

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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

1 NAME *Oconomowoc Depot*

HISTORIC

Oconomowoc Passenger Station: Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad

AND/OR COMMON

Oconomowoc Depot (preferred)

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

115 Collins Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Oconomowoc

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Ninth

VICINITY OF

STATE

Wisconsin

CODE

55

COUNTY

Waukesha

CODE

133

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Kathleen Wussow, c/o A. W. Wussow

STREET & NUMBER

5828 Mary Lane

CITY, TOWN

Oconomowoc

VICINITY OF

STATE

Wisconsin

53066

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Waukesha County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

515 W. Moreland Blvd.

CITY, TOWN

Waukesha

STATE

Wisconsin

53186

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

1976

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

CITY, TOWN

Madison, Wisconsin

STATE

53706

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

CHECK ONE

CHECK ONE

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Erected in 1896, the Oconomowoc Depot is a one story structure built of split granite boulders. It has an extended hipped roof, to which its great length is attributable. The roof, supported by simple wooden brackets that seem to rest on granite corbels, is bisected by a gabled roof perpendicular to the tracks; the gables themselves having parapets with Lake Superior sandstone coping. Each gable also has a series of four attic windows divided by split granite mullions, with a cut sandstone sill.

The main section of the depot contained the ladies' waiting room, the train dispatcher's office, and the gentlemen's waiting room. To the east of this section was the baggage room, to the west was an open truck shed. Supporting the roof over the truck shed were four sturdy square columns. Uniting these columns to each other and the central section of the depot, as well as uniting the baggage room to the central section, were trusses that conveyed the likeness of Tudor arches. The sills and the lintels decorating these parts of the depot were all cut sandstone.

The interior of the depot was finished with smooth plaster walls above paneled wainscoting. The gentlemen's waiting room is the only part of the depot to have undergone any structural alteration over the years. It was initially divided to provide office space for the Railway Express Agency; it has since been further divided.

The only other modification to the property in general was made in 1903 when a platform shed was erected on the south side of the tracks. The depot sits empty today, except for the freight agent on duty.

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 checked="" 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 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 1896¹

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Charles Sumner Frost²

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Oconomowoc Depot is significant not only because of the excellence of its architecture, but also because it was built at the direction of Mr. Albert Earling, 2nd vice-president and future president of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad.³ Earling had a summer house in Oconomowoc, and his desire to have an edifice to impress his friends was in keeping with the upperclass resort image that Oconomowoc had in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁴ The depot, designed by Chicago architect Charles Frost, was in constant use then by Oconomowoc's wealthy visitors and residents. The depot stands today as one of the few remaining structures of Oconomowoc's famed resort era.

Architecture:

Born in Maine in 1856, Charles Sumner Frost formally studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Upon completion of his studies, Frost took a position with the Boston firm of Peabody and Stearns. Having moved to Chicago in 1881, Frost then worked in partnership with Henry Ives Cobb. This partnership dissolved in 1889, with Frost working alone until 1898 when he formed a partnership with Alfred Granger.⁵

During the time that he was in general practice, Frost made a thorough study of the railway station. It was during this time that, in 1885, Frost married Mary Hughitt; daughter of Marvin Hughitt, a midwestern railroad magnate. Complemented by his railroad station studies, this association no doubt contributed to the number of depot commissions that Frost received.

Among the many railroad structures designed by Frost and his partners were the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad Company offices, the La Salle Station, and the Northwestern Terminal in Chicago, Union Stations in Omaha and St. Paul, and the Northwestern depot in Milwaukee. Wisconsin also claims several of the smaller stations designed by Frost. Those still in existence include depots at Lake Geneva, Oconomowoc, Wausau, Ashland, Fond du Lac, Superior, South Milwaukee, and Eau Claire.⁶ In regard to small depot design Frost said:

The design for small stations is very similar: each requires two waiting rooms, one ticket office, and a baggage-room, but so simple a problem, if considered rightly, has many points important both to

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.2

QUADRANGLE NAME Oconomowoc East, Wis.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 378080 4773830
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

This property is bordered by Collins Street on the North, Cross Street on the East, Summit Avenue on the South, and Main Street on the West.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John N. Vogel - Graduate Student

