

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

FEB 22 1988

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Shelbyville Railroad Station
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Depot Street N/A not for publication
city, town Shelbyville N/A vicinity
state Tennessee code TN county Bedford code TN003 zip code 37160

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Herbert L. Byers 2/16/88
Signature of certifying official Date
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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:)

Herbert L. Byers Entered in the National Register 3-24-88

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS

TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: combination railroad station

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls WOOD: weatherboard

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Shelbyville, Tennessee combination railroad station of the Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis Railway is a small rectangular frame structure, one block east of the Courthouse Square in Shelbyville, the county seat of Bedford County. The station, built in 1906, is an uncommon narrow frame station characterized by its overhanging eaves, supported internally so as to dispense with the need for the typical heavy wind braces or brackets. The station is located on its original site at the terminus of the small branch line, for many years operated by the Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis Railroad and now by the Walking Horse & Eastern Railroad.

The building was constructed by NC&St.L in 1906 in a variation of the company's last standardized depot plan, a narrow profile, tri-band sided frame station with high hipped roof, overhanging eaves, and numerous windows. The small frame structure is rectangular, approximately twenty-five feet by ninety in dimension. Walls are weatherboarded, with a wainscot of vertical beaded boards at the base separated from the upper walls by a molded wooden stringcourse, forming tripartite band siding of vertical-horizontal-vertical boards. Simple corner boards define the edges of the building. The building rests on a cast concrete foundation and is topped by simple hipped roof, its overhanging eaves supported by internal framing.

The east, or trackside, facade is distinguished by a tripartite bay window extension with one-over-one light double hung sash windows; the central window originally served as a ticket window. This bay extension is sheathed in diagonal board paneling. To the north of this are three two-over-two light sash windows, one opening from a small end waiting room and two on either side of an original wood and glass panel door leading to the main waiting room. At the south end, the decorative features are duplicated with a wood and glass panel door, topped by a two-light transom and flanked by two-over-two light sash windows. Near the end, a heavy nine-paneled sliding freight door provides access to the freight room.

The west facade has eight two-over-two light double-hung windows matching those on the rest of the building punctuated by three six-paneled doors with two-light transoms opening respectively from north to south to the freight room, ticket office, and waiting room.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Shelbyville Railroad Station

The south elevation features two small two-over-two light double-hung windows and the same surface treatment found on the main body of the building. The north elevation has the same two-over-two light windows above the wainscot and a smaller two-over-two light window at the east end.

The interior contains five principal rooms; a large freight and baggage room, a private office for the station agent, the main ticket office, a large waiting room, and a smaller waiting room likely a segregated space for the blacks.

The freight room, at the south end of the building, has beaded board walls above a vertical board wainscot resting on a plain twelve-inch baseboard. The rear of this area is divided into two small rooms, the stationmaster's office with a similar interior treatment and a small rest room with its original features.

The ticket office is centrally located and includes the bay window with one-over-one-light double-hung windows. The entire east wall is taken up by the ticket counter with integral wooden drawers and paneled surfaces to either side. Exactly opposite each other are small interior windows to the freight room to the south and to the main waiting room to the north. Walls are of tongue-and-groove boards above the original wainscot and plain baseboard. The west wall has a small rectangular frame electrical box with matching trim.

The main waiting room has tongue-and-groove board ceiling and walls, and beadboard wainscot with a molded baseboard. Side walls each include two-over-two light double-hung windows flanking paneled doors to the platform. The south wall is broken by the small interior ticket office window, while to the south is the small segregated waiting room, with another paneled door set between the three-fourths length windows. This room has a small restroom in the northwest corner with stained woodwork and original porcelain fixtures; it is separated from the waiting room by a wooden partition.

The roof was altered in 1966, when the original red roof tiles were replaced with a modern composition roof. At the same time small dormers the north and south ends were removed. Otherwise, the building retains its original appearance and is presently being restored for a local museum.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1906-1937

Significant Dates

1906

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis
Railway (NC&St.L)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Shelbyville Railroad Station, built about 1906 by the Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis Railway is nominated under National Register criteria A and C for its significance to Shelbyville and Bedford County, Tennessee, in commerce and architecture. The small frame structure is a good example of the small "railroad style," with tri-band pattern wooden walls, overhanging eaves, and a high hipped roof. The Shelbyville depot is one of the few surviving historic resources related to railroad development in the county, has been little altered, and is presently being restored.

The medium-sized station (actually a terminal; the building is located at the end of a small feeder line) served the Bedford County seat as a shipping point, a passenger station, and railway office for the Shelbyville Division of the NC&St.L, the first branch line of the once-powerful railroad system that spanned the central South. Today, the station is the terminal for the recently-organized Walking Horse and Eastern Railroad, a small connector line.

