

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Registration 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 Nebraska City Burlington Depot

other names/site number NeHBS # OT06:E-001

2. Location

street & number Southeast intersection of 6th Street and 7th Corso not for publication [n/a]

city or town Nebraska City vicinity [n/a]

state Nebraska code NE county Otoe code 131 zip code 68410

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Michael Sumner
Signature of certifying official

7/1/97
Date

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society
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 certifying official/title

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): _____

Edson R. Beall
Signature of Keeper

8/8/97
Date of Action

Nebraska City Burlington Depot
Name of Property

Otoe County, Nebraska
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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.)
n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instruction)

TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Renaissance Revival

foundation concrete
walls brick

roof synthetics
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.)

- [x] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patters 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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

transportation

Period of Significance

1912

Significant Dates

1912

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

n/a

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 for Additional Data:

- [x] State Historic Preservation Office
[] Other State agency
[] Federal agency
[] Local government
[] University
[] Other

Name of repository:

Nebraska City Burlington Depot
Name of Property

Otoe County, Nebraska
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre.

UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet).

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	15	260840	4505900	3.			
2.				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 Greg Miller, Historian
organization Nebraska State Historical Society date August 1996
street & number 1500 R Street telephone (402) 471-4775
city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68501

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/title _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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.

**United State Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Nebraska City Burlington Depot

Name of Property

Otoe County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 7 Page 1**Description**

The Nebraska City Burlington Railroad Depot is located in Nebraska City, the Otoe County seat in southeastern Nebraska. Built of red brick in the Renaissance Revival style the building includes two one-story side-gable wings parallel to the tracks, and a two-story flat roofed center-wing perpendicular to the tracks. The depot retains a high degree of integrity. The nomination consists of one building.

The Nebraska City Burlington Railroad Depot was built in 1912. The rectangular brick building measures 114 feet in length and is 28 feet wide. The main structure of the building are two, one-story wings with parapeted gables which are parallel to the existing tracks. A two-story center-wing, 30 feet long and 38 feet wide, is located in the center of the building. The center-wing is perpendicular to the tracks. It extends out from the rest of the building by 6 1/2 feet on the track side and 5 feet on the street (north) side. The building has a concrete foundation and a stone base. The roof has imitation slate shingles and wide eaves. A chimney protrudes from the peak of the roof on the west side.

Two large sliding freight doors are located on the west wing of the track (south) side of the depot. A small window is located east of the eastern freight door. A terra cotta belt course runs waist high along the entire length and width of the one story wings of the depot.

The second story facade of the track side (southern) center-wing has windows on the east and west sides, and a large, central window flanked by two smaller windows on the southern exposure. The first story of the center-wing is dominated by a bay. The bay has one large window on the south side, and smaller windows on the east and west. The bay is ornamented with terra cotta detailing and a "Nebraska City" sign. A modest entry door with a transom is on the west side of the bay and a window on the east side. The flat facade of the wing features pilasters, above which is a wall cornice of terra cotta. A terra cotta coping is over the parapet wall. The east wing on the track side has two large windows that flank a door.

The east and west end gables have parapets topped with terra cotta and a "Nebraska City" sign. The sign is located above two large symmetrical windows. A smaller window is above the eave.

The street (north) facade of the building has an entry door in the middle flanked on either side by two large windows. Next to the eastern most window is the north facade of the center-wing. It extends out from the building an additional 5 feet. This wing is identical to the south side except that it does not have a bay.

The interior of the western wing of the building is divided into three rooms. An express room (approximately 12 by 16 feet) on the south side has a sliding wooden door which opens to the tracks. A doorway leads from this room to an office (approximately 12 by 18 feet) to the north of it. A door from the office opens to the street side. Another door from the office leads east into the baggage room. This room (approximately 20 by 28 feet) includes two large sliding doors; one on the track side and one on the street side. In addition there is a smaller entrance on the street side. A stairway leading to the second floor is also located in the northeast corner of the baggage room. All three of these rooms have beaded ceilings, maple floors, and plaster walls.

A doorway on the east end of the baggage room leads to a corridor. The corridor has a mosaic tile floor and base, plaster walls, enameled brick wainscot, and a plaster ceiling.

The first door (going from west to east) on the south side of the corridor opens into the smoking room (approximately 7 by 16 feet). This room has two doors, one that opens to the track side and one on the west that leads into the men's restroom (approximately 9 by 9 feet). Both of these rooms are finished of the same materials as the corridor.

The second door on the south side of the corridor leads to the ticket office and telegraph station (approximately 19 by 20 feet). The ticket window is located in the northeast corner of this room. The office is finished with a maple floor, rough plaster walls, oak wainscot, and a plaster ceiling.

On the north side of the corridor is the women's restroom, although there is no entrance to it from the corridor. The eastern end of the corridor opens to the passenger waiting room. In the northwest corner of the waiting room is the door that leads into the women's restroom, which is divided into two rooms. The larger (approximately 18 by 19 feet) contains sinks and undoubtedly at one time a sofa and/or chairs. The toilets are in a smaller room (approximately 7 by 14 feet) to the west. These rooms are finished with the

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same materials as the corridor.