DATE

ORGANIZATION

University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee

July 28, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

W169 N 11490 Biscayne Drive

TELEPHONE

(414)251-6212 & 765-4815

CITY OR TOWN

Germantown

STATE

Wisconsin 53022

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

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

Richard Kurney

TITLE Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE 11/5/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Charles D. Shull
 KEEP ER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

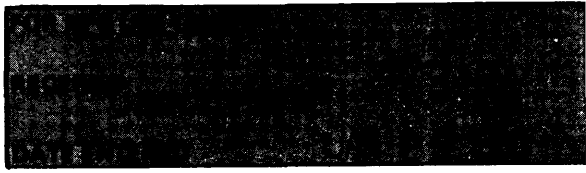
DATE 1/28-80

ATTEST: *Anna Jane Saxe*
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION
 Regional Coordinator

DATE 1/28/80

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Oconomowoc Depot, Oconomowoc, Waukesha County, Wisconsin

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the company and the travelling public Architecturally, the building should express its purpose and when possible, also give some hint as to the character of the town or city it serves. Above all things, as it is intended for a waiting place, the shelter feature must be strongly developed. The wall and piers should be massive, even out of proportion to the load they carry, in order not to be damaged by the vibration and jar caused by passing trains. The roof is, after all, the chief feature, and on its handling and material depend much of the failure or success of the design

The Oconomowoc depot, as well as Frost's other Wisconsin depots, incorporated his own design philosophy along with some of the traits found in Victorian picturesque design. The one characteristic in Frost's philosophy, however, that sets each depot apart is his belief that each structure should be designed and built in an appropriate style for the particular community it served. In Oconomowoc's case this meant a depot built of split granite boulders, which were found abundantly in the area, with Lake Superior sandstone trim.⁸ The symmetrical design of the depot, and its Victorian features, made it a very dignified structure; one worthy of serving the esteemed residents and guests of Oconomowoc's resort era.

History:

Chartered in 1851, the Milwaukee and Watertown Railroad reached Oconomowoc in December 1854. Oconomowoc's first depot, a red brick building, had been built in the summer of that year, and it served as the western terminus of the line through most of 1855.⁹ In following years growth of Oconomowoc and increasing traffic on the line created the need for a new depot, which was completed, also of brick, in 1879.

Oconomowoc established its reputation as an important resort during the decade of the Civil War. The William Tell House was built in 1858, a substantial number of hotels and resorts, including Draper Hall, the Woodlands, Jones House, Townsend House, and Giffords, were in operation by the mid 1870s. By conveying wealthy vacationers from Milwaukee and Chicago, the railroad was vital not only to the success of Oconomowoc's resorts, but also of estates, and throughout its heyday the railroad was the chief means of transporting guests and residents alike to the area. Among the more prominent of these summer residents were Albert Earling, second vice president of the Milwaukee Road, and Philip Armour, the meat-packing magnate.

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By the mid 1890s the need for a new depot had become quite apparent. No doubt the most compelling reason was that the area around the old station had developed a noxious odor, owing to the location of stockyards directly across the tracks. Both Earling and Armour, who was a stockholder in the railroads, actively supported the plan for a new depot; due perhaps to their interest and to the stylishness of Oconomowoc, a very handsome depot was designed.

As the railroad stated in the May 23, 1896, issue of the Wisconsin Free Press, the new depot would be built "30 feet wide and 88 feet long, with pavilions to the street from each end, a large baggage room 24 feet by 30 feet, and with all the modern conveniences;" the estimated cost was \$12,000.¹² New track, however, would be needed to serve the new depot, and since the City of Oconomowoc clearly would benefit from construction of the new depot, the railroad requested that the city share in the cost of laying the track. The city complied.¹³

Oconomowoc's new depot was completed in 1896 and served passengers until 1972, when the Milwaukee Road discontinued its Cannonball commuter train. Since that time an agent has been on duty, but the depot has largely remained empty and unused. At various times its future has been discussed by the people of Oconomowoc, and several, not wanting the depot to go the way of the Townsend House, Draper Hall and the rest of Oconomowoc's old resorts, have written the State Historical Society of Wisconsin expressing support for the preservation and restoration of the depot.

