buffet parlor car" ("Train Operation," exhibit text for the WCF&N, Center Point Depot Museum, Center Point, Iowa). A "limited" train 6-mile run between Waterloo and Cedar Rapids took one hour and 45 minutes. The "local" service trains made the same run in two and one-half hours ("Train Operation," exhibit text for the WCF&N, Center Point Depot Museum, Center Point, Iowa).

However, a large portion of the interurban's revenues came from hauling freight and livestock.

Lumberyards, grain elevators, coal distributors and stock yards were located close to the train stations. Center Point's stockyard, which consisted of six pens that were connected with loading chutes, was located north of the depot.

An article appearing in the Center Point Journal on January 16, 1941 illustrates the amount of livestock that was hauled from Center Point. "*The WCF&N reports that C.W. Heefner and Son shipped 422 cars of hogs last year. The shipments went mostly to Waterloo packers*" ("Train Operation," exhibit text for the WCF&N, Center Point Depot Museum, Center Point, Iowa).

In 1917, the number of trains between Waterloo and Cedar Rapids was reduced to eight trains daily. The numbers continued to be reduced to three daily trains in 1936 to one daily train, with a second on Friday, Saturday and Sunday in 1952. In August of 1955, the train was reduced to only the weekend runs. The final passenger run of the interurban occurred on February 20, 1956, with the streetcar line between Waterloo and Cedar Falls discontinued in July 1957 when the WCF&N was dissolved. In 1958, the company was reorganized by the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific and the Illinois Central railroads as the "Waterloo Railway" (*Waterloo Daily Courier*, 12/23/1957; Rogers 2012). The line was now solely a freight line and was switched over to diesel-powered engines. The Waterloo Railway was fully integrated into the Illinois Central system in 1970 and continued to haul freight until the line was abandoned and the tracks subsequently removed (Thompson 1989:211). In 1976, the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad filed to abandon the former WCF&N rail line between Gilbertville and Cedar Rapids. In 1978, the former rail right of way was purchased for the development of a nature trail, which officially opened as the Cedar Valley Nature Trail in 1984. Today, the trail is designated a National Recreational Trail and part of the Discovery Trail Across America (Center Point Historical Society 2004:33, 36).¹⁰

¹⁰ The effort to convert the old WCF&N railroad bed into a recreational trail was spearheaded by the Iowa Rails to Trails, Inc., a statewide non-profit organization. Additional support came from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and the Old Interurban Trail, Inc. and hundreds of volunteers, who contributed their time and labor to the project. The ownership of the land in Linn County was later transferred to the Linn County Conservation Board, with the other county sections similarly owned and maintained by their respective conservation boards. Today, the Center Point Depot is owned by Linn County but is a joint maintenance effort of the Conservation department and the Center Point Historical Society (Center Point Historical Society 2004:36-37).

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History of the WCF&N Center Point Depot and Substation

As noted previously, the residents of Center Point were not entirely on board with the interurban construction through their town when it was first proposed. One reason was that many felt that the existing Rock Island Railroad was already serving the town's needs for transportation and freight service into Cedar Rapids. The second reason was that the owners of the WCF&N expected the townspeople "to buy shares of the company stock" for the line to be built through their town (Center Point Historical Society 2004:13). However, "in the end, the people of Center Point subscribed to \$50,000 worth of stock" and the line was built (Center Point Historical Society 2004:14). However, a 1913 news item in the *Cedar Daily Republican* (August 22, 1913) reported a different version of the events noting that the residents of Center Point had "decided not to wait for Cedar Rapids to co-operate in building the Interurban" and had subscribed \$50,000 "on the condition that the Cass line should be extended from Urbana to Cedar Rapids, through Center Point."

A delegation came to see Mr. Cass the other day. They said they wanted the interurban no matter what Cedar Rapids did. They expressed regret that Cedar Rapids had thrown down the proposition. But they wanted their share of the line in any event and if necessary they were willing to put up all the money for it. The line is now about seven miles from Center Point. Mr. Cass told them that it would not be necessary for them to do more than take the preferred stock in an amount sufficient to supply the deficiency between the cost of the road and the amount to be realized from the sale of bonds....The Center Pointers said they could raise a hundred thousand if necessary so anxious were the people, including the farmers, to have an interurban connection. They would rather have had it with Cedar Rapids but Waterloo would do (*Cedar Rapids Daily Republican*, August 22, 1913).

This news item suggests that whatever reservations the townspeople might have had towards the interurban had been replaced with anxiousness that they might miss out on getting the interurban through Center Point. One can perhaps speculate that the distinctive Mission-style depot was an award for their support.¹¹

The depot and substation in the town of Center Point was completed in 1914, with the town hosting a two-day celebration on September 24-25, 1914, for the opening of the interurban. WCF&N President Cass donated two 800-pound oxen for the Commercial Club to roast and serve to the celebrants. There was also a chicken dinner in the evening. Town teams played baseball games both days, with other activities including band concerts, aerial exhibitions, a tight-wire act, a merry-go-round for the kids, and nighttime balloon ascensions and fireworks. The celebration was well attended ("Opening Celebration," exhibit text for the WCF&N, Center Point Depot Museum, Center Point, Iowa).

In 1914, 13 interurban trains were operating on the Waterloo to Cedar Rapids section, with six of these trains being "local" and seven being the higher speed "limited" trains. The local trains stopped at all the stations, with the limited trains only stopping at Center Point and La Porte City ("Train Operation," exhibit text for the WCF&N, Center Point

¹¹ Unfortunately, the original design plans, or blueprints, for this depot do not appear to have survived. The Center Point Historical Society has no such plans in their collections, and none were left in the depot when it was closed. Previous studies have attempted to locate the archives of the WCF&N but have concluded the likelihood that the company papers went to the Rock Island Railroad or more likely the Illinois Central when those companies acquired the WCF&N line. If that was the case, then neither railroad appears to have retained the WCF&N archives other than a few pieces of company correspondence (Rogers 2012).

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Depot Museum, Center Point, Iowa). The limited trains could make the 60-mile run between Waterloo and Cedar Rapids in one hour and 45 minutes compared to the two and one-half hours it took the local trains to make the same run. At its peak, there were 12 passenger trains arriving daily in Center Point.

The fact that the two depot buildings that departed from the WCF&N's "standard" design were the only two where the limited trains stopped probably accounts for their more elaborate designs. This included the Mission style influence and the use of stucco for the exterior on the Center Point Depot and the round-arched windows of the so-called Georgian Revival on the La Porte City Depot (Bowers 1979). Although as previously noted, the La Porte City Depot, when it was nominated to the NRHP in 1979, was missing some of its key design elements (i.e., the arcaded porte-cochere and roof overhang with console brackets) that pointed to more of a Mission stylistic influence in its original design as well. Thus, it is suspected that these two depots were built of a somewhat different design than the standard depot design because all passenger runs of the train would have stopped at these two depots whereas the other depots only had the six local trains stop. These two depots were meant to impress.

