

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

DEC 09 1992

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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 an 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 Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Northern Passenger Depot--Dows

other names/site number Dows Rock Island Depot

2. Location

street & number 200 Railroad Street N/A not for publication

city or town Dows vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Wright code 197 zip code 50071

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

David [Signature] 11/24/92
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historical Society of Iowa
State of 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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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 the Keeper

[Signature]

**Entered in the
National Register**

Date of Action

11/7/93

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 the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Railroad MPS

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/rail-related

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION/CULTURE:museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN
Romanesque

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/limestone
walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows
Name of Property

Wright, Iowa
County and State

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 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)

TRANSPORTATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1896 - 1942

1896

Significant Dates

1896 - 1942

1896

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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 (38 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:

Dows Mercantile

BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows
Name of Property

Wright, Iowa
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	45	45,910,40	4722720
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2			

3			
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4			

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 Betty Swanson, Historian

organization Dows Historical Chapter date September 28, 1992

street & number R.R. #2 Box 74 telephone (515) 852-4781

city or town Dows state Iowa zip code 50071

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Dows Chapter of the Wright County Historical Society--Jim White, Pres.

street & number: 300 S. Eskridge telephone (515) 852-3879

city or town Dows state Iowa zip code 50071

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 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 Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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CFN-259-1116

BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

Sited a short distance northeast of Dows' downtown commercial district, the depot, built by the Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Northern (BCR&N) Railway, consists of a one-story, rectangular-shaped, brick main block capped with a cross-hipped roof with gables and a single story baggage wing constructed of the same material but with a slightly lower hipped roof attached to its north end. Although likely designed by the railroad's engineering department and based to some degree on stock plans, the building owes much to Henry Hobson Richardson's interpretation of the Romanesque, especially as he related it to his designs for railroad depots. In addition to the large rounded arches, executed in this instance in brick rather than stone, that are a hallmark of his influence, this depot features the compact plan and the low and predominant roof supported by large brackets that characterize Richardson's small railroad station designs.

The building, constructed of red clay brick, is well preserved with few alterations. The roof was originally covered with tin shingles (three of which were discovered during the 1988 alterations and are on display in the depot museum), later replaced in the early 1920's with cedar shingles which have been replaced with the present asphalt shingles. The north chimney was taken down through the attic to the ceiling in 1949 when other alterations were made. The south chimney was taken down to the roofline in the late 1960's when the main roof was first shingled with asphalt shingles; a galvanized flue pipe was installed so the building could be heated with an oil burning heater. The eaves extending four feet from the sides of the building, covered underneath with six-inch boards, are supported with twenty four brackets each of which is supported with a limestone block imbedded in the brick wall (note photograph no. 2).

About 1910 an underground cistern was built just inside the west entrance and two bathrooms were installed in the entryway. (note floor plan B, Section 7, p. 7) They were supplied with water by gravitational flow from the line's water tower. At that time the original entrance door with transom to this area was removed and in its place two windows were installed with a common cement sill and the open area enclosed with brick. The original appearance was restored in 1988 when the two windows and bricks were removed and a new door with transom, built by retired carpenter Robert Larson using three thicknesses, five eighth inches thick, was installed. A small section of

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BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

the cement sill remains on either side of the doorway. All other doors, except the two to the newly installed restrooms and the one to the newly built furnace room (which were donated from area farm houses), are original.

The visible foundation is limestone block beneath of which is flagstone and cement. The underground depth of the foundation varies from five to six feet at the north to two feet at the south as was discovered when the waterlines were installed in 1988. The original boardwalk and platform (note photograph no. 1) were replaced about 1910 with a brick platform using Oskaloosa brick which is still in place today. Between the depot and railroad tracks the platform varies from sixteen feet wide at the north to eighteen feet wide at the south, extending seventy eight feet north and ninety nine feet south of the depot for a distance of two hundred forty nine feet. To the north and south of the depot are sidewalks twelve feet wide of the same brick. To the west of the building a five foot wide cement sidewalk with steps and a ramp leading to the main entrance was built in 1988.

To the north is an asphalt parking lot. The area between this lot and the tracks and the area to the west of the depot was seeded to grass in 1988. Seven dwarf arborvitae and three potentilla shrubs were planted west of the depot. Three crab apple trees, a row of deciduous bushes and a spruce tree were planted northwest of the tracks with the owner's (Midwestern Railroad Properties, Inc.) permission. To the south of the depot each year is planted a beautiful triangular flower bed, the plants of which are started by the students at the local school. On the south brick walk is the original dray wagon which adds to the landscape.

The entryway was reclaimed in 1988 when the two old bathrooms were removed. The north, east and south walls of this area (note floor plan C, Section 7, p. 8) are the original varnished wainscoted ones. The wainscoting on the west wall on either side of the doorway is new. Except for the vinyl tile on the floor the entryway has been altered back to its original state.

The original "Ladies Waiting Room" (note floor plan A, Section 7, p. 6) is now the receiving area for visitors. In place of the seating benches which at one time lined the west and

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BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

north walls of this room are five seats salvaged and refinished from the old movie theater which is now a part of the building that houses the Dows Clover Farm Grocery Store. The room has been made smaller with the addition of a furnace and storage room centered along the north wall and partitions blocking the views to the entrances to the two restrooms, all constructed of wainscoting. (note floor plan C, Section 7, p. 8 & photograph no. 3) Beside the water fountain is the same scale used over seventy years ago in the depot.

In the south room, or originally the "Gentlemen's Waiting Room," two benches salvaged from the old Popejoy depot and donated by Harold Bach have been attached to the walls in the southwest corner. This room has been made into a small museum with railroad memorabilia and historical finds as well as local historical items.

Between these two rooms is the "common public area," where people once came together to purchase their ticket from the depot agent at the ticket window. This area is graced on the north and south with spindle arches which, except for the south top thirty four spindles, were rebuilt in 1988 by Gilman Charleston, Ed Colnes, and Henry Iverson as remembered from 1916 (note "The Arches", Section 7, p. 9, picture, Section 7, p. 10 & photograph no. 5) An old oval braided rug on the floor and a black 1898 "Round Oak no. 18" stove (donated by Shirley Hackbarth) complete with chimney add charm to the area.

The room from which people of bygone days could hear messages in code being received and transmitted over the telegraph lines and where the depot agent conducted business is now a small store which sells Iowa made products. All that remains of the original furnishings in the depot is the cupboard along the west wall of this room. (note photograph no. 6) The transom window in this east room, larger than the other three arched transoms, has twelve amber colored stained glass panes and is accented with one rose colored one.

The other three arched transoms have twelve panes each. The south one has light rose colored panes while the two on the west are a darker rose with still darker accents. Four stained glass panes have been replaced in the two west windows. The windows are all original except for the newly installed transom above the west entrance.

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BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

All along the top of the inside brick walls of the depot, except for the entryway, and the newly installed restrooms, is a three inch cove molding underneath of which is an eight inch trim board with two and three fourth inch diameter wooden circles spaced approximately six inches apart. There are four hundred eighty five circles total, most of which are original.

The north wing which was originally the baggage room and later turned into a storage area in 1949 is now two modern restrooms. Wainscoting four feet high lines the inside brick walls, and partitions, also of wainscoting, separate the stalls (note photograph no. 7). The brick walls and ceiling of 1" X 8" boards are original.

Eight white glass globed light fixtures complete with chains for hanging were saved when the Senior Citizens remodeled their building at the northeast corner of Ellsworth and Tracy Streets and later donated to the Dows Historical Chapter to be used in the depot. One is hanging in the entryway, one in the museum, two in the receiving area and two in each restroom. The ladies restroom also has a modern fixture with four light bulbs above the lavatories. The four light fixtures in the store and the two outside the two ticket windows were designed for decor purposes as they were constructed using modern plastic shades, green on the top and white underneath and hung from the ceiling with electrical cord.

The inside brick walls and wainscoted ceiling have been painted light green. The woodwork is dark green with medium green accents (circles). The outside wood was painted as close as possible to the original colors as selected by the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway using dark gold with rust-burgundy for the trim. The Rock Island emblem has been repainted black and white.

Shortly after purchasing the depot in 1987 the Dows Chapter of the Wright County Historical Society received a \$20,000 matching grant from the Iowa Department of Economic Development to open the building as an official State of Iowa Welcome Center. The restoration was an all community project. Over 6,500 volunteer hours, translating into \$22,000 were donated by over 120 residents who physically worked on the rebuilding process. \$3,100 worth of in-kind materials and professional services were donated. In addition, over \$15,000 (the original cost of the depot) was locally raised to assist the restoration; a process that should have cost \$75,000 - \$100,000 was reduced to \$40,000 (Dows Depot Welcome Center Brochure, Section 7, p. 12).

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BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

Besides the previously mentioned projects the renovation of the depot included replacing 1,265 lost and crumbling brick (matching brick salvaged from the Fillmore Building Warehouse, taken down in 1987, were used), repairing windows (one wood sash and four stained glass panes were replaced and the windows were caulked) and covering the windows with plexiglass on the outside. Mayor Richard VanGerpen and David Elledge worked in the crawl space, used hydraulic jacks to level the floor and replaced and reinforced rotted joists. Cement and wood blocks were used to support the flooring that was rebuilt in the "Ladies Waiting Room." Approximately 400 square feet of flooring, salvaged from a farm house, was used to replace rotted flooring and the area that had been lowered in 1949 to allow space for the dray wagon. The floor was then sanded and sealed. A sub-floor was laid in the baggage room where the new restrooms were installed. Vinyl tile was laid in this area also.

Electric sanders were used to sand the ceiling. The walls were cleaned and prepared for painting. Paint on the cupboard and east transom was removed and much sanding was done. Cupboard, entryway and restroom wainscoting were varnished. A threshold had to be replaced in the south doorway on the east side and several panels in two doors had to be replaced. The depot was rewired for electricity, a furnace with central air and restroom fixtures were installed.

Wooden eave troughs, built into the roof, had rotted where water ran to the corners and had to be removed and repaired. The roof over the north wing had to be reshingled and it was there the three original tin shingles were found.

