

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
 INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY
 RECEIVED AUG 21 1979
 DATE ENTERED OCT 11 1979

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
 TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley Railroad Depot

AND/OR COMMON

former Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Depot

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

First & Maple Streets

—NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Dwight

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Nebraska

CODE

31

COUNTY

Butler

CODE

023

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Alfred and Jerome Novacek

STREET & NUMBER

First and Maple Streets

CITY, TOWN

Dwight

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Nebraska

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
 REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds, Butler County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

David City

STATE

Nebraska

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

—FEDERAL —STATE —COUNTY —LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
 SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The former Chicago and North Western Railroad (C & N W) depot at Dwight, Nebraska, is situated on the east side of town, located at the corner of First and Maple Streets. This has been the site of the structure since its construction in 1887 by the Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley Railroad (F E & M V), a former C & N W subsidiary. Trains no longer stop at or pass by the Dwight depot as that the C & N W branchline from Platte River Junction, Nebraska, to Seward, Nebraska, was dismantled in 1962 after permission to abandon it was granted. The main track and a siding were situated on the building's east side. Even though the line has been gone for approximately 17 years, the right-of-way through Dwight is still visible. During the summer months, grass still grows in strips by the building, indicating where the railroad ties had been.

The depot's locale is in relation to its past use, the Dwight business district being located just west of it. East of the depot is situated the elevator facilities of Alfred and Jerome Novacek, present owners of the depot. South of the depot are metal storage bins while park recreation facilities were constructed on part of the right-of-way a short distance north. The building stands alone except for a row of trees on the west side.

The depot is a 22 x 61 foot frame structure consisting of 1½ stories. The building is partitioned-off into rooms that were found in a majority of country railroad stations. A combination baggage-freight room is in the south end while in the middle is a business office divided into an agent's work space and passenger waiting area. The depot's north end contains living quarters for the depot agent.

Contrary to most country railroad station architecture, the building was not constructed so as to have an agent's bay-window on it, which normally would have allowed an agent to better observe activity on the tracks. The Dwight agent's office was situated on the room's west side, separated from the passenger waiting area and a door leading to track-side by a ticket counter. Access by an agent to the living quarters from this office was originally done by exiting the business office and entering the quarters by an outside door. This situation was remedied in the early 1900's when a small passageway was made between the agent's office and his quarters.

The living quarters originally consisted of only three rooms on one floor. The ceiling of the quarters was later lowered and a second story installed, consisting of one large room. Also, a 12 x 10 foot kitchen lean-to was added onto the building's north end.

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The baggage-freight room has three sliding freight doors in it, one each facing east, west and south. This arrangement allowed for easy loading and unloading of freight. The freight doors are constructed of an unusual slanted siding which forms a decorative v-shaped pattern. This was used on many F E & M V frame depots. The freight room's south end has two parallel six-pane windows situated above and on either side of the freight door, an architectural trait also found on most F E & M V depots. The building was originally constructed with a wood plank platform extending around it from east to west, but this fell into disrepair and was replaced in later years by a cinder platform.

The building has a gabled roof with a minimum of projection by the eaves. Originally wooden cedar shingles the roof was covered over with asphalt shingles by the Novaceks after their purchase of the depot in 1963. Until 1963, the building had an order-board, a semaphore-type signal used to inform train crews if the agent had orders for them. Extending out from the roof at track-side, this order-board was removed after the depots abandonment by a scrap salvage firm. One of two signboards reading "Dwight", which hung on either end of the building, remains on the south end. It was placed there originally to alert travelers and trainmen as to what town they had reached. Utilizing white lettering on a black background, the C & N W had varied their depot signs on various branchlines by also using black lettering on a white background. In 1978, the Novaceks installed a small sign under the remaining signboard which told the elevation above sea level of Dwight, this being 1,623 feet. Though it was not standard practice of the C & N W to install elevation signs on their depots, the Novaceks recalled this practice having been done by other railroads such as the Union Pacific. They felt this historic practice should be retained on the Dwight depot.

The building had originally been painted a dark-red by the F E & M V, a practice continued by the C & N W. In bad need of new paint by the time of abandonment, the Novaceks painted the depot white in 1963 and again in 1977. The business office interior is painted a smokey-gray color which was a standard office paint scheme used by the C & N W. The agent's quarters is wallpapered. Planking is used as the floor in the freight room while the remainder of the depot floor is wood. The building's foundation is believed to be of limestone. By 1963, the foundation was settling, whereby the depot took on a noticeable sag. The Novaceks shored up the foundation by installing railroad ties acquired from the abandoned right-of-way.