While it was not identified as such in the NRHP nomination, the La Porte City Depot was designed by Waterloo architect, Mortimer Cleveland, and built by contractor H.A. Maine & Co. (Jacobsen 1983; *Waterloo Reporter*, August 23, 1912). In a letter to George Hamilton of the Linn County Conservation Commission dated October 6, 1983, James E. Jacobsen, then NRHP Coordinator at the Iowa State Historical Department in Des Moines, suggested that the Cedar Rapids architectural firm of Josselyn & Taylor might have been responsible for the design of the Center Point Depot (Jacobsen 1983). This is speculation, and to date, the architect for the Center Point Depot has not be identified.

The typical WCF&N parlor car was outfitted with wicker seats and benches. A desk at the rear of the parlor car was there for the passengers to use. Food was also served in route, with tables provided in the parlor cars for lunching. The more elaborate of the cars required extra fares. In later years, the wicker seats were replaced with more durable leather-upholstered bench seats like those found in buses and standard railroad cars of the day (Center Point Historical Society 2004:14-15; photos for the WCF&N exhibit, Center Point Depot Museum, Center Point, Iowa). During World War I, the parlor car service was discontinued. "The 100-series cars were rebuilt with operating cabs, baggage compartments and mostly coach seating" ("Cedar Rapids Line," unlabeled article in the archives of the Center Point Historical Society, Center Point, Iowa).

Freight service at the Center Point depot was important to the local economy. Even though freight service was already provided by the Rock Island line, the interurban freight service proved popular, particularly for hauling livestock. For example, C.W. Heefner and Son of Center Point shipped over 400 car-loads of hogs in 1941 alone, with their hog shipments primarily going to the packing plants in Waterloo. The stockyards in Center Point were located just north of the depot and connected to the WCF&N tracks by a side track. Also located nearby were a canning factory, the elevator company, and a lumber yard ("Train Operation," exhibit text for the WCF&N, Center Point Depot Museum, Center Point, Iowa).

Throughout its history, the WCF&N Center Point Depot was directly across the tracks from the Rock Island Railroad passenger depot, with the Rock Island also having a separate freight depot southeast along the tracks. At their peak in the 1920s, both depots were the hub of Center Point transportation and shipping and each employed full-time station

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agents (Center Point Historical Society 2004:15). The Rock Island Railroad fell to the same fate as the interurban in the mid-to-late 20th century when competition from the automobile and trucking industry sent the railroad industry into steep decline. Both depots in Center Point were abandoned, with the Rock Island depot torn down in the late 1970s. Fortunately, the WCF&N depot survived but was not maintained. By the 1980s, it too was in danger of demolition being in such poor condition. It was through the efforts of two rehabilitation projects in the early 1980s and the late 1990s that brought the building back to life and saved this historic property.

Architecture of the WCF&N Interurban Buildings

In addition to the concrete-arched bridges, wooden trestle bridges, steel bridges, and concrete culverts built along the WCF&N interurban line, were buildings that served as combination depots and substations, stand-alone substations and booster stations, express offices, the company roundhouse and shops, the company freight depot, and the company terminal/office building. The main company buildings and yard/shops were all located in Waterloo. The known extant WCF&N buildings in Waterloo include the two-story red brick freight depot built in 1910 at 19 Lafayette Street and the three-story brick terminal and office building built in 1917 at 323-329 East 4th Street. The terminal/office building housed the WCF&N business office, ticket office, and downtown depot for the interurban (Iowa Site Inventory forms completed in 1993 by Jan Nash for PHR Associates). The original WCF&N “Lafayette Building” terminal and office building was a five-story building that appears to be non-extant. Below is a historical postcard photograph of the Lafayette Building. The roundhouse was destroyed by fire in 1954 and was not rebuilt.

Other small WCF&N buildings and structures included crossing sheds, which were frame buildings, and stand-alone substations, which were larger-sized masonry buildings that had no other function than serving as electrical substations. There was a stand-alone substation in La Porte City, which was later converted into a dwelling, at least one substation in Waterloo, and one or more in Waverly. Several of the Waterloo/Waverly substation and booster station structures appear to be still standing but are not in use.



Extant WCF&N Buildings in Waterloo, Iowa

Left: Former WCF&N Freight Depot at 19 Lafayette St. Right: Former WCF&N Terminal/Office at 323-9 E. 4th St.

Source for both photographs: Black Hawk County Assessor’s current photos obtained from <http://www2.co.black-hawk.ia.us/website/bhmap/viewer.htm>, 2017.

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Lafayette Building “Interurban and C.G.W. Ry. waiting room, Waterloo, Ia” [non-extant]

[Another postcard photo labels this building as containing the WCF&N headquarters and downtown terminal building.]

Above photo obtained from WCF&N - Waterloo Railroad Facebook page, 2017.

There were several depot property types associated with the WCF&N. Some were built specifically for the interurban, while others were purchased and remodeled for interurban use. These included the following types:

One-story hip-roofed brick depot and substation

The earliest extant WCF&N depot building is the one-story, hip-roofed brick depot located in La Porte City at the west end of main commercial area. It was built in 1912 some distance from the interurban tracks, with passengers then transported by buggy or subsequently by a spur rail connection to the interurban tracks (see photos below). In 1928, the 1912 depot was closed and a second depot primarily for freight was built next to the tracks.

The 1912 depot is still standing and is listed in the NRHP for its historical association with the WCF&N Interurban. It is distinctive from all the other WCF&N depots in its round-arched doors and windows showing influence from the Georgian Revival style (Bowers 1979). The depot is missing its original arcaded porte-cochere (replaced by the plain one-story brick veneered building on the left side of the historic building in the photo below) and a shed roof that wrapped around the façade and side of the building that had brackets or consoles under the eaves. Those missing stylistic details might have resulted in a more eclectic stylistic definition more so than Georgian Revival, with influences from other early 20th century Revival styles also in evidence. This building and the one in Center Point are distinct departures from the WCF&N’s “standard” depot design, with the La Porte City example showing little similarity to any of the depots in its form and design. This building also originally had a tile roof as can be seen in the photographs below. The depot in La Porte City was designed by Waterloo architect, Mortimer Cleveland. It is probable that the Center Point Depot was also designed by an architect; however, the architect of that depot has yet to be identified.

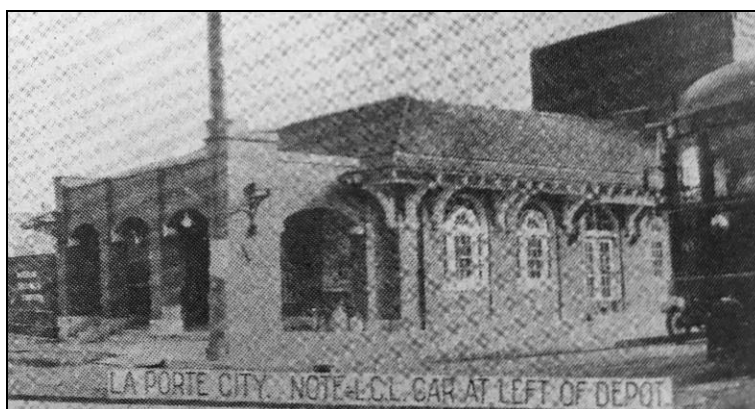
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Post 1912 photograph of the WCF&N La Porte City Depot at left.
Copy obtained from flickrriver.com, 2017.