This depot is one of four buildings owned by the Dows Historical Chapter. The others being the Quasdorf Blacksmith Shop built in 1899 (across the street from the depot), the Fillmore Building rebuilt after the fire of 1894 (a block south from the depot), and the Lumber Yard Office Building built in the 1980's (the oldest building on Main Street, one-half block east of the Fillmore Building). The Chapter also owns parts of two lots across from the depot and north of the blacksmith shop, one part of which was donated by R. J. Crafton and the other by Arthur and DeElda Frodin. These sites have been made into the "Iowa Welcome Center Historical Park." To add to this setting, approximately one block northwest of the depot is the United Methodist Church with its large stained glass windows also built in 1896 (owned by the Iowa Conference of the United Methodist Church).

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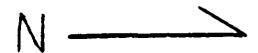
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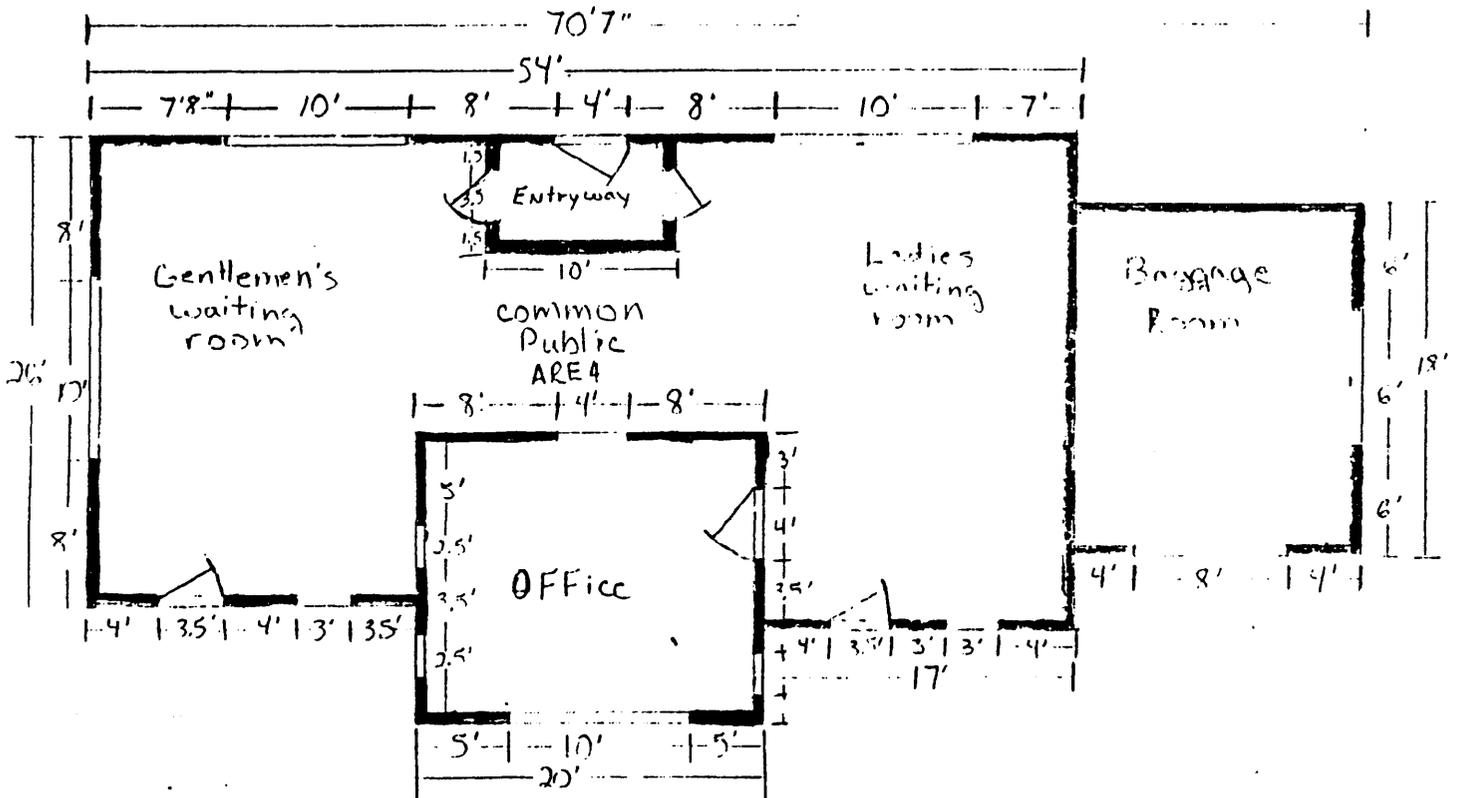
CFN-259-1116

BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

Scale - 1' = 3/32" By Eric Sturgeon



Dows Depot



Floorplan A

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National Park Service

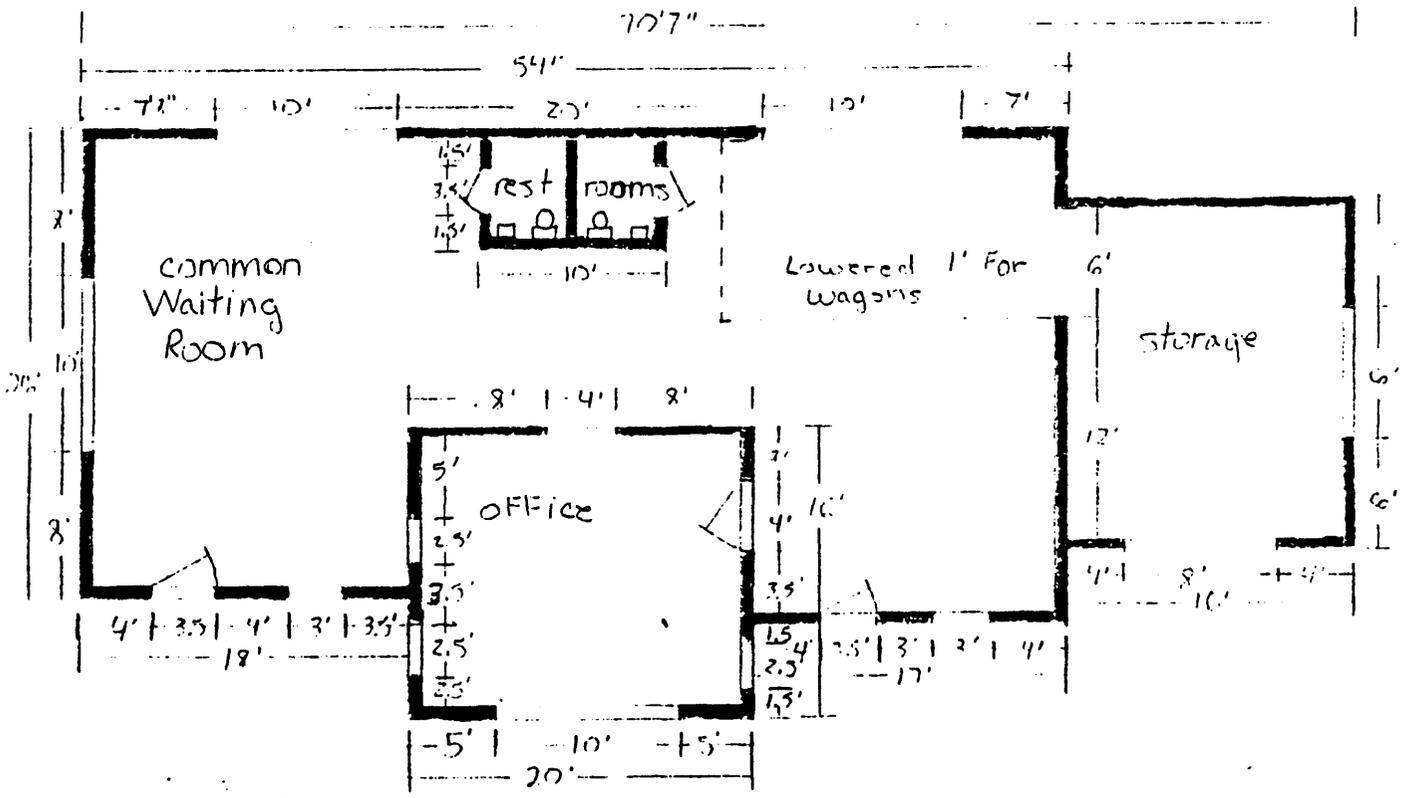
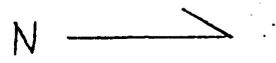
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BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

Scale = 1" = 3/32" By Eric Sturgeon



Floorplan B

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BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

THE ARCHES

THE ONLY FRAGMENT OF THESE ARCHES TO SURVIVE WAS THE TOP ROW OF SPINDLES ON THE SOUTH SIDE (SEE PHOTOGRAPH BY S.E. DOOR). GILMEN CHARLESTON MOVED IN FROM BLAINE COUNTRY IN 1916 AND REMEMBERS SOMETHING LIKE YOU SEE TODAY.

ED COLNES WORKED ON THE SOUTH ARCH WITH GILMEN AND HANK IVERSON WORKED ON THE NORTH ARCH, IN ADDITION TO MAKING THE TOP 3/4 SPINDLES.

THE ARCH SUPPORTS ARE MADE OF 13 3/16TH LAYERS. THE SPINDLES ARE MADE FROM RIPPED TWO-BY-FOURS, TURNED ON LATHE. THE CARPENTERS THEN PLUMBED DOWN FROM THE TOP SPINDLE AND THE CURVED CUT WAS MADE. GILMEN SAID THE HARDEST PART OF THE JOB WAS "KEEPING TO IT."

WHEN STANDING BY THE WATER FOUNTAIN, ONE CAN APPRECIATE THE NORTH ARCH FRAMING THE SOUTH ARCH, REFLECTING THE CURVE OF THE SOUTH WINDOW. THIS IMAGE SUPPORTS GILMEN'S MEMORY. THOUGH THEY MAY LOOK LIKE THEY WERE HERE SINCE 1896 WHEN THE DEPOT WAS BUILT, OUR LOCAL CARPENTERS HAVE RECREATED A TIMELESS IMAGE AND HAVEN'T RESTORED SOME OF THE FINEST, NEARLY "LOST" CHARACTER WE NEVER WOULD HAVE KNOWN. MAY THIS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ALWAYS HANG NEAR THE ARCHES SO THEY CAN RECEIVE THE CREDIT THAT IS THEIRS.