Description (continued)

The passenger waiting area is a large (28 by 42 feet) open space that has two doors. One opens to the track side and the other to the street. The room has a mosaic tile floor and base, plaster walls with an enameled brick wainscot, and a plastered ceiling.

The second story of the center-wing is a large open space 30 by 38 feet. It was apparently used for storage. It has a maple floor, and plastered walls and ceiling.

The integrity of the exterior of the building is very good. Plywood has been placed over the window openings to protect recently installed new windows. Although the floor plan of the original depot is still visible on the interior, the overall integrity is poor. Currently, however, there are plans to rehabilitate the interior for an adaptive reuse.

Statement of Significance

The Burlington Depot in Nebraska City, Otoe County is significant at the local level under Criterion A for its association with transportation. The introduction and expansion of the railroad to other areas of the state adversely impacted Nebraska City's status as a major river port and overland freighting center. The citizens of Nebraska City realized that in order to compete with other towns, their community needed passenger lines and an accompanying modern depot. The period of significance is 1912, the year the new depot opened. The nomination consists of one contributing building.

Overland freighting had a major role in the economic development of the Nebraska territory. The opening of the West, characterized by the immigrant route through the Platte River Valley, created a great demand for supplies. Up until the late 1850s the vast majority of the freight that eventually found its way westward came to Nebraska via steamboats on the Missouri River. The river towns developed almost in proportion to the amount of steamboat business they were able to secure. Since the steamers brought their goods up the river, initially, the southern ports received most of the traffic. Because of its location Nebraska City's success in this activity established it as a major river port and an important economic center in the territory. Of the companies regularly engaged in this line of work from the late 1840s through the 1850s, 64 have been identified as operating out of Nebraska City and 24 out of Omaha (Olson, 1966, p.105).

The development of the railroad, however, had an impact on the river towns and eventually on the steamboat industry itself. In 1867, the Union Pacific opened a line between Omaha and Grand Island. In the same year the Chicago and Northwestern reached Council Bluffs, Iowa; just across the river from Omaha. Then in 1872 a railroad bridge connecting Omaha with Iowa opened. This sharply cut into the amount of freighting business done out of Nebraska City and consequently affected its status as an economic center.

As noted the completion of railroad lines also effected steamboat business. As the railroad continued to expand throughout the state, communities began to spring up along the various lines. The result was an increasing reliance on the railroad for supplies and a corresponding decrease in the importance of river freighting towns. "Penetrating the interior, these lines sucked up traffic at the source, and as one after another [railroad lines] reached the Missouri River the steamboat traffic on this stream was progressively short-circuited" (Hunter, 1949, p.488). The St. Louis Board of Trade acknowledged this trend in an 1886 report that stated:

The business of this river [Missouri] has been more affect by railroad competition, than any other river in the West. Steamboats could not compete with a railroad on either bank and where in 1866 there were in active service seventy-one steamers, there are now but seven steamers and three Tow (sic) boats..." (Hunter, 1949, p.587).

As so often happens a decrease in Nebraska City's population accompanied its economic decline. "With the rapid decline of overland freighting the population of Nebraska City dropped from 6,050 in 1870 to 4,183 in 1880, while that of Omaha with the Union Pacific Railroad increased from 16,083 to 30,518. Overland freighting from Nebraska City had dwindled to mere hauling within the trade area" (Noble, p.188).

By 1900, Nebraska City's population showed an increase to 7,380. (The 1890 census was destroyed in a fire and any figures attributed to it are considered highly inaccurate.) While part of this can be attributed to an increase in the number of industries in the town during the 1880s; more importantly was the increasingly significant role the railroad played in Nebraska City's economic life.

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Name of Property

Otoe County, Nebraska

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Beginning in 1871 the Midland Pacific Railroad began operations between Nebraska City and Lincoln. Still, this limited train traffic did not compensate for the diminishing freighting business, primarily because other communities were also receiving train service. Again, this was in contrast to the important roles river towns once commanded.

Statement of Significance (continued)

The people of Nebraska City realized that to keep up with other towns economically, much less regain the status their community once had, the railroad would have to play an important role. In an attempt to achieve this goal a line between Nebraska City and Omaha opened in 1887 and the Burlington railroad bridge, connecting Nebraska City with Iowa opened in 1889.

Although these were definite improvements other communities were also receiving additional lines and the railroad in general was expanding in Nebraska. Between 1900 and 1910, track mileage within the state increased from 5,685 to 7,879. Additionally, "double tracks had been laid on the main line of the Union Pacific and part of the Burlington" (Olson, p.257). It was also during this time that most people depended on the railroad for inter-town transportation. Wagon transportation was declining, automobiles were not yet plentiful, and most towns were connected by the railroad.

By 1910 many people in Nebraska City, seeing the improvements made to railroad facilities in other towns, felt they were being slighted by Burlington and the Missouri Pacific. The townspeople focused the brunt of their anger on the Burlington because it operated the only passenger line into town. And it was the businessmen and consumers of the passenger line that helped determine the health of the town's economy.