Circa 1917 photograph of the WCF&N La Porte City Depot showing an LCL freight car to the left of the building and a passenger car to the right indicating spur rail connections between the depot and the main interurban line by that time.
Source: Westinghouse 1917:14.



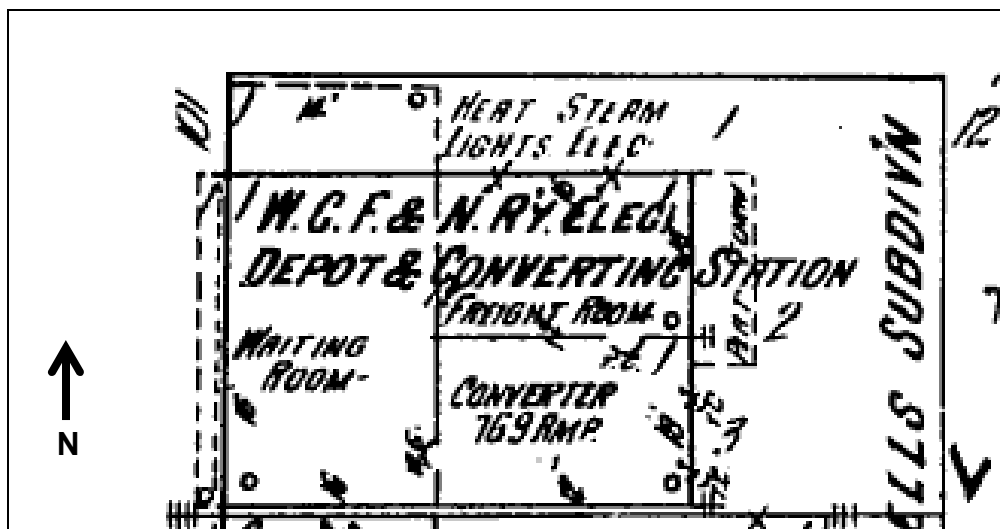
WCF&N La Porte City Depot in 2014.
Photo taken by J.R. Manning, April 2014; copy obtained from landmarkhunter.com, 2017.

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The La Porte City Depot was labeled on the 1913 Sanborn fire insurance map as a “depot and converting station,” with the waiting room in the front, street-side portion of the building, a freight room in the northeast portion of the building, and the converting station in the southeast corner of the building (see map below). There was a platform for the freight room off the rear of the building, with the porte-cochere off the north side of the waiting room likely to shelter passengers as they got on and off the transport to the main interurban line.



1913 Fire insurance map of the WCF&N La Porte City Depot.
Source: Sanborn 1913 obtained from <http://www.statelibraryofiowa.org>, 2017.

Combination Depot - Two-story, hip-roofed substation with one-story, hip-roofed passenger and freight depot

There were three combination depots under this property type located in Brandon, Gilbertville, Shaver. Shaver was a little different in design in that its one-story section appears to have had a flat or shed roof instead of the hip roof exhibited on the Brandon and Gilbertville depots. The Shaver depot was reportedly located on the north side of Cedar Rapids and was one of the early depots serving the Cedar Rapids metropolitan area.

These depots were all built to the WCF&N’s “standard design” that called for:

a building of brick, concrete and steel 101 feet in length and 22 feet wide. The substation (also called the power house) was in the 2 story section (approximately 30.5’ x 22’) which contained all the electrical equipment needed to power the lines. The 1 story section contained the ticket office and waiting room (approximately 28’ x 22’) and the freight room (approximately 36’ x 22’) (Friends of the Gilbertville Depot 2012-16).

These depots also featured “rock faced paving bricks” on the exterior walls essentially from the ground up to the top of the windows “to help hide damage caused by the trucks, which hauled products from the station to businesses” (“The Train Stations,” exhibit text, Center Point Depot Museum Center Point, Iowa).

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WCF&N Brandon Depot in 1955



WCF&N Gilbertville Depot in 1955

Photos obtained from [Digital.lib.uiowa.edu_railroadiana](http://Digital.lib.uiowa.edu/railroadiana), 2017



WCF&N Shaver Depot in 1952. Photo obtained from [Digital.lib.uiowa.edu_railroadiana](http://Digital.lib.uiowa.edu/railroadiana), 2017

It was noted of these depots:

The roofs were shingled with asbestos shingles. The interior finish consisted of exposed brick on the walls. Windows and doors were trimmed in oak ("The Train Stations," exhibit text, Center Point Depot Museum Center Point, Iowa).

The Brandon and Gilbertville depots are still standing, with the Gilbertville depot, built in 1912, having been refurbished through local preservation efforts led by a group known as the Friends of the Gilbertville Depot (gilbertvilledepot.org, 2017). The Brandon depot built in 1913 remains privately owned and has suffered some from modern additions (see photo below) (Rogers 2014).

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WCF&N Brandon Depot in 2017. Plaque on second story, left side of façade, is the year built - 1913.
Photograph taken by Tallgrass Historians L.C., September 17, 2014.

The Shaver Depot appears to be non-extant, although this is not certain. This depot was reportedly on the north side of Cedar Rapids “at a point called Shaver” and “was principally a freight depot” (Undated article labeled “Cedar Rapids Lines” on file Center Point Historical Museum, Center Point, Iowa). The reason it was primarily used for freight was when the WCF&N first came to Cedar Rapids, the line connected to the tracks of the Cedar Rapids & Marion City Railway (CR&MC) and the Cedar Rapids & Iowa City Railroad (CRANDIC) with passengers using the CRANDIC station downtown. At the end of 1915, the Union Interurban Station opened at 2nd Street and 4th Avenue in Cedar Rapids. This station was used jointly with the CRANDIC until a new station was acquired by the WCF&N at A Avenue and 10th Street. This change was precipitated by the CRANDIC’s abandonment of their streetcar operation (Undated article labeled “Cedar Rapids Lines” on file Center Point Historical Museum, Center Point, Iowa).

Combination Depot - Two-story, front-gabled substation with one-story, hip-roofed passenger and freight depot

The only example of this type is the depot in Center Point. While similar to the WCF&N’s “standard design,” the Center Point depot differed in its front-gabled substation section, its stuccoed exterior walls, and its dimensions. Rough-faced red brick was used only at the water table level of the exterior. The dimensions of the Center Point depot are as follows, compared with the standard design dimensions:

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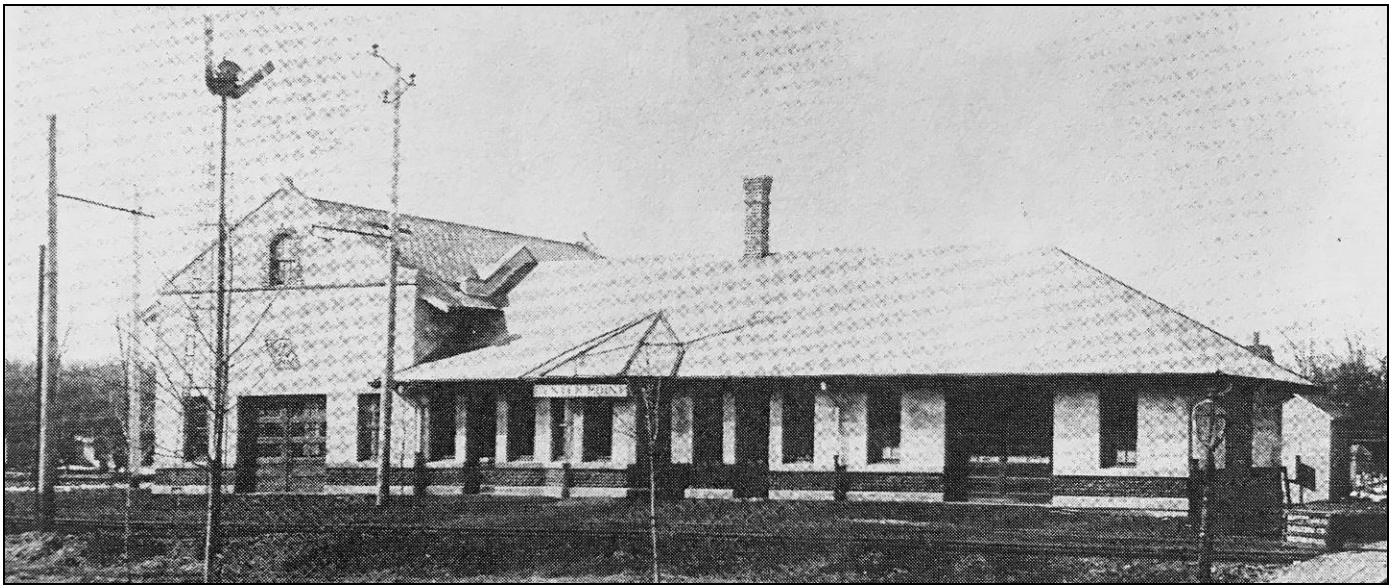
Standard

101 feet in total length
22 feet in width
substation 30.5 feet x 22 feet
ticket office/waiting room 28 feet x 22 feet
freight room 36 feet x 22 feet

Center Point Depot

101 feet in total length (N-S)
34 feet in width (E-W)
substation 52 feet (E-W) x 30 feet (N-S)
ticket office/waiting room 42 feet (N-S) x 34 feet (E-W)
freight room 29 feet (N-S) x 34 feet (E-W)

Some historical accounts of the Center Point Depot described the original roof as a tile roof; however, historical photographs show that this depot had tiles only along the ridgelines of the gable and hipped roofs and the two ridges of the rounded bay window in the ticket office section of the building (see photo below). The rest of the roof was either asbestos shingles, like some of the other WCF&N depots, or was originally covered with slate shingles, which is reported to have been the original roofing material in a 1979 typescript found in the Center Point Depot inventory file at the State Historical Society of Iowa in Des Moines. On the other hand, the La Porte City Depot did have a tile roof originally.



WCF&N Center Point Depot and Substation circa 1917, labeled "A Stucco Station."
Source: Westinghouse 1917:13.

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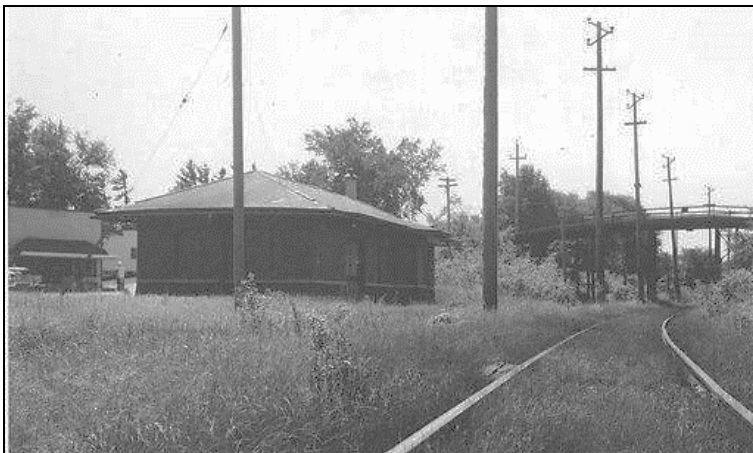
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WCF&N Center Point Depot, Center Point in 1952. Photo obtained from Digital.lib.uiowa.edu_railroadiana, 2017

Passenger/Freight Depots one-story, hip-roofed brick depot, no substation or lower voltage and smaller substations

There were three examples of this property type in Lafayette, Robins, and Urbana. All three buildings are non-extant. This type of depot likely only functioned for passengers and freight shipping and did not have substations as part of the depot building. The 1915 photograph of the Robins Depot shown below was labeled as a “Standard Way-Station” indicating a subcategory of depots that the WCF&N had for these smaller depots. They were clad with brick and had low-pitched hipped roofs with wide eave overhangs and exposed rafter ends. Their design reflected Prairie School and Craftsman stylistic influences.



WCF&N Lafayette Depot in 1959



WCF&N “Standard Waystation” Depot in Robins in 1915

Photos obtained from Digital.lib.uiowa.edu_railroadiana, 2017

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WCF&N Urbana Depot in 1952

Photo obtained from [Digital.lib.uiowa.edu_railroadiana](http://Digital.lib.uiowa.edu/railroadiana), 2017

Freight Depot, one-story, hip-roofed stuccoed depot

The second depot at La Porte City was built in 1928, with this station built alongside the interurban tracks whereas the first depot was built in the main commercial area of La Porte City. Passengers had to be transported out to the main line from the first depot. The 1928 freight depot was utilitarian but still presented a stylish Tudor/Craftsman appearance with its steeply-pitched hipped roof, stuccoed walls, and faux half-timber details under the bay windows.



WCF&N Freight Depot, 2nd La Porte City Depot, in 1955

Photo obtained from [Digital.lib.uiowa.edu_railroadiana](http://Digital.lib.uiowa.edu/railroadiana), 2017

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Side-gabled one-story depot

There was one known example of this type of depot, which resembled older standard railroad depots and perhaps was an older depot building converted to interurban use. This depot was in Denver, Iowa, and is no longer standing. A 1955 photograph of the Denver Depot shows a frame building with a side-gabled roof with wide eave overhang. It appears to have had at least a freight function but also probably passenger room as well. It did not have a built-in substation.



WCF&N Denver Depot in 1955. Photo obtained from Digital.lib.uiowa.edu_railroadiana, 2017

Purchased Building - Front-gabled, stuccoed Tudor-style

This depot was located at A Avenue and 10th Street NE in Cedar Rapids. It was built in 1927 as a “dog hospital for Drs. Eastman and Bogaard. In 1939 the WCF&N railroad purchased the building and remodeled it into a railway depot” (*Cedar Rapids Gazette* 1974; article posted on the WCF&N - Waterloo Railroad Facebook Page, 2017). St. Luke’s Hospital purchased the building in 1957 and used it until 1974 when it was demolished to make way for a new diagnostic center.



WCF&N Cedar Rapids Depot in the 1940s.

WCF&N Cedar Rapids Depot just prior to demolition.

Photos obtained from Digital.lib.uiowa.edu_railroadiana, 2017 and from WCF&N - Waterloo Railroad Facebook Page, 2017.