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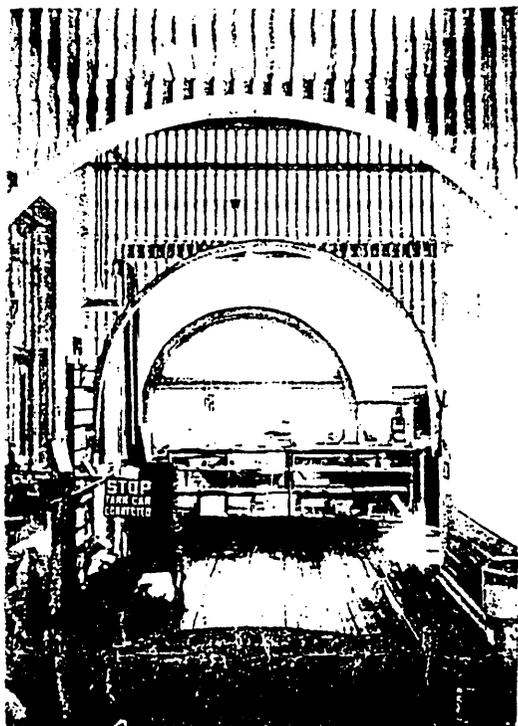
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BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

Inside Views of Depot



View thru arches looking south from water fountain.



Southeast view of depot museum.

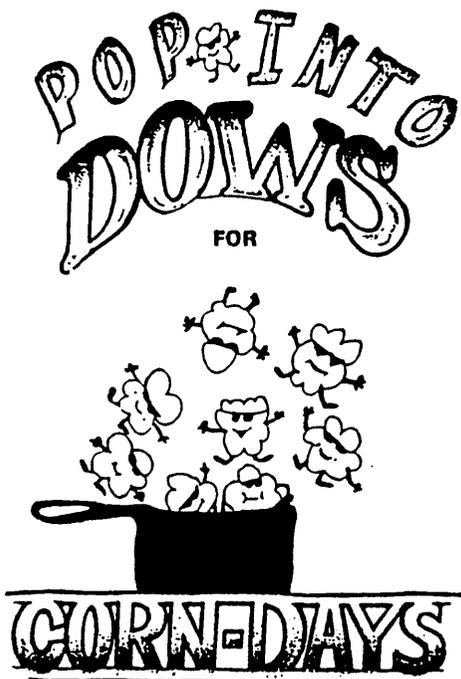
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BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows



**IT'S A GOOD TIME!!
FIRST WEEKEND
EVERY AUGUST**

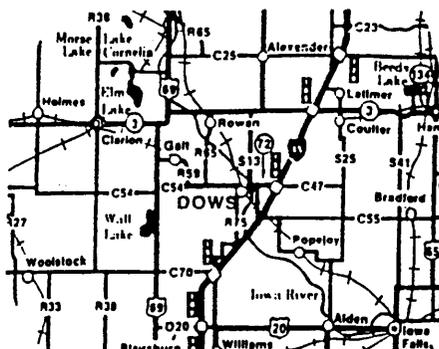
**FREE
CORN ON THE COB,
ICE CREAM &
WATERMELON**

ALL KINDS OF SHOWS & GAMES

ENTERTAINMENT FOR ALL AGES

PARADE

PRIZES



**DOWS, IOWA-A GOOD TOWN
IN A FRIENDLY PROGRESSIVE
COMMUNITY IN A GREAT
STATE!**

Conveniently located within two miles of Interstate 35 in the north central area of Iowa, Dows has five quality hard surfaced roads leading in every direction and is within a 100 mile radius of most major Iowa cities.

Dows Main Street is active and viable, providing a variety of services, including: hardware, banking, cafe, groceries, floral and gifts, pharmacy, towing service, clothing, tv and stereo, gasoline, hairdressing, lounges and collectables.

Dows' major employers and manufacturers include the Farmers Cooperative of Dows and Rowan, Val-Mark (aluminum wheel inserts), Weidemann Construction Company, Farmers State Bank and Care Center.

Dows' recreation includes many picnic parks, a public swimming pool, a public golf course, and short distances to state and county parks and camping facilities.

With the completion of the new water tower, school remodeling and the construction of a new water treatment plant, Dows is actively and enjoyably seeking light industry to locate within the area.

For further details please contact: Clyde Vedane
515/852-4215



where

the past is just ahead

2 Miles Off I-35 Exit 159



DOWS DEPOT

WELCOME CENTER

WEST TRAIN STREET
DOWS, IOWA 50071
(515) 852-3595

**OPEN: Monday-Saturday —9-5
Sunday —12-5**

For 84 years (1896-1980), the Rock Island Depot in Dows served as the focal point of railroad activity.

The depot is the first depot built in Wright County. When the railroad tracks were completed in 1880, and fondly known as the "Slippery Elm Railroad", they connected Cedar Rapids to Sioux City. The railroad was the commercial lifeline of Dows for fifty years, when trucks began to be widely used for local shipments.

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BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

The Depot was built at a cost of \$15,000 and is typical of the kind of railroad buildings of the period.

When the Rock Island Railroad declared bankruptcy in 1980, the Depot was sold to the Hawkeye Land Co. During this period, the depot was virtually stripped of all its original contents. After several years of fund-raising and negotiations, the Depot was purchased by the Dows Historical Society in 1987.

Shortly after the purchase, the Dows Historical Society received a \$20,000 matched grant from the Iowa Department of Economic Development to open the building as an official State of Iowa Welcome Center.

The restoration was an all-community project. Over 6,500 volunteer hours, translating into \$22,000 were donated by over 120 residents who physically worked on the re-building process. \$3,100 worth of in-kind materials and professional services were donated.

In addition, over \$15,000 was locally raised to assist the restoration; a process that should have cost \$75,000-\$100,000 was reduced to \$40,000.

TODAY

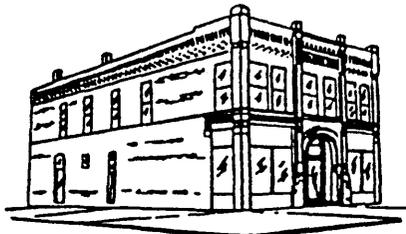
The Dows Depot Welcome Center is furnished with period railroad memorabilia and historical finds, as well as local historical items, all contributed by local and distant interested parties, to whom we are very grateful.

The Dows Depot Welcome Center is open everyday (except Christmas, New Year's Day and Easter) from 9-5 Monday-Saturday and 12-5 on Sunday.

Visitors will find information on many Iowa attractions, barrier free restrooms, telephone, and one or two of the over 90 volunteers who act as Dows Hosts.

An "Iowa Room" can also be found in the Depot, selling fine crafts, hand made items, and Iowa souvenirs, and gifts.

**VISIT OUR HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PARK FACILITY ACROSS FROM THE DEPOT**
Picnic Tables



**DOWS MERCANTILE STORE
& FILLMORE BUILDING**

Dows was incorporated and platted in 1880 and named for Stephen Leland Dows of Cedar Rapids. Dows grew rapidly but the Main Street was destroyed in a fire, September, 1894.

Within two weeks, a plan of architecture was approved, insurances paid, and 200 workmen covered on the job, which was completed, for the most part, before Christmas of that year.

The average cost of a 22'x80' brick building was then about \$1,600.

The Fillmore Building was the cornerstone building of the Fillmore Block and was a part of the master plan of 1894. The two story building has housed general stores, a hardware store, hairdressers, a barber shop, a veterinarian, and apartments.

It was purchased in 1987 by the Dows Historical Society to prevent it from demolition.

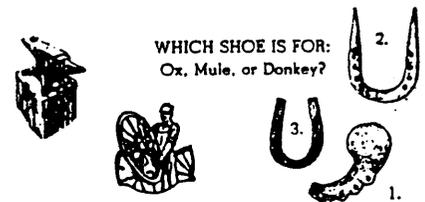
TODAY

The DOWS MERCANTILE STORE opened May, 1989, and represents 175 Iowa artists and manufacturers, creating unusual products, folk art, quality crafts, and fine art.

Staffed and run by the Dows Historical Society, the commission store contains a working artist' area, seasonal shows, and an ever expanding, ever innovative selection of hand made Iowa arts and products. Traditional crafts in a historic setting.

The Store is open from 9-5, Monday through Saturday and 12-5 Sundays.

DOWS MERCANTILE is the perfect place to shop for gifts, art work, and souvenirs of Iowa or simply to stop for an ice cream treat.



Opening in the Future



**QUASDORF WAGON, MACHINE
& BLACKSMITH SHOP**

Just across from the depot.

100 year old family run - progressive shop, catering mainly to the local farm needs as they changed from 1890 to recent times.

INTERESTING — EDUCATIONAL

Try to name some of the items and their uses.

Tours will be made available.

**OPENING DATE AND HOURS
WILL BE ANNOUNCED.**

1. Ox. 2. Mule 3. Donkey

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BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

1. Name of property, BCR&N Passenger Depot (Photographs #1-11).
2. City and State are, Dows, Iowa
3. Photographer is unknown for photograph #1.
Sharon Walbaum is photographer for photographs #2-12.
4. Date of photograph #1 is 1906.
Date of photographs #2-12 is January 10, 1992.
5. Negatives are stored at Dows Mercantile.
7. N/A
Above information is for photographs as stated.

