

HISTORIC NAME: Union Depot

COUNTY: Blue Earth

CURRENT NAME:

CITY/TWP.: Mankato

JUL 28 1980

LEGAL DESC.: Beginning at the SW corner of the intersection of ADDRESS: 112 Pike Street Main and Pike Streets; thence westerly along the south curb line of Main Street to the Minnesota River; thence southwesterly along east bank of river to the southwest corner of Lot 2, Mankato Claim Company's Addition; thence easterly along southern boundary of said Lot 2 to the western curb line of Pike Street, thence northeasterly along said curb line to point

CLASSIFICATION:	CONDITION:	SIGNIFICANCE:	THEME/S:
Building <u>  X  </u>	Excellent <u>      </u>	Local <u>  X  </u>	of beginning.
Structure <u>      </u>	Good <u>      X  </u>	State <u>      </u>	Primary <u>Transportation</u>
Object <u>      </u>	Fair <u>      </u>	National <u>      </u>	Secondary <u>Settlement</u>
District <u>      </u>	Deteriorated <u>      </u>		Others <u>      </u>

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:	Yes <u>  X  </u> No <u>      </u> Restricted <u>  X  </u>	PRESENT USE:
VISIBLE FROM THE ROAD:	Yes <u>  X  </u> No <u>      </u>	Railroad Station
OCCUPIED:	Yes <u>  X  </u> No <u>      </u>	

DATE CONSTRUCTED: 1896 & later additions	ORIGINAL USE: Railroad Station
ORIGINAL OWNER: Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha, and Chicago Northwestern Railways	ARCHITECT/BUILDER: J.B. Nelsen & Co., Mankato

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: Chicago Northwestern Transportation Company; 400 West Madison; Chicago, Illinois 60606	ACREAGE: Less than one acre approx. <u>  3  </u>
LOCAL CONTACT/ORG.: Blue Earth County Historical Society 606 South Broad Street, Mankato, Minnesota 56001	UTM REFERENCE: Mankato West 7.5 15 / 419690 / 4890740
FORM PREPARED BY: Dennis A. Gimmetstad	
DATE: January 1980	

**DESCRIPTION:**

The Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha/Chicago Northwestern Union Depot in Mankato is located on a riverside site one block from Front Street, the main commercial street of the downtown area. Tracks run between the depot and Pike Street to the southeast and between the depot and the river to the northwest. The depot's extremely close proximity to the river is somewhat obscured by the recent construction of a retaining wall for flood control.

The building is a sprawling structure with a two-story central section and one-story extensions on both ends. A separate express house is located to the southwest. Rock-faced buff limestone is utilized on the lower walls; the upper walls are of dark red brick. The limestone is also used as sills, lintels, voussoirs, and ornamental trim.

The central two-story section, constructed in 1896, is rectangular in shape and is topped by a hip roof, broken on the northwest and the southeast facades by full-height pavilions and on the northeast by a full-height three-sided bay with a vaulted roof. Double hung windows are grouped singly and in pairs, and are capped by flat arches on the first floor. Both pavilions feature stone coping at the gables and the northwest pavilion has a three-sided two-story window bay. The semi-circular gable of the northeast bay displays a circular window.

The central portion of the southwestern extension was constructed as a baggage area about the same time as the two-story section was built. Various additions were made further to the southwest and between the two story area and the baggage room, and by the early 1920s, this area formed a continuous extension of the central building and housed an enlarged baggage area and a lunchroom. A one-story extension was also appended to northeast of the central building, and a separate express house was constructed to the southwest, sometime between 1914 and 1924. Materials and scaling of these additions is similar to the original sections, and, while some of the design features have been obscured, the building appears as a single unit.

Tying the entire structure together are the broad hip roofs of the two side extensions and the connecting pent roofs between the first and second stories of the central section. The broad overhang of these roofs, supported by heavy brackets, forms an extensive covered area at the principal track (northwest) side. This area originally extended to form a long covered walkway to the northeast; the major portion of the walkway was removed in the 1950s.

**SIGNIFICANCE:**

The Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha/Chicago NorthWestern Union Depot in Mankato is significant as the only surviving railroad depot in the 13 Blue Earth County townsites where the railroad played a major developmental role. The building was constructed jointly in

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Union Depot

Blue Earth County  
Mankato, Minnesota

1896 by the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha and the Chicago North-Western lines. The CStPM&O had been the first line to cross the area, constructed from West St. Paul to St. James in 1869-70. Originally its tracks ran down the center of Fourth Street, several blocks inland from the river, but in the mid-1890s city agitation resulted in their removal from this area to the riverfront. Here the tracks were in close proximity to those of the CNW, which had been another of the first lines to cross southern Minnesota, being constructed from Waseca to Watertown, South Dakota, from 1870 through 1873. The two lines built their Union Depot near Main Street at the riverfront shortly after the CStPM&O tracks were moved. Earlier the two lines, as well as their two competitors, maintained separate depots. The four original depots, a second competing union depot, and all the depots of the other Blue Earth County towns have been destroyed or moved and altered from their original condition. Although Mankato was founded as a "river town", it owed a large part of its growth to the interesection of rail lines at the city. The majority of the out-county communities trace their very existence to the designation of station points. The Union Depot at Mankato is important as a surviving component of this crucial transportation system.

#### Bibliography

Hughes, Thomas. History of Blue Earth County, and Biographies of its Leading Citizens. Chicago: Middle West Publishing Company, 1909(?), p. 213-14.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1900, 1908, 1914, 1924.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

for Keeper *Albion Lynn*  
1/19/89

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Note: These changes apply to  
Union Depot in Blue Earth County,  
Minnesota.**

**REFERENCE NUMBER:** 80001956

**STATE:** MINNESOTA

**COUNTY:** Blue Earth

**RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC):** Mankato Union Depot

**CITY:**

**VICINITY OF:**

**ADDRESS:**

**CERTIFICATION DATE:**

**REMOVED DATE:**

**COMMENTS:**

*Nina M. Archabal*

**Nina M. Archabal  
State Historic Preservation Officer**

**JUN 17 1988**  
**Date**