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As of early 1979, the freight room was being used for storage by the Novaceks. The business office contains C & N W memorabilia collected by the Novaceks, while the living quarters are vacant. With the exception of minor alterations, the Dwight depot is close in appearance to its 1887 construction.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1887

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The former Chicago and North Western Railroad (C & N W) depot at Dwight stands as mute evidence to a previous era when patterns of transportation and prosperity were largely dependent upon the existence of railroad service to a community. This pattern allowed railroads such as the Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley Railroad (F E & M V) to enter into an area already serviced by competing railroad companies and establish their own towns to serve as well as to serve towns already having a railroad. A subsequent change in transportation patterns would later find such railroads as the C & N W abandoning their lines of service which had become unprofitable. In doing so, the railroad company left behind communities and their culture which it was largely responsible for having established.

The year 1869 saw the beginning of construction in Nebraska of the newly-organized F E & M V, as several miles of track were built north from Fremont. Subsequent years of construction found the F E & M V slowly pushing its line into the sparsely-settled area of northeastern Nebraska, any consideration of building into the more fertile areas south of the Platte River being hindered by the previous arrival there of the Union Pacific and Burlington and Missouri railroads. The F E & M V became a C & N W subsidiary in 1884, resulting in an extension of the line from Long Pine into extreme western Nebraska and Wyoming via towns such as Valentine, Gordon, Rushville, Chadron, Crawford and Fort Robinson. The C & N W consolidated its holdings in March, 1903, at which time the F E & M V became part of the C & N W system and its separate name was discontinued.

By 1886-87, a final major push in construction was undertaken by Nebraska railroads, each company connecting communities by rail in a way it was best felt would give it traffic superiority over its competitors. Because of this, the idea of the F E & M V reaching into the area south of the Platte River was finally achieved in this period when it was decided to build lines of trackage connecting Fremont and Omaha to the capital city of Lincoln, the town of Superior, where a connection with the Santa Fe Railroad allowed for easy access of produce of Gulf ports, and to Hastings, fast becoming a rail center with three other lines. It was felt that these lines, angling in a south or southwesterly direction, would deter some of the traffic monopoly that the predominantly east-west branchlines of the U.P. and B & M held. Construction of the South Platte lines went rapidly, with a junction point just south of the Platte River being made. From Platte River Junction, one line extended south to Lincoln while another went west to the community of Linwood, site of another junction point. Here, a line to Hastings angled off in a southwesterly direction while the "Superior line" headed south through Dwight to Seward,

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Dwight

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A	14	666460	4549640	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Bounded on the south by the north line of Maple Street, on the east by the east line of the now-removed rails, on the north by a line twenty feet north of the building foundation and running parallel to Maple Street, on the west by the east line of First Street.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

James J. Reisdorff, Contract Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

DATE

June, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

David City

Nebraska

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Marvin W. Kinnett

8/13/79

TITLE

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Carol Skull

DATE

10-11-79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

William H. Bowman

DATE

10.10.79

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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where it then angled in a southwesterly direction to Superior. The Lincoln branchline was completed in 1886, the Hastings line in 1887, and the Superior line was completed to Geneva in 1887 and to Superior in 1888.

The passage of the Hastings and Superior branchlines across Butler County resulted in several new towns being organized. Towns on the Superior line organized after its construction included Abie, Bruno and Dwight. North of Dwight is the town of Brainard, also touched by the F E & M V, but which had been organized several years earlier by the Union Pacific. Prior to the arrival of the F E & M V, Richardson township was strictly a rural community, with services such as postoffice, district school and country store located in separate areas of the township. The postoffice was originally named Lone Star but an influx of Czech settlers from Dwight, Illinois, resulted in a name change of it to "Dwight" in 1883. The postoffice was moved to the railroad townsite to be next to the depot in 1887, with the Dwight name being chosen by the F E & M V for the town. When the F E & M V tracks arrived at the townsite on July 15, the local residents turned out with milk and apples for the track workers and provided a fireworks display that evening. The Dwight depot was quickly erected and the Pioneer Townsite Company put in charge of laying out the town.