Photograph #1

6. View looking northeast

Photograph #2

6. View of west brackets looking north

Photograph #3

6. View of receiving area looking north

Photograph #4

6. View of museum looking northwest

Photograph #5

6. View of arches and west ticket window looking northeast

Photograph #6

6. View of cupboard in small store looking south.

Photograph #7

6. View of ladies restroom looking northwest

Photograph #8

6. View of front of depot looking east

Photograph #9

6. View of north end of depot looking southeast

Photograph #10

6. View of southeast corner of depot looking northwest

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Photograph #11

6. View of south side of depot looking north

Photograph #12

1. Home of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Eriksen, originally Dows' first depot (1880-1896), then Dows' freight depot (1896-1949)
6. View looking northeast

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BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

The Dows depot is significant under Criterion A for its association with the development of the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railway (BCR&N), which between 1876 and 1903 became the largest railway claiming Iowa as its home. Dows benefitted from its advantageous location on the "Iowa Route" at the juncture of where a principal branch extended northward to Forest City off the Pacific Division's main line and the surviving depot is a reminder of the prosperous days of BCR&N at the turn of the century. The Dows BCR&N Railway Depot also possesses local significance under Criterion C. The Dows depot is one of a handful of brick combination stations (passenger and freight) constructed by the BCR&N as part of a general line upgrade after 1895 in Iowa that remain standing. Constructed in 1896, its design was based on a prototype erected in Forest City (no longer extant), whose inspiration drew heavily on Henry Hobson Richardson's designs for small railroad stations. With its large rounded arches, compact plan, and low and predominant roof supported by large brackets, the depot is best extant example of Richardsonian Romanesque design influence in Dows. The opening and closing dates of significance reflect the years of the depot's association with BCR&N and its growth.

The BCR&N depot at Dows relates in the following way to results of the Multiple Property Listing entitled "The Advent and Development of Railroads in Iowa: 1855-1940." The historical context of the depot's history is to be found in the series of building improvements and construction of new branch lines as set forth in discussion about the period of railroad development known as "The Golden Age of Steam Railroading: c.1890-c.1920". Insofar as the depot's history illustrates a phase in the history of the line itself, the story of the Dows depot reflects that of a "second generation building: brick replacement structure" on the BCR&N, which parallels the history of the Illinois Central as presented in section six of the "context report" concerning "The Illinois Central, a Line Study: 1855-1940s". As a particular "type of property," the Dows depot is an extant example of a "Passenger Depot (Local)--one of three known such BCR&N depots. Under "Registration Requirements" for passenger depots, it would be evaluated as a significant expression of community and railroad line growth under National Register Criterion "A". With respect to its aspects of historical "integrity", the Dows depot satisfies to a high degree the requirements of location and authenticity of original design, setting and association. Four BCR&N depots have been listed to date in the National Register of Historic

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Places and, of them, the depots at Clarion (1898) and Vinton (1900) represent this era of BCR&N prosperity and construction improvements. The two others, in Walker (1873) and Rock Rapids (1886), illustrate the earlier first generation development of wood frame buildings associated with the line.

The railway, with Cedar Rapids as its headquarters, owed its origins to the competing dreams of those who envisioned the main arteries of western rail commerce (e.g., grain, lumber, coal) to lie not in moving the raw products and growing business of the West on to Chicago and Milwaukee for shipment eastward via the lakes and canals, but in creating north-south connections from St. Paul across Iowa to St. Louis for the movement of products downriver through New Orleans to New York. When within six years the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Minnesota faced foreclosure and became purchased by the new BCR&N, its new leadership first accomplished their predecessor's aim to obtain a suitable northern terminus, this time by uniting with others to construct the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railway. Once completed by late 1877, BCR&N directors then turned their business horizons west and, seeing their territory threatened by the encroachment of competing lines, undertook to establish their "Pacific Division". Beginning at Vinton, the tracks branched off the Main Line to the northwest and headed gradually through Dows and on toward Sioux Falls and Watertown, South Dakota. In so doing, an intense rivalry ensued between the BCR&N and the Milwaukee road which resulted in "one of the most interesting 'crossing wars' in the history of railroad building in Iowa". At Dows, when the branch line was built in 1895 connecting Forest City to the BCR&N, the effect of all this on Dows proved substantial indeed. As a later review of Dows' development indicated, "Dows, at noon six days a week, was much like a Grand Central Station. Passenger trains from the east, west and north met here at noon. The trains remained here long enough for the passengers to pick up a lunch at Bob Cobble's restaurant. . . , the transfer of passenger, mail, baggage and express" (Pictorial History of . . . Wright County, p. 125).

The year 1896 and several ensuing ones thereafter were prosperous ones for the BCR&N. As earnings exceeded those of previous years in the line's history, the directors undertook a program of permanent improvements, replacing temporary and less substantial rails, bridges and structures with new ones. Cedar Rapids obtained a new Union Passenger Station in 1896 and successive improvements followed elsewhere. As part of their "liberal" expenditures for improvements in buildings during that year, BCR&N officials arrived in Dows during

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the first week in March and selected the location for their new brick depot. They also decided to move the present depot building (built in 1880, first depot in Wright Co., Dows Brochure) north for use as a freight depot (Dows Advocate, March 13, 1896, p. 5, c. 3).

The City Council of the Incorporated Town of Dows adopted ordinance #15 to vacate a tract of land for depot purposes on March 13, 1896 (note Section 8, p. 8, as taken from the Dows Advocate). Work commenced Monday, July 13, 1896 on the new brick depot with ten men working on the foundation (Dows Advocate, July 17, 1896, p. 4, c. 3). It is a common belief the brick was produced locally by the J. A. Wilson Brick and Tile Co. but, no record can be found where they or any other brick factory were in existence in Dows at that time. Three such factories; that of J. A. Wilson, Nels Munson, and Bangs and Knuths first entered into business between 1900-1920 (The History of Dows, Ia., p. 31, c. 2). The August 7, 1896 Dows Advocate states, "The carpenters and bricklayers are all here, so is the brick and lumber..." So, we can only assume the brick and lumber were produced elsewhere and brought to Dows by train. The brickwork on the building was completed in two weeks time (Dows Advocate, August 21, 1896, p. 4, c. 2). Two months later, the new depot, which proved to be one of the finest on the Burlington system, was dedicated Monday, October 19, 1896 (Dows Advocate, October 23, 1896, p. 5, c. 2).

The October 9, 1896 issue of the Dows Advocate reports, "The depot is a model of beauty inside and out. Mr. Windsor, the boss painter, did an excellent job of painting. The work on the inside is especially fine." We regret we have been unable to find the name of the architect who designed the depot or the engineer who built it. A. H. Conner, who headed the line's engineering department is credited with designing the Clarion depot and he may have been involved with this one also. A. H. Conner & Co. built seventeen brick buildings in Dows after the fire of September 1894 (Dows Advocate, October 12, 1894). It is also possible the Cedar Rapids Architectural firm of Josselyn and Taylor, who did many of the line's larger depots was responsible for the Dows design, but it is unclear at this time what their role was in designing small town depots.

"The depot became a type of social center. People (railroad patrons and 'loafers') gathered near the station's pot bellied stove during the cold just as folks assembled at the general store, post office, or elevator office. In more pleasant weather they might leave the station to stand on the platform or to stroll through the depot park. This popularity of the depot ultimately led to separate waiting rooms for men and for women and children. (The fairer sex and

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children it was thought, had to be protected from 'coarse and vile' males.) The arrival and departure of a passenger train was always exciting--a highlight of the town's day. There might be relatives or friends to greet or to bid a tearful good-bye and always strangers to observe. Children, especially wanted to 'watch the train come in,' it broke the monotony of small-town life. The young marveled at the agent giving the engineer that green-paper note attached to a looped stick. Probably most parents tolerated this pastime because they, too, liked to do it. But there were dangers particularly from the moving equipment. Parents of teenage girls usually did not allow their daughters to frequent the depot. As journalist-historian Frank Luther Mott explained, 'The reason was that every 'drummer' (traveling salesman) was believed to have bold eyes for a young girl and strange seductive powers over feminine virtue.' That is why going to the depot became a family activity--a pleasant Sunday outing after church and the noon meal." (The Country Railroad Station in America, p. 8-9)

Prior to 1885 the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern came to be heavily influenced by the much larger Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway and in 1902 the Cedar Rapids Road was leased to the CRI&P. The following year, 1903, the Road was purchased outright by the Rock Island. Consequently the BCR&N as early as 1884 was boldly advertised as an adjunct to "The Great Rock Island Route--The passengers Favorite Route Between Chicago and All Points East, West, South-West and North-West." The Rock Island also enthusiastically and specifically promoted the BCR&N as part of "The Albert Lea Route.."

Before the automobile, "The railroad was the main mode of travel between cities and towns. It replaced traveling by horse and buggy or wagon and it was the commercial life-line for Dows to the outside, from 1880 to the 1930's when trucks began to be widely used for local shipments. The railroad established regular passenger and freight service through Dows on the Cedar Rapids to Sioux Falls division and the Dows to Germana (the name changed to Lakota during World War I) subdivision. With the exception of meats, vegetables, dairy products and a few other items produced locally, Dows was dependent upon the railroad to bring in coal, lumber, machinery, automobiles, clothing, furniture, groceries, etc. There were two types of freight trains, the 'through freight' which was composed mostly of carload lots such as coal, lumber, automobiles, etc. stopping only in town to 'set-out' a loaded car. The way-freight or local was made up of L.C.L. (less than car-load lot) shipments. This train was made up of cars originating and loaded in various cities such as Cedar Rapids,

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Waterloo, Des Moines, Chicago, etc. stopping at each town on the line where merchandise billed for that town was unloaded and signed for. Many coal bunkers lined the east side-track from which coal was sold to the consumer. Each bunker contained a different type or kind of coal. There were about 40 tons of coal per car and the coal was unloaded by use of wheelbarrows being wheeled from the top of the coal cars over plank to the bunkers. The railroad was the prime mover of livestock. On some Saturday nights train loads of cattle, sheep and hogs would pass through Dows, the destination being Cedar Rapids, Waterloo or Chicago, in time for the Monday morning markets. In some cases livestock was billed straight through to New York for slaughter. Hundreds of decks of hogs and car loads of cattle were shipped out of Dows by rail... A railroad siding was in use at the Ellsworth Stock Farm northwest of Dows for many years, to which cattle were shipped and from which cattle were hauled out. The railroad maintained a water stop consisting of a windmill, large wood stave tank (water tower) and a stand-by engine for pumping. The water was used to replenish the water supply in the locomotive tenders and to water livestock at the stock yards." (The History of Dows, Ia., pp. 9-11)

A round house for servicing engines and rolling stock and a turntable for turning the engines around located on the east side of the tracks near the main line branch "Y" north of town (History of Dows, p. 9) was taken down in the early 1920's. In 1949, following the end of World War II, many changes were made at the depot and rail yard in Dows. A large opening was made in the west end of the south wall of the baggage room and a section of the west floor in the "ladies waiting room" was lowered to allow the dray wagon to be brought into the area for ease of loading and unloading (note floor plan B, Section 7, p. 7). The water tower, windmill and pump house (note detailed map, Section 8, p.9, picture, p. 10) were taken down. The wooden windmill was piled and burned between the tracks. Lumber from the water tower was used by Charles Peddle to build a fence at his stockyards north of town. The freight depot was sold, moved a block east and renovated into a modest attractive one story house (note photograph no. 12). It is located at 301 East Train Street and is the home of Mr. & Mrs. Herbert Eriksen. Most of the unloading platform at the freight depot was taken down. The small section that remains is still used occasionally by the railroad for loading and unloading freight and by truckers and farmers. The small coal shed east of the depot between the main track and east sidetrack in which the "hand cars" were stored when not in use were also taken down the same year and the one "Hand car" in use at that time was stored

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in the baggage room. The last of the coal bunkers weren't removed until 1972 when the Dows Farmers Cooperative Co. built the large round metal grain storage bins.