A meeting of interested citizens of Bedford and Coffee County was held at "the Beech Grove" (now Beech Grove, Tennessee) on November 2, 1839 to take into consideration the memorializing of a legislation in favor of construction of a Georgia railway from its terminus at Ross Landing on the Tennessee River to Nashville. The meeting elected William S. Watterson Chairman and James L. Armstrong secretary, and passed a resolution calling on the Legislature to promote the railway project.

The Nashville & Chattanooga Railway was chartered by an act of the Tennessee General Assembly on December 11, 1845. At the time, there was not a mile of railway line in the entire state. Bedford County, located on the prospective route, came forward with a full share of moral and financial support for the undertaking. The Bedford County Court appointed commissioners Robert Matthews, George Davidson, Thomas Dean, Jonathan Eakin, and W. C. Swanson to oversee railway affairs in the county. The commissioners undertook their work with zeal, and approximately 150 citizens came forward to subscribe from anywhere from 1 to 100 shares of

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A
 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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A

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

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

See continuation sheet

Shelbyville 79NW

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for the Shelbyville Railroad Station is shown as lot 19.01 on the accompanying Bedford County Tax map.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries for the Shelbyville Railroad Station include sufficient property to protect the architectural and historical significance of the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Miranda T. Roche/Richard Quin
organization South Central Tennessee Development District date July 20, 1987
street & number Post Office Box 1346 telephone 615-381-2040
city or town Columbia state Tennessee zip code 37402-1346

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2

Shelbyville Railroad Station

stock, long before a rail was received or a foot of roadway graded. Some of the stock was eventually paid for in labor, materials, and services.

Construction of the main line began in 1848, where a tunnel was drilled through the Cumberland Plateau near Sewanee. Rails and fastenings were brought from England to Nashville by water. The first locomotive, a "splendid" passenger carriage, and thirteen freight cars were received by boat on the Cumberland River in Nashville in December 1851, and on the 27th of the month made the first trip, a trial run of one mile out of Nashville. The line reached Murfreesboro, 31 miles from Nashville, on July 4, 1851, and by 1852 had been extended to Wartrace in Bedford County, the junction with the Shelbyville branch line. Two years later, following the completion of a bridge over the Tennessee River at Bridgeport, Alabama, the Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis Railway was opened all the way to Chattanooga.

The eight and two-tenths miles Shelbyville Branch opened in the early 1850s and was the first branch line of the Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis Railway system. The branch was chartered by the Tennessee General Assembly on January 19, 1850. Construction began two or three years later. Section by section construction of the line was let to contractors. Thomas "Old Dry" Holland built the two sections nearest Shelbyville; other portions were constructed by Patrick Fay, Volney H. Steele, Mike Holt, and other parties not recorded. The section through Bomar Hill was the most difficult, as the hill, almost solid rock, had to be cut through. This cost far more than anticipated and the parties building this section failed financially; indeed, none of the contractors, who were unused to railway construction, made money from their contracts. Time and time again their laborious work in cutting through hills or building up fill would not be accepted by the exacting and tyrannical engineers of the Nashville & Chattanooga Company, and work would have to begin again. Finally, in 1852, the line was completed and trains began to run. The first depot at Shelbyville was erected and Robert Moffatt became the first agent. On his death, he was succeeded by his clerk, T. A. Bell, and he by J. S. Butler, followed by Dr. Jonathan Thomas, and later, by H. C. Whiteside.

Shelbyville's depot almost became a "union" station as a second railway, the Decatur, Chesapeake, and New Orleans Railroad, chartered in 1887, to run from Gallatin, Tennessee, through Murfreesboro, Shelbyville, Fayetteville, and Decatur, Alabama on to the Mississippi state line. Two-and-one-half miles of railway was actually built south from Shelbyville, but the line was never completed. (Its successor, the Middle Tennessee and

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 3

Shelbyville Railroad Station

Alabama Railroad, did eventually operate south from Elora, near Fayetteville, Tennessee down into Alabama, the line being abandoned only in 1985.)

The present frame depot, typical of the railway stations which were once common in South Central Tennessee, was constructed in 1906, the second terminal for the line. It replaced a smaller frame depot which had been located on the other side of the tracks about fifty yards east of the present station. The new station was constructed to serve the increased traffic along the short branch line.

The Nashville & Chattanooga Railway purchased the Nashville & Northwestern Rail Road in November 1872, and seven months later was renamed the Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis Railway. Eight years later, the Louisville & Nashville and Great Southern Railroad, its chief competitor, acquired controlling interest, but the NC&St.L was not formally merged with the Louisville & Nashville Railroad until 1957. The L&N continued to operate the line until recent years, though this company, too, was later acquired by another line, Seaboard Coast Lines, and is now a division of CSX Transportation. In 1984 plans were made to abandon the Shelbyville branch route, but local sponsorship was found to keep open the little line, which today is the Walking Horse and Eastern Rail Road.