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The WCF&N Center Point Depot and Substation in the Context of the County-Wide Inventory Study

The nomination of the WCF&N Center Point Depot and Substation is the fulfillment of a recommendation made in the 2010 inventory of county-owned historic sites and properties in Linn County (Rogers 2010). This study was sponsored by Linn County under the direction of the Linn County Historic Preservation Commission. The depot building is one of several other county-owned historic buildings recommended as eligible for the NRHP and for nomination and listing in the NRHP. The Mott Building in Cedar Rapids was the first to be nominated to the NRHP following the 2010 study (Rogers and Allen 2012). The second was the Abbe Creek School in rural Mount Vernon (Rogers 2013), and the third is the subject depot building in Center Point. There were already two buildings listed in the NRHP prior to the county-wide inventory including the Witwer Building and the Linn County Courthouse, both in Cedar Rapids. Additionally, the county owns three historic bridge structures that are listed in the NRHP (Rogers 2010).

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10. Geographical Data

LAT/LON REFERENCES Continued

#5	Latitude	42.19268	Longitude	-91.78153
#6	Latitude	41.19289	Longitude	-91.78163

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is shown as the black outline on the accompanying map entitled "National Register of Historic Places Boundary of the WCF&N Center Point Depot and Substation" (Additional Documentation, page 49).

Boundary Justification

The boundary is that portion of the historic WCF&N Center Point Depot and Substation property that encompasses the historic depot and substation building and the yard area surrounding the building. The yard area includes: the concrete pad where the electrical transfer exterior superstructure once sat, the concrete base of the signal tower, and the remnant brick-paved walkways between the depot and the grade of the former WCF&N interurban line.

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Additional Documentation



National Register of Historic Places Boundary of the WCF&N Center Point Depot and Substation.

Latitude/Longitude points (#1-6) are keyed on map.

Source for map: 2013 Aerial obtained from ExpertGPS Pro mapping software, 2017.

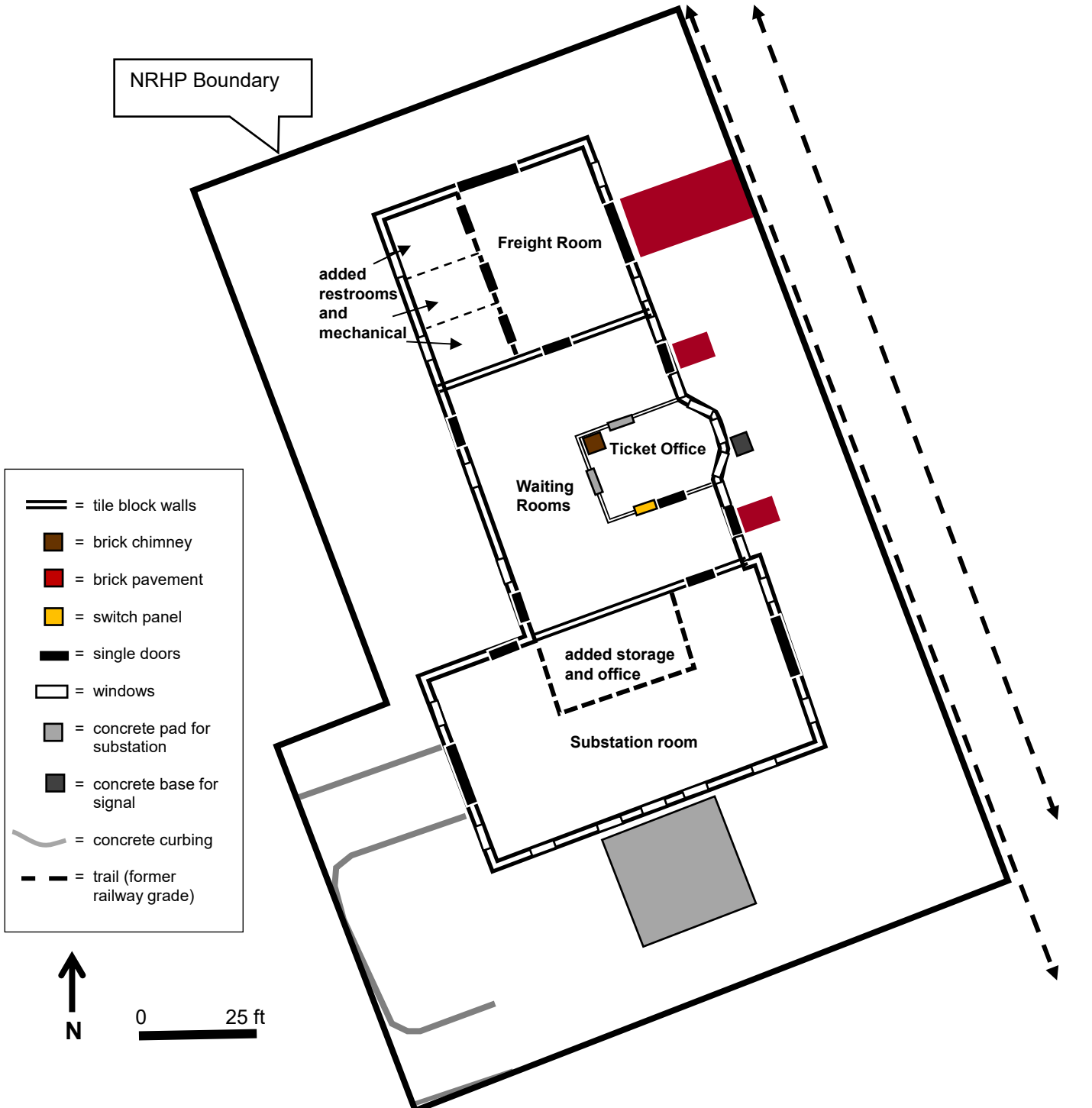
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Site Plan Sketch Map for the WCF&N Center Point Depot and Substation