"Also taken down in 1949 was a metal building south of Ellsworth Street built at the beginning of World War II with a spur track into which the 'Toonerville' was driven and stored each night. The Toonerville was a diesel train the railroad ran during the days of gasoline rationing during the war. It left Dows going north to Estherville in the morning and returned to Dows in the evening. Three section gangs worked to keep the tracks in good repair. One gang worked the tracks to the south and one on each of the two north lines," as told by Bus McAdams, February 6, 1992. (Today one section gang out of Eagle Grove tends the tracks.)

"The 'Rock' had some very successful years but also some very troubling ones. During the depression of the 1930's the Rock Island deteriorated physically, its morale was low and its finances precarious. Unfavorable economic conditions together with a heritage of burdensome fixed charges brought on the road's trusteeship in 1933. Things could hardly have been worse when John Dow Farrington left his post as general manager of the Burlington lines in Texas to become chief operating officer of the Rock Island in 1936. Rehabilitation began on all fronts, but the coming of the streamlined 'Rockets' did more to usher in a new era in the public's mind than any other single item. Hand in hand with speeding up trains came extensive relocation on a system-wide basis and pruning of branches which were unremunerative and a drain on the company's finances. In 1948 the Rock Island emerged from trusteeship 'with a wide-open throttle and signal lights all green' as William E. Hayes put it in his 'Iron Road to Empire' (The Palimpsest, September 1963, pp. 439-442).

This era of renewed prosperity was short lived. By the 70's the union laborers were striking for higher wages and due to increased trucking and air service, carrying both passengers and freight, the line was losing money and once again in deep trouble. It was placed in receivership in 1975. After the infusion of more than seventy million dollars in subsidies by the U.S. Government a Federal Judge, on January 25, 1980 ordered the 128 year railroad closed permanently March 2, 1980 and sold. The Kansas City Railroad Co., which had been performing emergency service on the Rock Island track, was ordered by the I.C.C. to accept no more new shipments after February 15, 1980 (The History of Dows, Ia., p. 11).

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The Hawkeye Land Co. of Cedar Rapids purchased a large share of the Line's property in Iowa including the Dows' depot. While in their ownership it was virtually stripped of all its original contents including the signalling device, with the exception of the large cupboard mentioned in Section 7, which was pulled from the wall but was evidently too heavy and cumbersome to handle. The depot was purchased from this company by the Dows Chapter of the Wright County Historical Society in September 1987 for \$4,000.

The Chicago Rock Island & Pacific Railway is now history but the Rock Island Depot in Dows, which was the hub of the railroad's activity in this community for 83 years is still intact. Dows' last depot agent, M. E. Petersen, locked the doors in 1978 when he left to work in Iowa Falls. Ten years later it was reopened as one of Iowa's Welcome Centers. Today over ninety people volunteer their time as hosts, keeping the depot open everyday (except Christmas, New Year's Day and Easter) from 9-5 Monday thru Saturday and noon to 5 on Sunday. Once again, at times, the Dows' Depot is much like a "Grand Central Station." The only difference being the travelers, instead of arriving by train, are arriving by automobile, motor home, bus, motorcycle, etc. In 1991 over eleven thousand people from all of the fifty states and twenty seven foreign countries visited the Dows Depot Welcome Center.

The State Historical Society has determined the Dows BCR&N Depot eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, both historically and architecturally, as a result of Ted Wesenberg's actions in filling out, and mailing the preliminary state report on the building.

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BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

THE DOWS ADVOCATE

MARCH 13, 1896

Ordinance # 15

An ordinance relating to the vacation of parts of certain streets and granting to the B.C.R.&N. Railroad Company for depot purposes, land therein described.

Be it ordained by the City Council of the Incorporated Town of Dows: That in consideration of certain improvements herein after specified, to be made by the Burlington Cedar Rapids & Northern Railway Company, to wit: The building of an depot at the intersection of Train and Garfield Streets with West Railroad Street. Same to be built of brick and similar in size and architecture of the depot building now maintained by the said railroad company at Forest City, Iowa and the moving of the present depot building a sufficient distance to the North of its present location to clear Ellsworth Street. Said improvement to be made and completed by January 1, 1887.

We the incorporated town of Dows, Iowa hereby vacate such portions of Train and Shepherd Streets lying between East and West Railroad Streets also grant said company a tract of land fifteen feet wide and one hundred feet long on the east line of West Railroad Street at about the intersection of Garfield and Train Streets for depot purposes, which portion of West Railroad Street is hereby vacated.

This ordinance to take effect upon the publication of the same in the Dows Advocate and is adopted on condition that if said improvements are not made and completed by the time herein before specified, this ordinance to be null and void.

Adopted March 11, 1896.

L. C. Fenninger, Recorder

J. J. Johnson, Mayor

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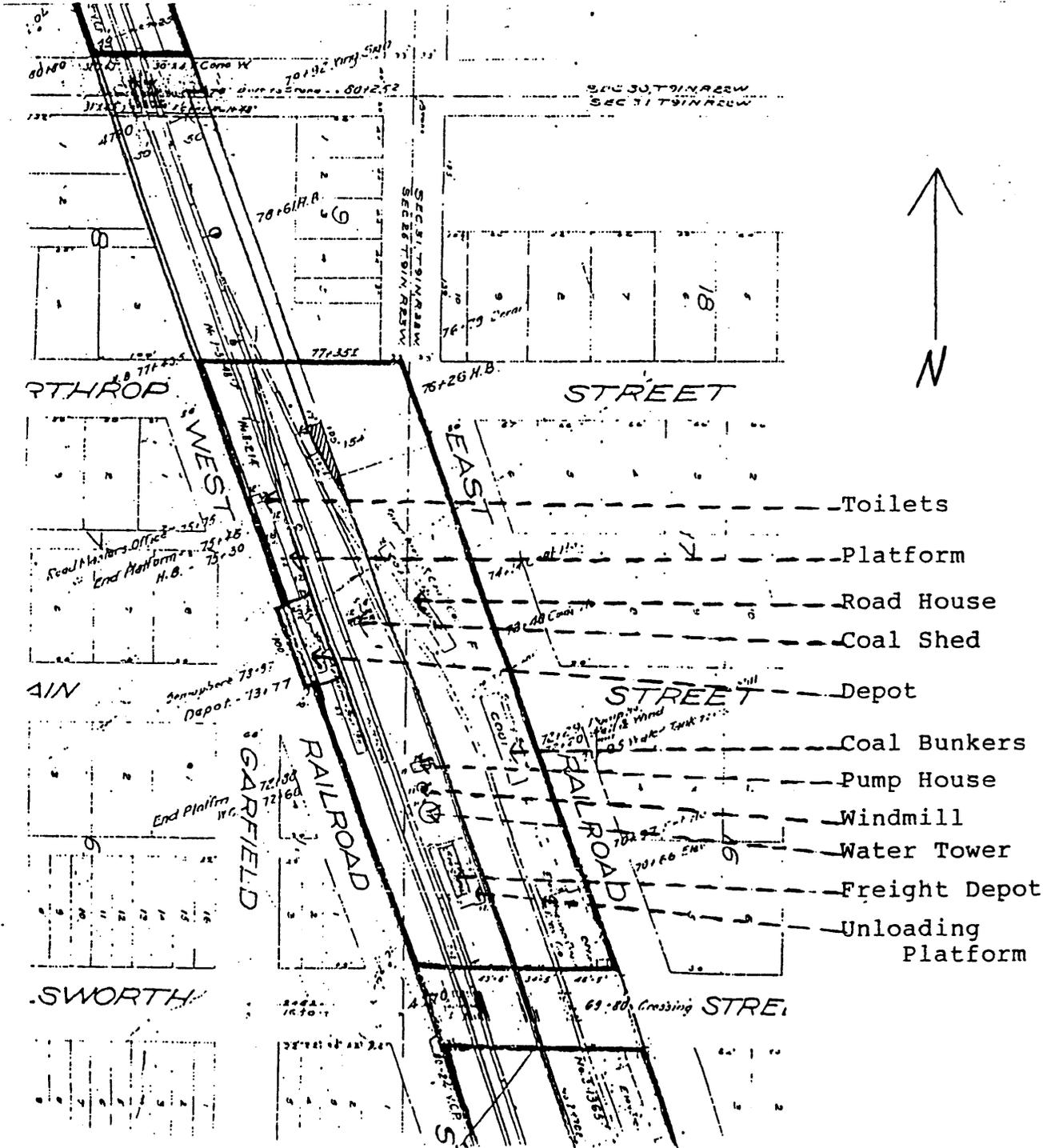
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BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

