

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received DEC 27 1982  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Northern Freight House

and/or common Rock Island Freight House

2. Location

street & number Front <sup>and</sup> ~~Street at corner of~~ High Streets, \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Burlington \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of

state Iowa code 19 county Des Moines code 057

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input 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 City of Burlington (land only) Winegard Realty (owns building)  
c/o this property

street & number City Hall, 4th & Washington

city, town Burlington \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state Iowa 52601

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Des Moines County Courthouse

street & number 503 N. Main

city, town Burlington \_\_\_\_\_ state Iowa 52601

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title n/a has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

date \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Northern Freight House sits within 200 feet of the Mississippi River. It is located just to the north of Interstate 534 where the auto bridge links Iowa and Illinois. The building is highly visible from both the interstate and the bridge. For those entering Iowa, the freight house draws attention to Burlington's transportation heritage on the riverfront.

The freight house is a two-story, rectangular brick building with a long, one-story brick wing projecting to the north. Both the main building and the wing have a limestone block foundation. The two-story section with hip roof is 40' x 50' and the one-story section with clipped gable roof measures 40' x 150'. The common, soft red-orange brick is laid in a running bond pattern. The building is a commercial architecture style with a decorative cornice of corbelled brick forming a dentil work pattern. The original roof was of slate but was replaced at an undetermined date by asphalt shingles. The gutter is tin and there is a gable roofed dormer and tall chimney on the west side of the building.

The office entrance to the building is on the south side. The two original upper and lower single door openings with transoms remain with later first floor doorway and small window added to the southeast corner. There is an 1888 "cornerstone" above the original first floor door on the southwest side. There were originally both inside and outside stairways to the second floor where the offices were located. A flight of wooden steps on cast iron brackets diagonals across the south side to the second floor door. There are two sets of three windows together on both the east and west sides of the building. All windows and doors have double row brick segmental arches with limestone corner blocks. There are limestone sills under the 2 x 2 windows.

The entire lower floor is open with one partition wall and was used for freight warehousing. There are seven loading bays on the east and west sides of the building with heavy doors containing panels of diagonal boards. Loading doors have a double row segmental brick arch with limestone corner blocks and a curved transom containing two rows of glass panes. The north end of the building contains another type of large loading door with a heavy wood lintel. There was originally a wood platform that extended from this door designed to hold the overload of freight from the building. There is a heavy timber bumper bolted to the building on the west and north sides that is probably a more recent addition.

The interior of the building has original yellow pine wainscotted ceiling still in place and original oak floor. The building was designed for electric lights and steam heat with the boiler in the basement.

All tracks run on the east side of the building where freight was unloaded into the seven bays. The west side bays were for unloading from wagons. The driveway on the west side of the building was originally paved with brick for the convenience of horse-drawn freight wagons. Today, much of the south and west side vicinity of the building is still in brick paving. All along the west side of the brick drive is an eight foot limestone retaining wall built of massive cut blocks and a "cornerstone" dated 1896.

## 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1898 **Builder/Architect** Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Northern R.R.

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

INTRODUCTION: The Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Freight House is one of the few remaining buildings representing the transportation complex that once dominated the Burlington riverfront. The B,CR&N Railway built the freight house in 1898. This is the second depot on the site, succeeding an 1873 brick structure. The present freight house is the only remaining physical evidence in Burlington of this substantial Iowa line. The line's importance can be noted as early as 1878 and throughout the 19th century when it was considered the most important north-south rail line in Iowa, joining St. Louis and Minneapolis. Consequently, the B,CR&N crossed the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy and other major east-west lines leading from rivertowns such as Davenport and Dubuque. This brought the B,CR&N to prominence by linking the regions between the east-west lines and providing continuous north-south passenger and freight service.

BACKGROUND: Before focusing on the history of the B,CR&N railroad line, it is helpful to view the broad picture of the impact railroads had on Burlington's riverfront and growth in general. Burlington established itself as a major river terminal because of its good landing, which was developed into a cobblestone levee. But it was the connection and transfer of goods to railroad lines at the riverfront which allowed Burlington to grow beyond a rivertown, to become a center of commerce and gateway to the west. The Burlington and Missouri River Railroad formed by public spirited citizens (with financial support from western counties and eventually Boston money) was developed in 1855. The main trunk line proceeded west through the downtown basin and Hawkeye Creek Valley. The north portion of the riverfront remained primarily as the steamboat landing. The construction of the 1868 C,B&Q Railroad Bridge at the southernmost point of the riverfront sharply increased the railroad traffic. And it opened the way for branch or feeder line railroads to directly expand their markets to the east by connecting with the C,B&Q. The B,CR&N was born in this era when smaller branch lines were viewed as necessary competition for east-west land grant roads. The independent railroad facilities offered better service for the smaller communities and farming districts. Recognizing this fact and the need for a north-south line, the founders of the B,CR&N established facilities on the north riverfront and headed north from Burlington to Mediapolis and beyond. The story of the B,CR&N is an important chapter in the development of industry and commerce in Burlington and is intertwined with the histories of the C,B&Q and the Rock Island railroad systems.