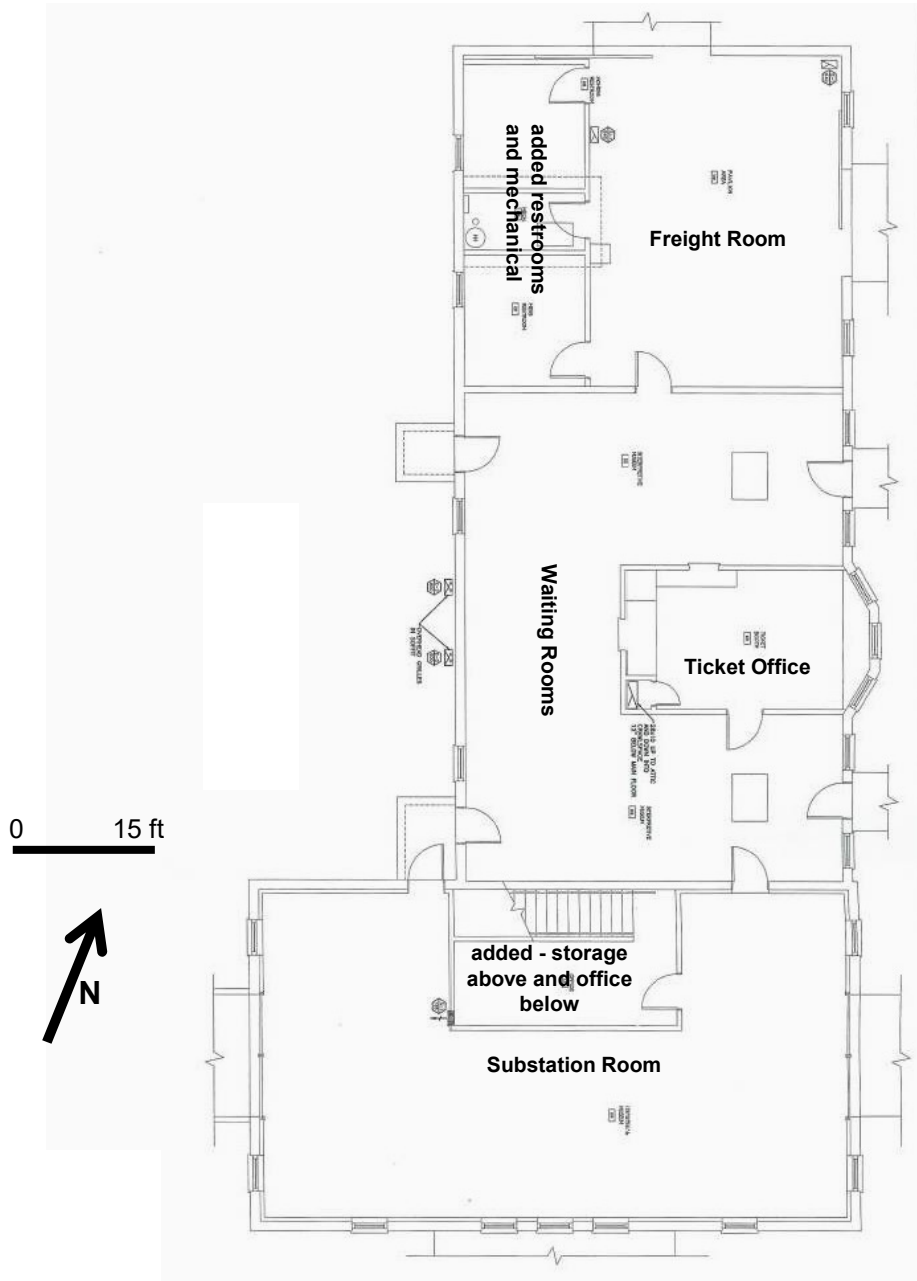
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Measured Floor Plan for the WCF&N Center Point Depot and Substation.
Source: Martin Design PC 2012

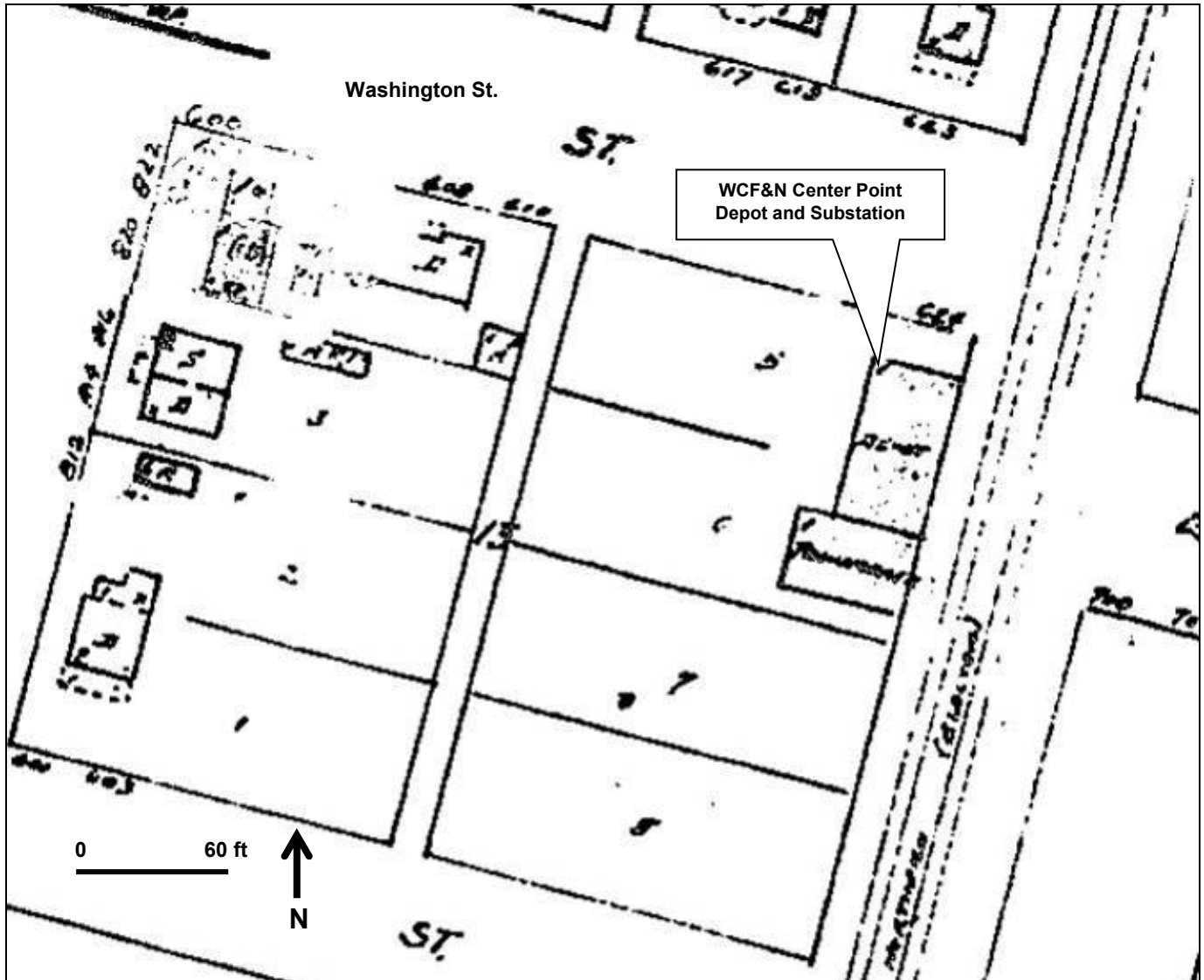
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1935 Fire Insurance Map of Center Point, Iowa, showing WCF&N Depot and Substation.
Source: Iowa Insurance Service Bureau 1935.

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Undated photograph of the WCF&N Center Point Depot looking NW and showing the electrical lines and transfer superstructure off the south wall of the substation.

Copy obtained from the Center Point Historical Society Collection, Depot Museum, Center Point, Iowa.

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**Undated photograph of the WCF&N Center Point Depot looking NW with original color version below.
[Probably from the early 1950s.]**



Copies obtained from the Center Point Historical Society Collection, Depot Museum, Center Point, Iowa.