The depot constructed at Dwight was typical of station architecture used by the F E & M V on their south-Platte lines. Built by crews of the F E & M V's bridge and building department, the depot's construction followed a pattern practiced by most railroads west of the Mississippi. Using one standard set of blueprints, the railroad would construct carbon-copy depot structures in each town, with minor structural variances in response to the various needs of each community. For example, living quarters were included in the Dwight depot because housing for the agent elsewhere was initially not available. In contrast, the F E & M V depot at Geneva contained no living quarters because the town was fairly well established by the time of the F E & M V's arrival and housing was available elsewhere. Using one set of blueprints enabled a railroad to construct a depot quickly for the immediate establishment of agent service. Also, construction of a simple, frame structure was a cost-saving factor for the railroad company. In the event a railroad townsite did not prosper greatly, little had been lost by the company in erecting a station structure there. It was only after a community had prospered from the effects of the railroad that public pressure was usually brought against the railroad to make it build a better station in town, one that would better reflect the town's image. (The depot was usually the first impression a traveler received of a town.) The fact that the plain-looking Dwight depot was never extensively remodeled or replaced demonstrates that the F E & M V felt that its Dwight station

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facilities were adequate in response to the business received from there. Also, Dwight, as an agriculture-oriented community, had a populace whose life-style never saw a great need for ornate buildings, including that of the railroad station. Why the Dwight depot did not receive a bay window is not clear, as that the other F E & M V depots between Linwood and Seward were constructed with bays. Other examples of the bay-less F E & M V depot were found on the Hastings line at such stations as Henderson and Inland.

Dwight prospered under F E & M V service, the first depot agent, W. H. Tewilliger, also being responsible for building the first Dwight grain elevator and operating the first store there. Dwight was incorporated as a village on December 29, 1904. At this time, the Dwight depot was indeed the community's gateway as it saw the arrival and departure of two passenger and freight trains daily. To be depot agent meant being a prominent community citizen as town-folks depended on him to provide their connections with the outside world via rail passage, telegraph messages and goods to be shipped or delivered. In 1924, 126 cars of livestock and 253 cars of grain were billed through the Dwight depot. The Novacek grain business, which did considerable business with the C & N W in Dwight, started in 1931 when brothers Charles and John Novacek acquired a local elevator through company reorganization. In October, 1973, their sons, Alfred and Jerome, assumed control of the elevator.

The decline of the south-Platte C & N W branchlines was due to that as other modes of transport were improved, branchlines such as the C & N W's became redundant in areas of high railroad density or in towns served by more than one railroad. As passenger service and less-than-carload freight shipments were discontinued, branchlines in agricultural areas soon had only the seasonal business provided by grain elevators to service. A minimum of business lead to costly track maintenance being deferred, which then lead to deteriorated track conditions, followed by poor operation of the few remaining trains on the line (complicated by heavier locomotives and rolling stock on light-weight rails), and finally a petition by the railroad to abandon the money-losing trackage. The abandonment of the Hastings line in 1942 was a result of these conditions. The Superior line was able to continue for an additional 20 years due to such conditions as its grain interchange at Superior and that towns it served were not so readily accessible by other means of transport. But again, the only major industries dependent on the C & N W line between Platte River Junction and Seward by 1960 were the small elevator operators. In this year, a major track washout east of Linwood lead the C & N W to seek abandonment of this section of the branch. Despite protests by the elevator owners, abandonment was approved by the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1962.

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Having been one of the last open agencies on the line, the Dwight depot was purchased by the Novaceks in 1963 from a scrap salvage firm who had acquired the abandoned depots. The Novaceks acquired the depot with the intent of not only using it for storage purposes, but also to preserve this visible reminder of C & N W service to Dwight. All other remaining C & N W depots between Linwood and Seward were eventually dismantled. The Novaceks have kept the building in reasonable repair and have collected some artifacts relating to the C & N W which are housed in the depot business office and shown to interested parties upon request. Local interest in the structure was exemplified in July, 1978, when the depot was first opened for public viewing during the annual Dwight Czech Festival held each year. Approximately 500 persons toured the depot during the brief time it was open on a Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon.

Since the C & N W abandonment, Dwight has continued to thrive as a small farm-business community of 220 in population. The paving of a four-mile spur road from Dwight west to Highway 15 shortly after the abandonment has guaranteed businesses such as the Novacek elevator of a transportation outlet for their products. The State of Nebraska is also planning to pave a country road between Dwight and Valparaiso in the future, there-by allowing easy access to Dwight from both east and west directions. Relating to population centers, Dwight is 32 miles from the state capital of Lincoln and 65 miles from Omaha, Nebraska's largest city.

The C & N W depot at Dwight, Nebraska, is a classical example of a small-town railroad station, specifically of the architectural style utilized by the Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley Railroad. Its continued existence is seen as a landmark to the community, a reminder of Dwight's heritage, and a symbol of how community effort will allow a town to survive despite the loss of such important services as a railroad.

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