Notwithstanding that Shelbyville missed being on the main line of a major railroad, the branch railway helped the city develop into a regional center of commerce and manufacturing by 1906. Industries established included pencil mills (at one time eight of these plants produced leads and pencil shafts, the latter being responsible for the destruction of many of the old log houses and rail fences of the area), textile mills, garment and sportswear factories, and plants producing tire cord and horse collars. Food processing industries included plants producing milk, cheese, and peanut and candy products. Three leather plants made and shipped harness and other leather products. Forest materials were also shipped from the town, including timber, cedar shingles, axe helves, barrel staves, and cheese boxes. Two animal-poultry feed mills and several flour mills also located along the railway and shipped large tonnages each year.

Most local commodities were shipped from the station, no separate freight depot ever being built in the community. Products awaiting shipment or newly arrived goods were stored in the large freight room. The station agent, responsible for freight shipped from the station, occupied the office at center.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 4

Shelbyville Railroad Station

Besides serving as a shipping point, the station was the hub of the local transportation system. A 1909 rate book listed eleven stops between Shelbyville and Wartrace inclusive; these were Haliburton, Haley, Greely, Bomar Hill, Caldwell, Gray Nelson, Ebo, Sanders, and Edgefield. For years, passenger trains were pulled by a steam locomotive named "Old Teton", which finally derailed in 1950 and was retired. Passenger service was discontinued after the NC&St.L and L&N merger in 1957.

Although the line continues to be important to the county's economy, its demise began during the Depression, like many other railroads around the country. Mergers, discontinuation of passenger services, and changes in freight shipping have made the Shelbyville Station obsolete for railroad use.

The Shelbyville Station is the best surviving structure related to railway transportation in Bedford County. Only one other station remains in the county, a small flag stop on the main line in the little town of Normandy to the northeast. The Normandy depot is a tiny rough frame structure, approximately eight-by-ten feet in dimension, with an open front that originally faced the tracks; it has been moved from its original location and has not been very well maintained. The main line station in the neighboring city of Murfreesboro to the north is a larger building of brick construction with a separate baggage-house, and cannot be easily compared. To the southeast, the station at Tullahoma is of more similar scale, but of later date, has been altered by more additions and interior changes, and is, again, not well maintained.

The station is a good example of the small stations built in the so-called "railroad style", simple vernacular structures borrowing minor details from the Gothic Revival and Stick styles. Decoration is limited, the most noticeable features being prominent roof braces or brackets and a low horizontal division on all walls, the lower section covered with vertical siding, weatherboarded above. The basically rectangular shape is broken only by a single bay extension trackside which provided the station agent with views up and down the tracks.

The Shelbyville Station is the only station located on the eight-mile long Shelbyville Branch and one of only two known stations in Middle Tennessee built from NC&St.L's last standardized depot plan. The other station, located in Dechered, Franklin County (extant in 1983) is much smaller (15' X 68') than the Shelbyville Station (30' X 90'). The Shelbyville station is a good example of the NC&St.L standardized depot plan, as well as

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Shelbyville Railroad Station

being significant in commerce to Shelbyville and Bedford County. The station was donated to the Shelbyville Kiwanis Club in 1984 and is now being restored as a local museum.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Trackage actually continues another two miles to Shelbyville Mills, Tennessee, on Duck River.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

Shelbyville Railroad Station

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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- "Kiwanis Club Given Historic L&N Depot." Shelbyville Times-Gazette, 12 February 1984, p. 1.
- Notice concerning a mass meeting in support of a railway in The Shelbyville Star, November 1839. Clipping in possession of Mrs. C. P. Adams of Shelbyville.
- O'Neal, Michael Ray. "Historic Railroad Depot Architecture in Middle Tennessee." M.A. Thesis, Middle Tennessee State University, 1983.
- "Railroad Depot Being Repaired." Shelbyville Times, June 2, 1966, p. 1.
- "Shelbyville Branch." NC&St.L Bulletin, February, 1986.
- West, Mike. "Seaboard to Close Shelbyville Line?" Shelbyville Times-Gazette, 31 January 1984, p. 1.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Section number _____ Page 1

Shelbyville Railroad Station

Shelbyville Railroad Station
Depot Street
Shelbyville, Bedford County, Tennessee
Photos by: Miranda T. Roche
Date: August 1987
Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission
Nashville, Tennessee

West facade, facing east
#1 of 10

North elevation, facing south
#2 of 10

Southeast corner, facing northwest
#3 of 10

East elevation, facing west
#4 of 10

South elevation, facing north
#5 of 10

Detail, eaves
#6 of 10

Station office, facing north
#7 of 10

Corridor, facing south
#8 of 10

Baggage Room, facing south
#9 of 10

Ticket window detail, facing south
#10 of 10

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 2

Shelbyville Railroad Station