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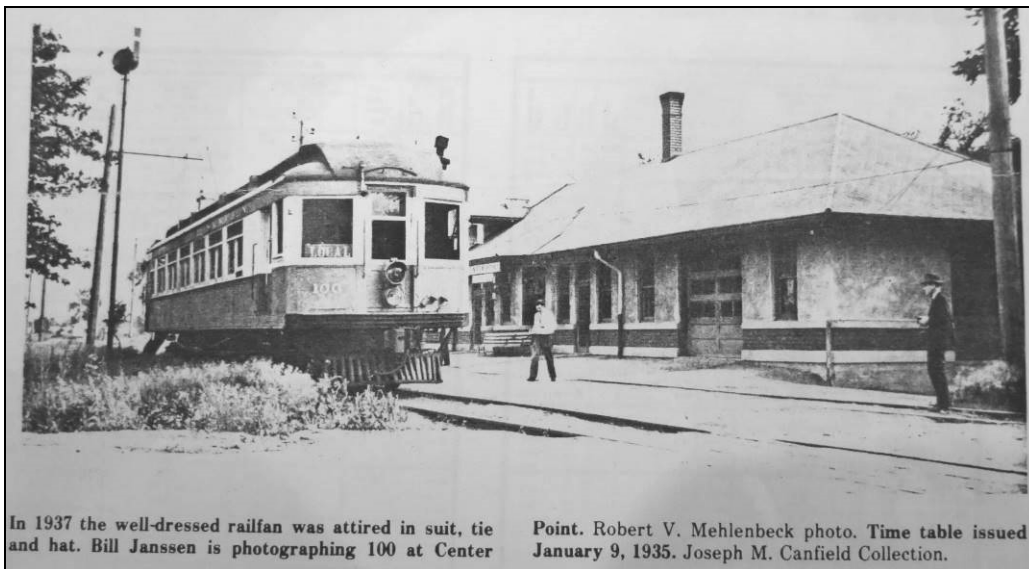
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Undated photograph of the WCF&N Center Point Depot looking WSW.

Note the ground slope at the north-end freight door.

Copy obtained from the Center Point Historical Society Collection, Depot Museum, Center Point, Iowa.



In 1937 the well-dressed railfan was attired in suit, tie and hat. Bill Janssen is photographing 100 at Center

Point. Robert V. Mehlenbeck photo. Time table issued January 9, 1935. Joseph M. Canfield Collection.

1937 Photograph of the WCF&N Center Point Depot looking SSW.

Copy obtained from the Center Point Historical Society Collection, Depot Museum, Center Point, Iowa.

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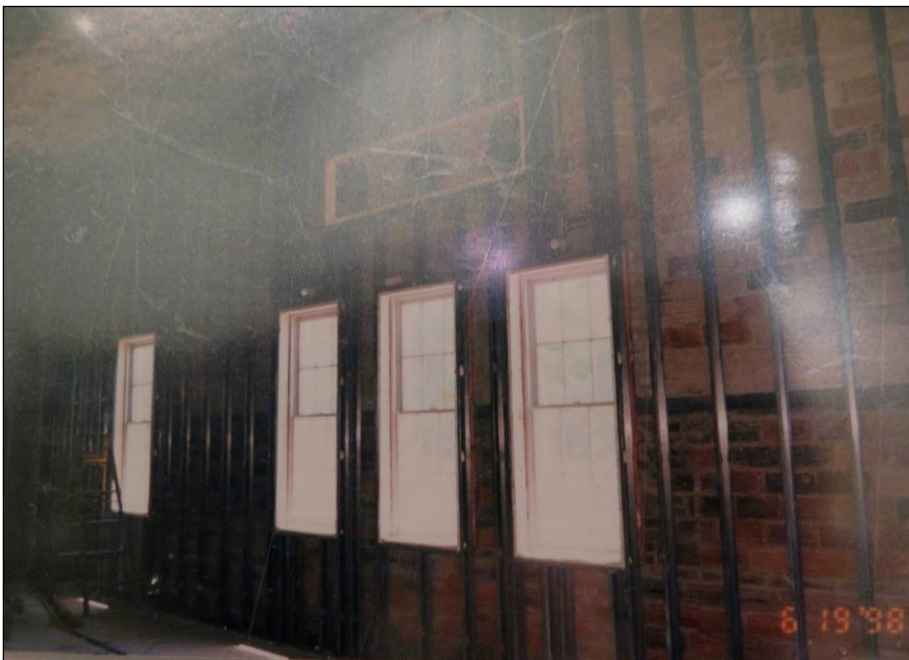
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Photographs taken during the 1980s rehabilitation showing the damaged plaster removed from the interior of the ticket office and waiting room area of the Center Point Depot. Copy obtained from the Center Point Historical Society Collections, Depot Museum, Center Point, Iowa.



Interior of the Substation power room during the 1998-99 rehabilitation showing the tile block walls exposed and new metal studs in place. View is looking at the south wall. Copy obtained from the Center Point Historical Society Collections, Depot Museum, Center Point, Iowa.

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WCF&N Center Point Depot in 1999 looking NNW.



WCF&N Center Point Depot in 1999 looking SE.

Copies obtained from the Center Point Historical Society Collection, Depot Museum, Center Point, Iowa.

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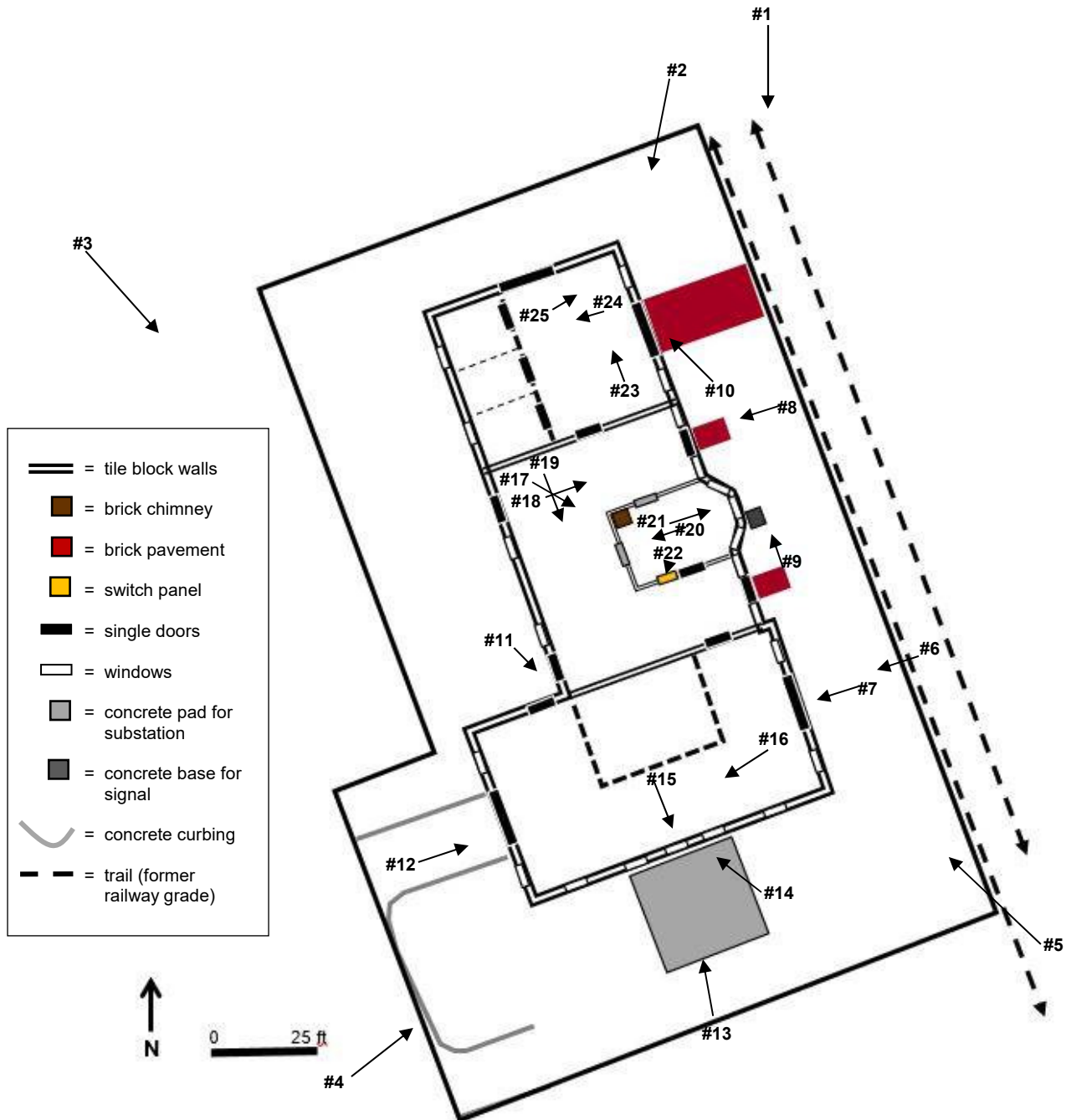
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County and State Linn County, IA