Early 1900 detailed map of Railroad Depot Area



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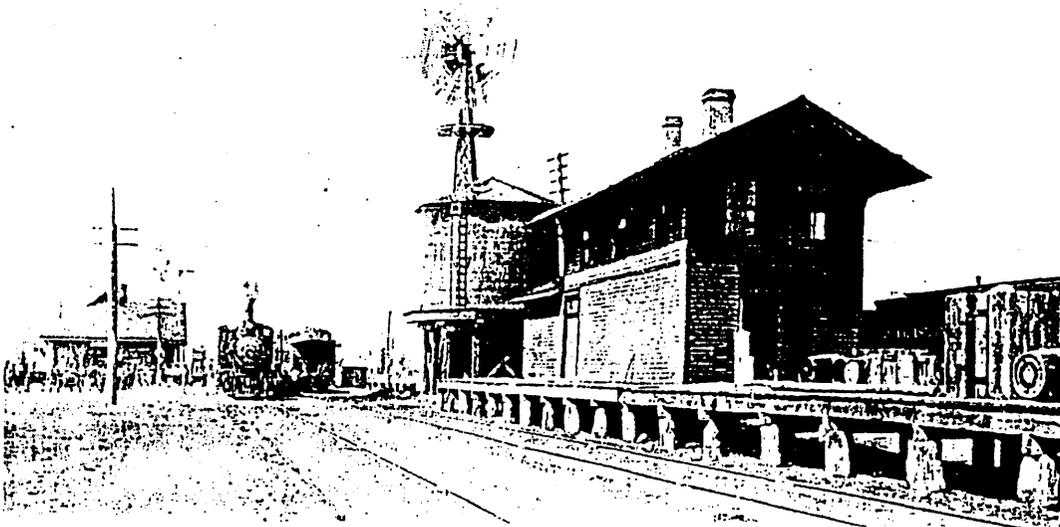
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BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

Railroad Pictures of 1915



Noon at the depot in 1915. Water tank and freight depot with platform at right. L.C.L. (less than car-load) freight for Dows was unloaded at this platform which was constructed on both sides and one end of the freight depot to accommodate freight cars on each side and drays on the end.



Noon, six days a week, at the depot in 1915 with trains (three in number) from the east, west and north branch meeting here at the same time. Note the bread and laundry baskets on the truck.

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BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

TWO FAMOUS BUILDINGS FROM DOWS' EARLY RAILROAD DAYS



Looking south down Garfield Street, to the left is Bob Cobble's Restaurant and just behind it, pictured below, Hotel Dows (both no longer extant). To the right is the Exchange Building (also no longer extant) and across the street south of it one can see the corner of the Fillmore Building.



"Hotel Dows" as it looked in 1915, located on the northeast corner of Ellsworth and Garfield, now vacant lots. Note the two-wheeled cart used to transport hotel guests' luggage to and from the hotel.

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DOWS RAILROAD MILESTONES

- 1880 - Rail line from Holland to Clarion completed via Dows by the Cedar Rapids, Iowa Falls & Northwestern Railway (connecting with rail lines already completed to Cedar Rapids and Burlington, Iowa)
- 1884 - Rail line completed to Watertown, S.D., via Estherville, Iowa
- 1884 - Branch line completed from Dows to Mayfield, Iowa, by Cedar Rapids, Iowa & Falls and Northwestern Railway
- 1895 - Branch line north of Dows completed to Forest City and beyond
- 1902 - Main line and branch line through Dows become part of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific--The Rock Island Route
- Passenger service consists of a Cedar Rapids-Estherville daytime train each way except Sundays, and an overnight daily Rock Island (Ill.)-Sioux Falls (S.D.) passenger train (with connections to and from Chicago)--carrying a mail car, baggage car, smoker, coach, and sleeping car.
- A branch line passenger trains operates between Iowa Falls and points north of Dows, except Sundays.
- 1932 - The Chicago-Sioux Falls sleeping car is discontinued; Cedar Rapids-Estherville daytime passenger trains are discontinued
- 1950 - Passenger trains 19 and 20 are discontinued west of Estherville
- 1954 - Railway Post Office car on passenger trains 19 and 20 is discontinued
- 1956 - Cedar Rapids-Estherville passenger trains 19 and 20 discontinued through Dows;
- existing freight trains 923 and 924 now carry any passengers in a combination baggage-coach car;
several years later, any passengers are carried in the caboose.
- Early 1961 - "Mixed train" (freight and passenger) service, with passengers carried in the caboose, discontinued on the branch line north of Dows;
branch line trains now carry freight only.
- Late 1961 - "Mixed train" (freight and passenger) service ends between Iowa Falls and Estherville;
trains now carry freight cars only in or out of, or through, Dows.
- 1979 - Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific ends systemwide operations;
service through Dows is provided by the Chicago & North Western Transportation Co.
- by 1983 - Trackage between Dows and Iowa Falls, and between Dows and Belmond, is abandoned;
freight service to and from Dows is provided from Eagle Grove and Clarion on an "as needed" basis.

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BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

Letter from former depot agent, A. H. Vaux, to Ted Wesenberg:

Rogers, Ar.
Jan. 15, 91

Dear Ted,

My son in Cedar Falls sent me the copy of the Iowan, he knew I would like to read about the Depots. When I read about the Dows depot it brought back a flood of memories. I spent 6 years of my early railroading in that depot. I went there in 1949 as relief agent when they went from a 6 day week to 5 day week. LeRoy Williams was agent, Arnie Maxwell was operator. When LeRoy died Arnie took that job and I took his. It was a busy place in those days, not unusual to have as many as 8 trains per day counting the branch line. The passenger service came to its end while I was there. Few can probably remember when the stock yard was one of the big shippers in the area. When Barney and Buss was in business they shipped as far away as the west coast. When I first went there they were still shipping in new autos in box cars. The cement elevator across from the depot was built while I was there. I married the second year, our first home was a small apartment in the Lynn Hall home. Both of our Children were born in Dows thanks to the help of Doctor Aggeson.

I almost went full circle, I went to Clarion in 1975 and worked on call 24 hour 7 days per week the first year. The next year I could see the railroad starting to fall apart. I worked two more years then decided I could not stand to stand by to watch them die. After 31 years I resigned in 1979, which was about a year before the end came.

I was most pleased to read what Dows and Clarion did to save a small bit of History. I would like to add my personal thanks for all work you have done.

Best Regards,

A. H. Vaux



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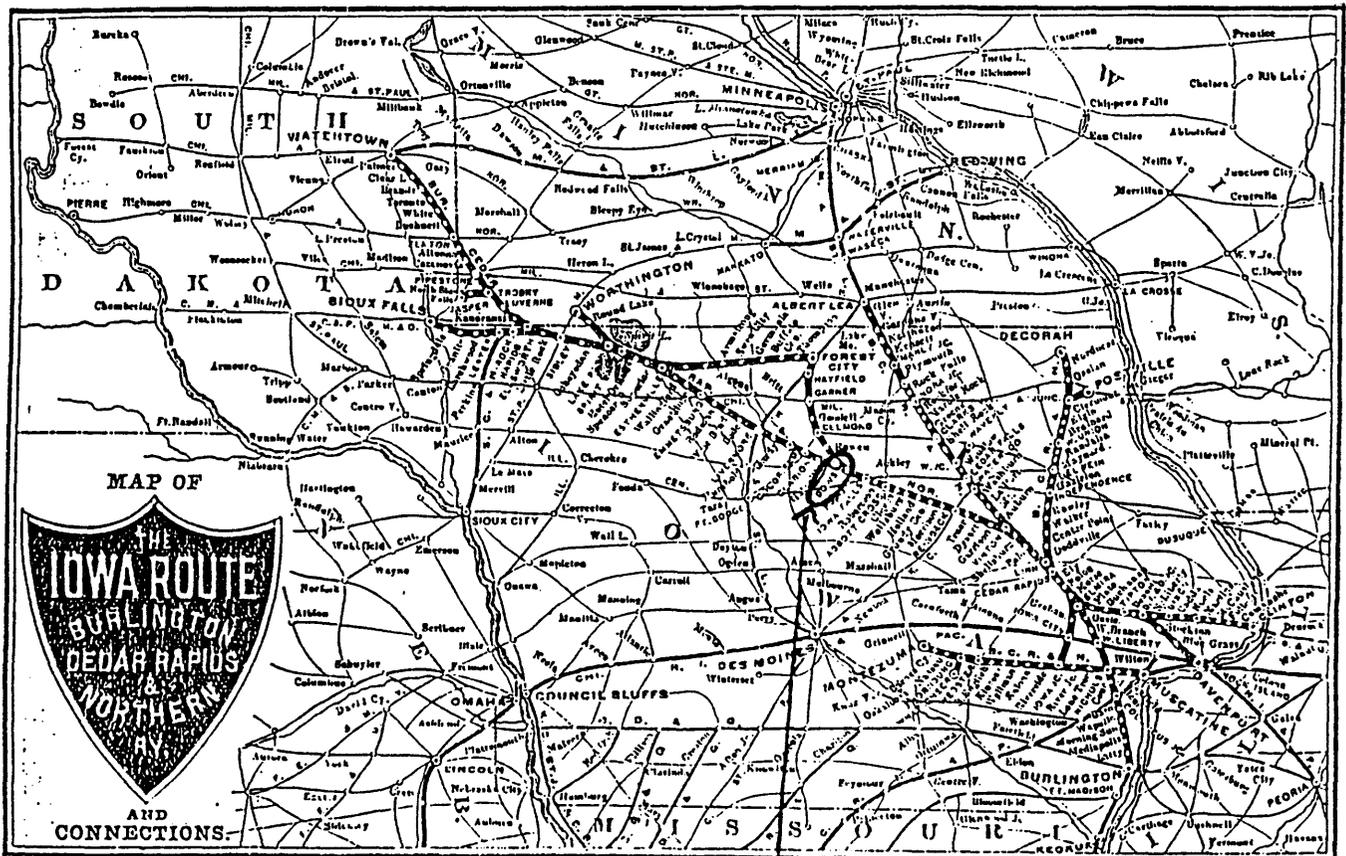
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BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

The 1896 Iowa Route of the BCR&N Railway and its connections:

From: BCR&N 20th Annual Report for 1896



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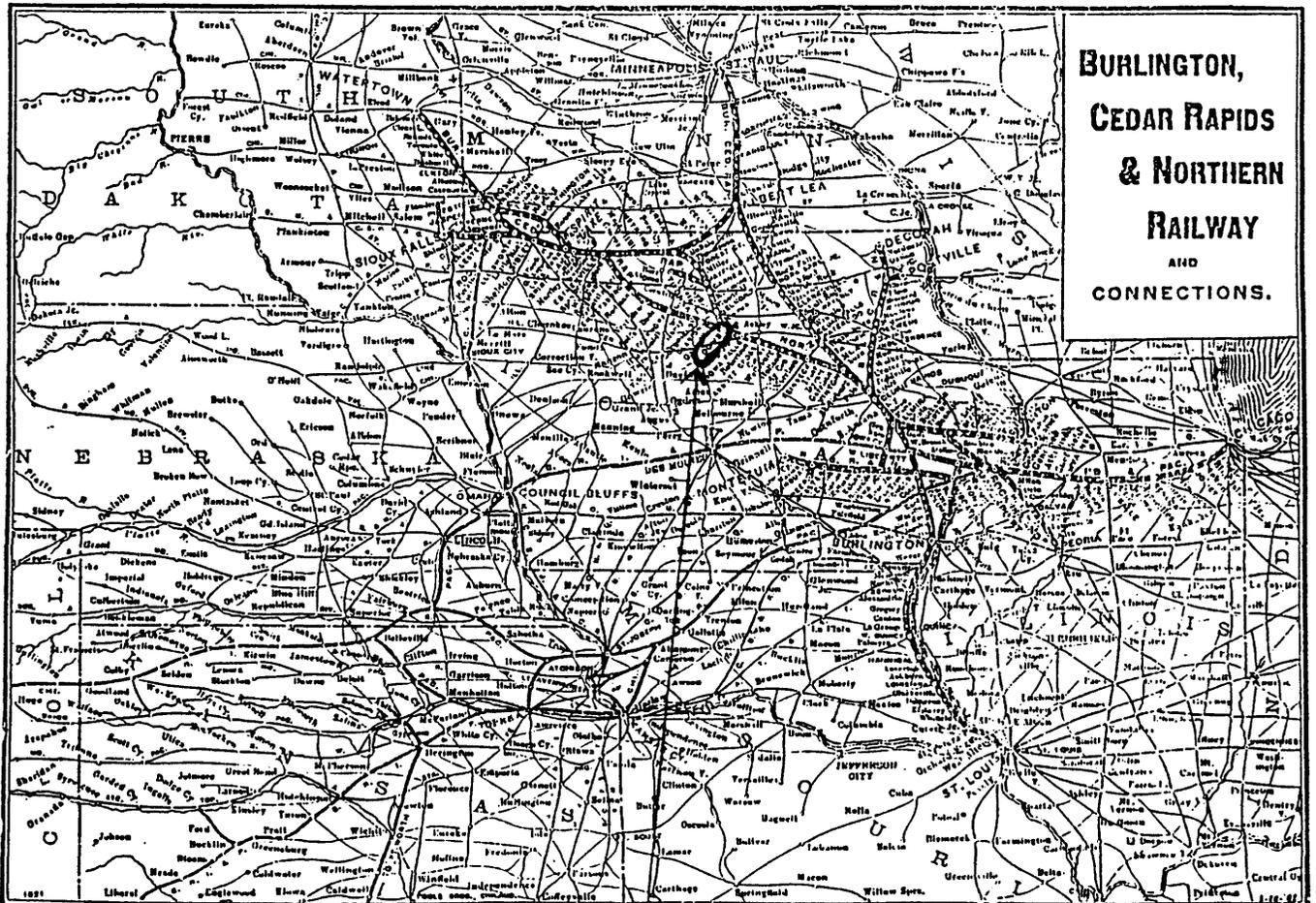
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The 1901 Route of the BCR&N Railway and its connections:

From: BCR&N 25th Annual Report for 1901



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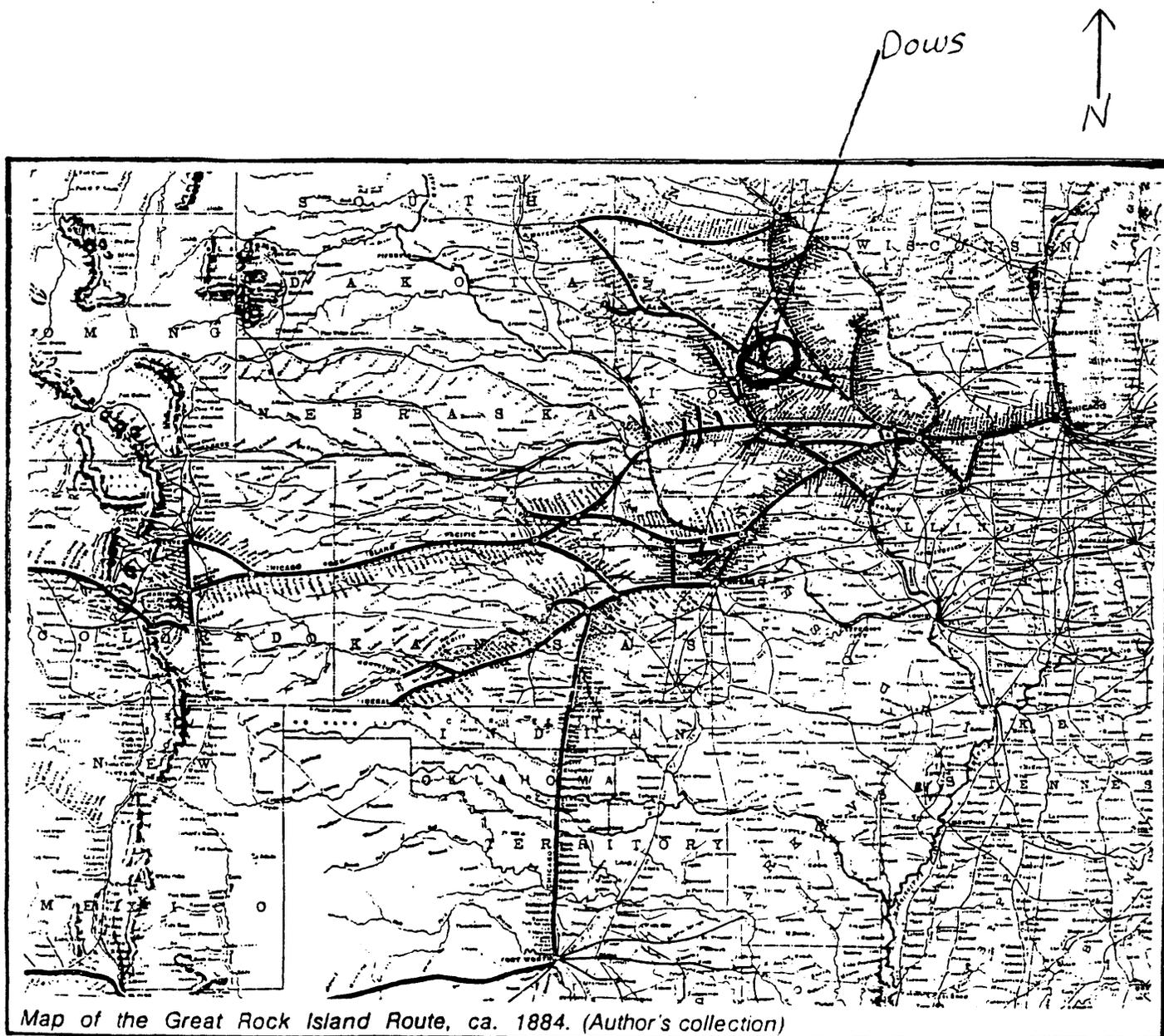
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BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

1884 map of the Great Rock Island Route



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BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

A Pictorial History of the Cities, Towns & Communities in Wright County, Iowa, ca. 1976, pp. 124-125.

Dows Centennial Committee, The History Of Dows, Iowa, ca. 1980, pp. 9-11.

The 1896 issues of Dows Advocate, March 13, July 17, August 7 & 21, September 11, October 9 & 23.

H. Roger Grant and Charles W. Bohi, The Country Railroad Station in America, Rev. and Enl. Edition, (Sioux Falls, SD: Augustana College Center for Western Studies, 1988) pp. 8-9, 107-110, 176.

Ben Hur Wilson, "Abandoned Railroads of Iowa," Iowa Journal of History and Politics, 26:1 (January 1928), 21, 27, 33-34, 39-40.

Christian Barman, An Introduction to Railway Architecture, pp. 9, 14-15, 39.

The State Historical Society of Iowa, The Palimpsest, September 1963, pp. 439-442.

1989 Brochure of Dows.

1869 Circular Announcing Issuance of Bonds by the Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Minnesota Railway Co.

Annual Reports of the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railway Company of Iowa, 2nd, 1878; 20th, 1896; 25th, 1901.

Bureau of Historic Preservation 5" X 8" card file on railroad structures along Iowa lines.

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BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

Verbal Boundary Description

It is a tract 50 feet by 101 feet lying east of Lot 8, Block 7 of the original Town of Dows in the northeast one fourth of the northeast one fourth of section 36-91-23.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries include the property historically associated with the passenger depot operations.