The Milwaukee Road sold the depot to Kathleen Wussow on May 31, 1978.¹⁴ Although plans are indefinite at this time, the Wussows have said that they want to retain as much of the present exterior design as possible in whatever new function they have for the depot. Said A. W. Wussow, Kathleen's father, "we do appreciate the historical significance this structure has to the citizens of Oconomowoc, and we want this landmark to continue to be a heritage of this community."¹⁵

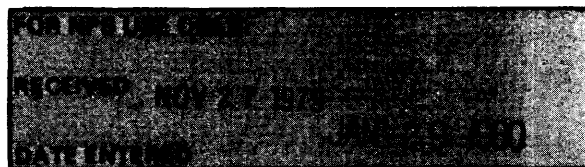
¹ Wisconsin Free Press, May 30, 1896

² Blueprints for the Oconomowoc, Wisconsin depot. Copies in the possession of the Milwaukee Road, the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

³ Jean Johnson, Illustrious Oconomowoc, (Milwaukee: Franklin Publishers), 1977, p. 180. ALSO: Quit Claim Deed - Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad Company to City of Oconomowoc. Dated June 18, 1896, and signed by Albert Earling.

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Oconomowoc Depot, Oconomowoc, Waukesha County, Wisconsin

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⁴"Seek Help to Save Oconomowoc Depot," Oconomowoc Enterprise, June 19, 1975.

⁵The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, New York: J.T. White and Company, vol. 27, p. 144.

⁶The Railroad depot questionnaire, a survey by the South Milwaukee Historical Society; 1977.

⁷Architectural Reviewer, September 1897 pp. 19-22

⁸Ibid., p. 31

⁹The History of Waukesha County, Wisconsin. Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1880, p. 700.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 710-711

¹¹Ibid., p. 181.

¹²Wisconsin Free Press, May 23, 1896.

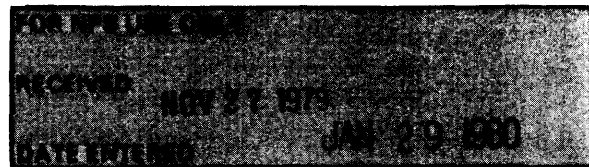
¹³Wisconsin Free Press, May 30, 1896.

¹⁴Conversation with John Nail, Property Management Division; Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad, Chicago, Ill., July 27, 1978.

¹⁵"Depot Plans Please Oconomowoc, Family," Milwaukee Journal, Jan. 28, 1978.

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Architectural Reviewer, September, 1897, pp. 19-49

Blueprints of the Oconomowoc, Wisconsin depot. Copies in the possession of the Milwaukee Road and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Conversation with John Nail, Property Management Division; Chicago, Milwaukee St. Paul and Pacific Railroad, Chicago, Ill., July 27, 1978.

"Depot Plans Please Oconomowoc, Family," Milwaukee Journal, Jan. 28, 1978.

History of Waukesha County, Wisconsin. Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1880, p. 700.

Johnson, Jean. Illustrious Oconomowoc. Milwaukee: Franklin Press, 1977.

Quit Claim Deed; Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad Company to City of Oconomowoc. Dated June 18, 1896.

"Seek Help to Save Oconomowoc Depot," Oconomowoc Enterprise, June 19, 1975.

The National Cyclopedia of American Biography. New York: J.T. White and Company, vol. 26, p. 144.

The Railroad Depot Questionnaire, a survey by the South Milwaukee Historical Society; 1977.

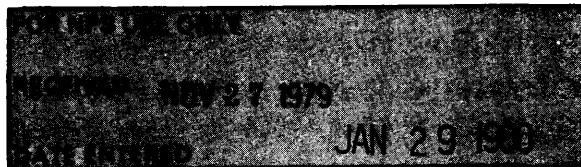
Wisconsin Free Press, May 23, 1896.

Wisconsin Free Press, May 30, 1896.

Withey, Henry F. and Elsie T., Biographical Dictionary of American Architects - Deceased. Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, 1970, p. 224.

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Oconomowoc Depot, Oconomowoc, Waukesha County, Wisconsin

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11. Form Prepared By

David A. Donath, Historian
State Historical Society of Wisconsin
816 State Street
Madison, WI 53706

Phone: (608)262-3390
September 13, 1978

Katherine E. Hundt, Architectural Historian
State Historical Society of Wisconsin
816 State Street
Madison, WI 53706

Phone: (608)262-2970
September 13, 1978