Map Showing Photograph Directions



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Additional

Section Documentation **Page** 59 **Property name** WCF&N Center Point Depot and Substation

County and State Linn County, IA

List of Photographs

Photographer: Leah D. Rogers, Tallgrass Archaeology LLC

Date of Photographs: December 31, 2016 (#1-14) and March 18, 2017 (#15-25)

Location of Original Photographs: 2460 S. Riverside Drive, Iowa City, IA 52246

Description of Photographs:

- #1 General view of Center Point Depot looking South
- #2 General view of Center Point Depot looking SSW
- #3 General view of Center Point Depot looking SE
- #4 General view of Center Point Depot looking NE
- #5 General view of Center Point Depot looking NW
- #6 East façade of substation section of Center Point Depot looking WSW
- #7 Close-up of east door and “Cedar Valley Road” plaque on substation section looking WSW
- #8 Close-up of door and windows on waiting room section looking WSW
- #9 Close-up of concrete base for signal in front of ticket office bay window looking NNW
- #10 Close-up of door on freight room looking NW
- #11 Close-up of rafter end detail of Center Point Depot looking SE
- #12 Close-up of west door and window of subsection looking ENE
- #13 South wall of subsection section with concrete pad in foreground looking NNW
- #14 Close-up of insulators in south wall of subsection section looking NW
- #15 Close-up of insulators in south wall on interior of subsection section looking SSE
- #16 General view of subsection section interior looking WSW
- #17 General view of waiting room interior looking SE towards ticket office
- #18 General view of waiting room interior looking ENE
- #19 General view of waiting room interior looking SSE
- #20 General view of ticket office interior looking WSW
- #21 General view of ticket office interior looking ENE at bay window and “Center Point” sign
- #22 Close-up of metal switch panel on ticket office interior looking SSW
- #23 General view of freight room interior looking NNW
- #24 General view of freight room interior looking WSW at modern restroom addition
- #25 Close-up of rafters and roof truss of freight room interior looking NE





CLOSED FOR SEASON
OPEN APRIL 15

CCCB
\$14







MUSEUM



Fever
Valley
Road

*Cedar
Valley
Road*







CLOSED FOR SEASON
OPENS APRIL 15



Surveillance Cameras In Use













EXIT

CENTRAL PRINT
LUMBER CO.
PHONE 2321



1954
Center Point
Centennial











CENTER

POINT

2 200 1900



2 200 1900



2 200 1900



2 200 1900

CROUSE-HINDS
PANELS
SYRACUSE, N.Y.
CAT. NO.



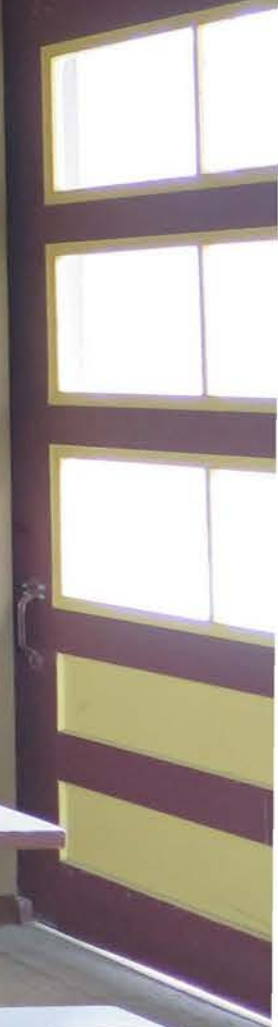


NO SMOKING
WITHIN 100 FEET
OF THIS FACILITY

Map of Cedar Valley Nature Trail



Cedar Valley Nature Trail





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: WCF & N Center Point Depot and Substation

Multiple Name: _____

State & County: IOWA, Linn

Date Received: 1/24/2018 Date of Pending List: 2/26/2018 Date of 16th Day: 3/13/2018 Date of 45th Day: 3/12/2018 Date of Weekly List: _____

Reference number: SG100002185

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

X Accept Return Reject 3/7/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments: _____

Recommendation/
Criteria Accept, National Register Criteria A and C.

Reviewer Patrick Andrus *Patrick Andrus* Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2218 Date 3/7/2018

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

CHRIS KRAMER, ACTING DIRECTOR

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OFFICE OF IOWA

IOWA HISTORICAL
FOUNDATION

January 19, 2018

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240



Dear Mr. Loether:

The following National Register nomination(s) from Iowa are enclosed for your review and listing if acceptable.

WCF&N Center Point Depot and Substation

The WCF&N (Waterloo, Cedar Falls & Northern) Center Point Depot and Substation is locally significant under Criteria A and C for its historical associations and architectural distinction. The depot is one of three of the WCF&N depots, outside of Waterloo, that retain good integrity and only one of two located alongside the original interurban line that have been restored and one of only a few that still convey their historical association with the WCF&N, which was one of Iowa's major interurban lines in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This interurban line is significant for its innovation as an electrified line built to steam railroad specifications so that freight could be exchanged with the connecting steam railroads. The Center Point Depot was also designed in the Mission style of architecture more so than the Prairie School and Craftsman styles, which were more typical of the WCF&N "standard" depot designs. The Center Point Depot also provided residents with additional access to the urban centers of Cedar Rapids and Waterloo at a time when automobile transportation was just beginning to develop and expand. The period of significance for this building is from 1914, when the depot was built and officially put into operation, to 1956 when the last passenger interurban run was made through Center Point.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Laura Sadowsky
State Historian and National Register Coordinator
State Historical Society of Iowa

Enclosures.