The importance placed on the railroad and its contribution to the community is illustrated by the attention it received in the local newspaper. Almost every issue made some mention of the Burlington and/or the Missouri Pacific. The news items covered a variety of subjects ranging from the number of trains passing through to the improvement of tracks.

When dealing with the Burlington, however, the newspaper tended to focus on the inadequacy of its passenger depot (which it referred to as a box car, The Nebraska City News, October 7, 1910) and increasing the passenger traffic into Nebraska City. On February 8, 1910 The Nebraska City News urged the commercial club (similar to a Chamber of Commerce) to discuss with Burlington the option of adding an additional passenger train between Nebraska City and Lincoln. The newspaper argued that the new line would "greatly benefit this city" by bringing in additional businessmen and consumers. The disaffection of the newspaper with Burlington became evident a few days later when it reported "It may have been they (Burlington) were running lines for some new tracks, but it is a dead cinch they were not laying any lines for a new passenger depot. The Burlington is simply playing with the people of this city, as a cat does with a mouse..." (The Nebraska City News, February 22, 1910).

The importance of having a larger modern depot played a duel role. First, it would allow for the accommodation of increased traffic. Also, the depot presented the first impression of a community to the passengers. If the depot was new and equipped with modern conveniences, passengers would probably have a more favorable impression of the town. An old depot could result in just the opposite.

On May 17 and 20, 1910, the newspaper noted that Burlington announced it would spend a considerable amount of money in improvements and for the construction of new depots at Holdrege, Peru, and Grand Island; but no mention was made of Nebraska City. This caused the newspaper to retort that someone needed to make the railroad officials sit up and take notice of Nebraska City.

In early October, Burlington began putting a new brick platform "north of their box car here, which they call a passenger depot" (The Nebraska City News, October 11, 1910). This made the newspaper conclude that a new depot was not in the immediate future. Matters went from bad to worse when the railroad reported it was going to move their passenger depot and replace it with a smaller one that would be cheaper to heat and light (The Nebraska City News, October 11, 1910).

At this point the situation did not look good for the people of Nebraska City. But within a little over two weeks, and with no explanation as to why, Burlington changed its position from an apparent downgrading of the depot to announcing it would build a new passenger depot in Nebraska City. The railroad now pronounced that the present depot was "inadequate and insufficient" and that the new facility would meet the needs of the people "for the next twenty-five years." The cost of the brick and stone structure was estimated at between \$60,000 and \$65,000. In addition the railroad hoped to operate another train between Lincoln and Nebraska City after the new depot opened (The Nebraska City News, October 28, 1910).

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Name of Property

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A little over a year after this announcement, work actually began on the building. Periodic updates in the newspaper kept people abreast of the progress at the depot. On May 3, 1912, the new depot officially opened for business. Surprisingly, despite all the clamoring for the need of the building there was no celebration or ceremony, just a listing of who bought the first tickets (The Nebraska City News, May 3, 1912).

Statement of Significance (continued)

The Burlington Depot in Nebraska City is eligible at the local level, under Criterion A for its association with transportation. As a main port on the Missouri River, Nebraska City played an important role in the early overland freighting business. With the introduction of the railroad, however, its prominence declined. As the railroad spread throughout the state, the citizens of Nebraska City, as voiced through the newspaper, felt they were being neglected, especially by Burlington, which had the only passenger line into the town. Many believed that an additional passenger line and in particular a new depot would encourage more businessmen and consumers into town, thus increasing its economic prosperity. The depot was especially important not only because of the civic pride it would bring, but also because it provided the first impression of the community for most travellers. A good first impression could result in repeated trips and have a positive financial impact, and hopefully help return Nebraska City to its former status.

Bibliography

Grant, H. Roger. Kansas Depots. Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1990.

_____, and Charles W. Bohi. The Country Railroad Station in America. Boulder: Pruett Publishing Company, 1978.

Hunter, Louis C. Steamboats on the Western Rivers. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949.

Noble, Glenn. Frontier Steamboat Town. Lincoln: Midgard Press, 1989.

Olson, James, C. History of Nebraska. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966.

Otoe County Historical Society and Otoe County Museum Society. Otoe County Nebraska. Dallas: Taylor Publishing Co., 1983.

Watkins, Albert. History of Nebraska. Vol. 3. Lincoln: Western Publishing and Engraving Company, 1913.

Newspapers

The Nebraska City News

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the northeast corner of block 53 south Nebraska City addition to the city of Nebraska City, Otoe County, Nebraska, thence Westerly along the north line of said block 53 a distance of 27 feet to the point of beginning, thence deflecting 32 degree 40' left along a line a distance of 65 feet, thence deflecting 90 degrees 00' left along a line a distance of 80 feet, thence deflecting 90 degrees 00' left along a line parallel with track no. 12 of the Burlington Northern Railroad, a distance of 155 feet, thence deflecting 90 degrees 99' left along a line a distance of 80 feet, thence deflecting 90 degree 00' left along a line a distance of 90 feet to the point of beginning, containing 0.28 acres, more or less.

Boundary Justification

The boundary contains that parcel of land which has historically been associated with the property.