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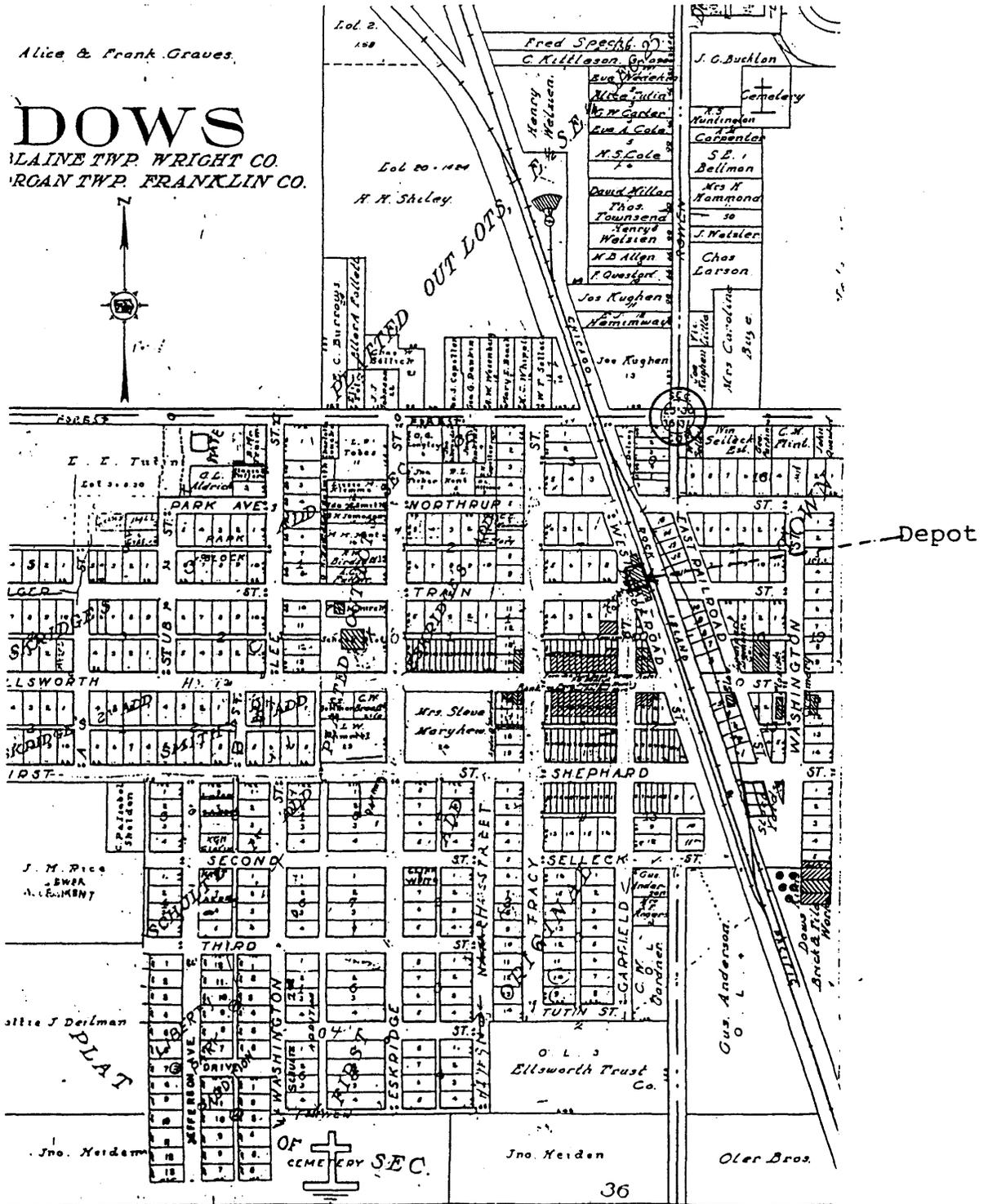
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BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

Map of Dows



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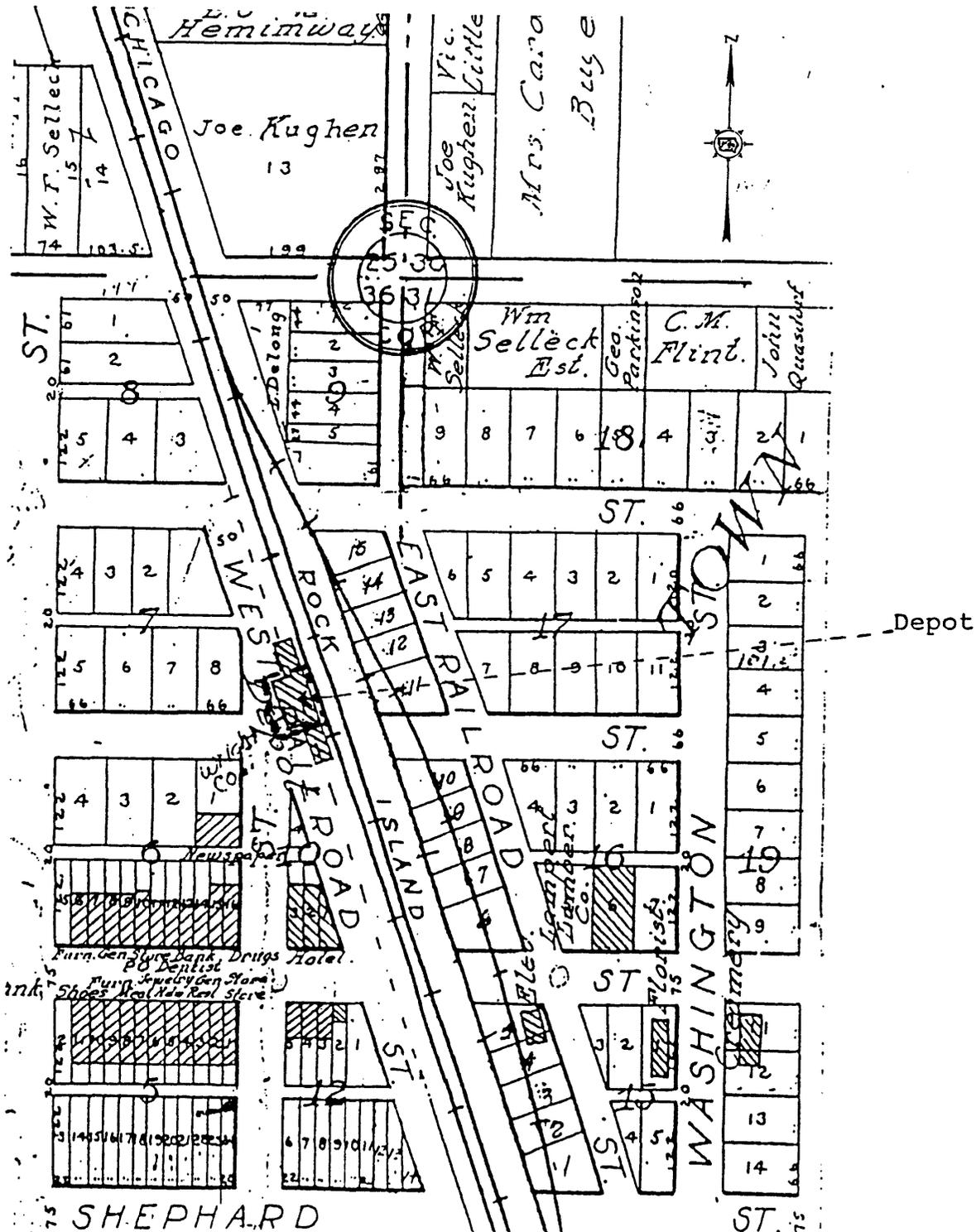
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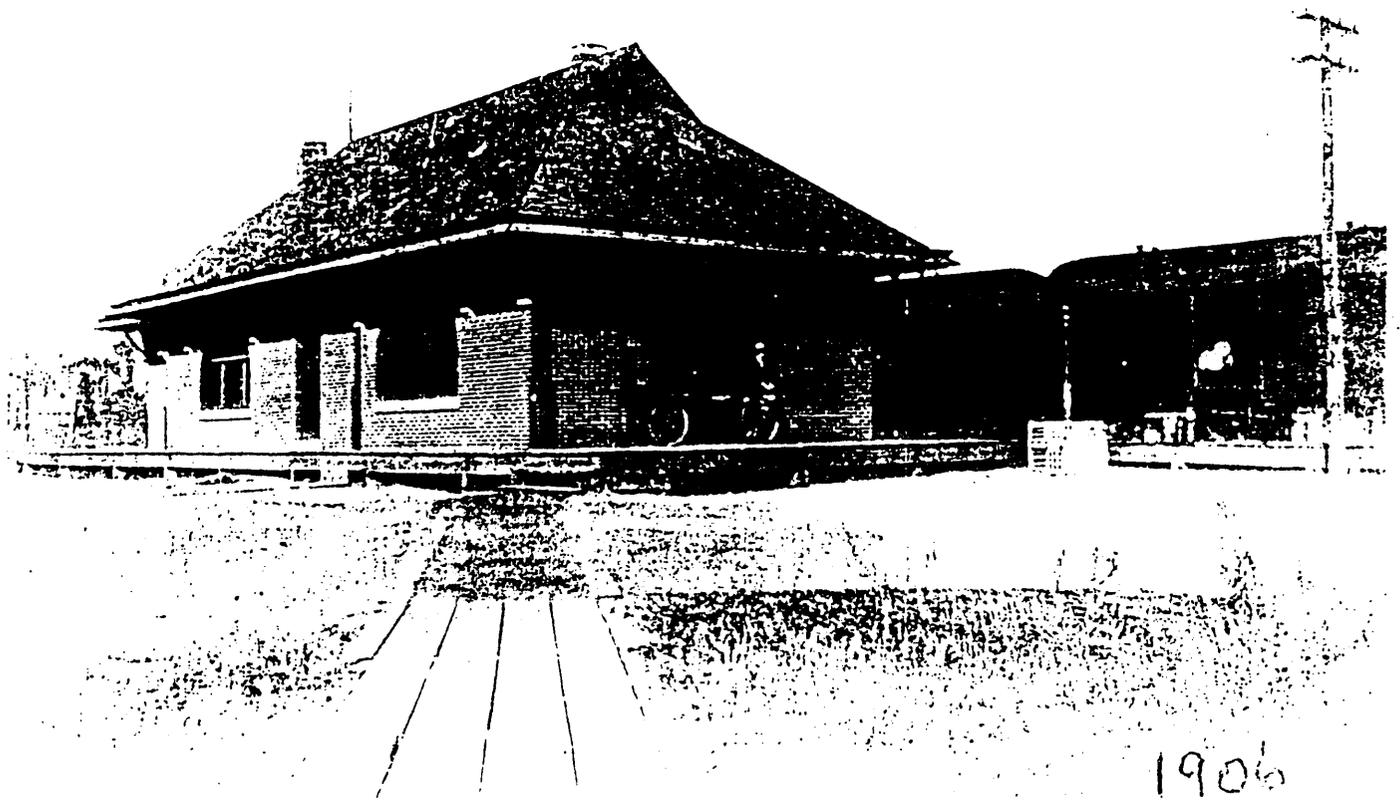
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BCR&N Passenger Depot--Dows

Depot boundary map





DOWS BURLINGTON, CEDAR RAPIDS & NORTHERN PASSENGER DEPOT

Built in 1896