HISTORY OF THE LINE - GENERAL: The B,CR&N line had its beginning in 1866 when the Cedar Rapids and Burlington Railroad Company was organized with mostly Burlington money to build a line from Burlington to Cedar Rapids with connections to Quincy, Illinois. At the same time, another company was established with the intention of going from Cedar Rapids to Minneapolis. In 1867, these two lines consolidated to form the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Minnesota Railroad Company with prominent Burlingtonian and future Iowa Governor, John H. Gear, as president. In fact, many Burlingtonians were directors of the line and railroad shops were constructed in Burlington in 1869. However, due to the Panic of '73, the mortgage was foreclosed on the Burlington, Cedar Rapids, and Minnesota, a common occurrence in the history of most railroads. With another input of Burlington funds, the line was reorganized in 1876 as the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railway. This new line was a success and by 1878 was considered the most important north-south rail line in Iowa.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see Continuation Sheet, Item #9, page 1.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property ~~less than one acre~~

Quadrangle name Burlington Iowa-Illinois

Quadrangle scale 1/24,000

### UTM References

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1	5
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6	6	0	3	4	0
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4	5	1	9	6	4	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Please see Continuation Sheet, Item #10, page 1.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state Iowa code 19 county Des Moines code 057

state \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title James E. Jacobsen , National Register Coordinator

organization Iowa SHPO date 8 December 1982

Historical Building, East 12th & Grand

street & number Avenue telephone 515-281-4137

city or town Des Moines state Iowa

# 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 *John A. Anderson*

title Executive Director Iowa State Historical Department date December 8, 1982

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register date 1/27/83

*John A. Anderson*  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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**CONTINUATION SHEET**    DESCRIPTION    ITEM NUMBER    7    PAGE 1

Attached is an 1888 view of the Burlington riverfront looking south showing a higher density of buildings and activity than is present today. Although this view predates the 1898 B,CR&N Freight House, it shows the previous freight house of 1873 near the river edge immediately north and east of this location. Also note - the C,B&Q Union Depot (1880-1943) with the pinnacled roof can be seen on the extreme right. The building complex in the foreground is the former Burlington waterworks - now vacant land.

Other smaller structures along the riverfront have all been razed as part of the riverfront landfill, railroad, or auto parking changes. And several warehouse buildings on the west side of Front Street have been razed for parking or low, modern construction. The only other permanent structures on the east or river side of Front Street are the 1949 Memorial Auditorium and the 1927 Port of Burlington warehouse.

The Freight House is the only substantial building of Victorian character directly on the riverfront today. It is also the most prominent building in the vicinity of the auto bridge; its visual impact clearly reminds one of the transportation heritage Burlington was founded on.

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CONTINUATION SHEET SIGNIFICANCE ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

As a north-south line, the B,CR&N crossed every principle east-west railroad through Iowa, including the four, 1856 land grant roads which became popularly known as the Chicago & Northwestern, the Illinois Central, the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific, and the Burlington & Missouri (later the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy). Among the Iowa east-west lines and the northern and southern lines (such as the Northern Pacific, Union Pacific, and the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe) there was great competition in establishing branches and connections with lines from other sections of the country. To build their line, the developers of the B,CR&N added sections of main and branch lines from these other companies to their own existing track through lease arrangements. They enjoyed a good working relationship with the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy and with the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific, because of the less competitive nature of the B,CR&N's north-south line. Portions of these two lines allowed the B,CR&N to reach both St. Louis and Minneapolis.

Considering the usual competition between the western routes, the C,B&Q and C,RI&P had a relatively harmonious relationship, and the B,CR&N enjoyed peaceful aspects of making connections. However, the support of the larger roads occasionally placed the B,CR&N in a position of intense rivalry with other main roads, such as the Milwaukee or Northwestern systems during the development of the B,CR&N's five branch lines in the 1870's. In 1879, the C,B&Q and Rock Island had considered a merger which fell through. But in the summer of 1879, the two roads jointly purchased the B,CR&N. Control was not formally consolidated. The north-south line was designated a proprietary line; it was managed separately and financial records were not included in C,B&Q totals. The B,CR&N maintained a separate identity until after the turn of the century when the relationship between the three lines changes.

A good indication of this separate identity can be seen in advertisements throughout the 1880's and 90's. Frequently adjacent ads in City Directories and local promotional booklets would bill the services of the two lines, equipment, and direct routes to destination points. Of particular interest are corresponding ads for the tourist trade by the B,CR&N to summer resorts in the Iowa and Minnesota Lakes regions and by the C,B&Q to the Iowa Lakes and the Black Hills. The B,CR&N claimed the "favored tourists' route . . . running through the finest country in Iowa".

In 1901, the nature of the competition between the four east-west lines changed when railroad magnate James Hill, who already controlled the Great Northern and the Northern Pacific, secretly purchased controlling interest in the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy. Hill was in competition with E.H. Harriman of the Union Pacific to find a southern outlet from Chicago. During the re-shuffling of the corporate structure, the C,B&Q sold its interest in the B,CR&N to the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific line in 1902. The B,CR&N then became absorbed into the Rock Island system which only recently ceased operations.

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HISTORY OF THE LINE - BURLINGTON INFLUENCE: The B,CR&N's leadership and financial support were closely related to the history of commerce and industry in the city. As well as the line being started in Burlington, the Board of Directors included several prominent Burlingtonians: John Gear, Charles Mason (Iowa Territory and State Supreme Court Justice) and Lyman Cook (banker and mayor) and T.W. Barhydt (banker and merchant), who both were officers of other Burlington rail lines. Burlington's influence on the line is also illustrated by the Tracy family. In 1880, Judge Joshua Tracy, who had been Solicitor General of the line for several years, consolidated several smaller branch lines under the B,CR&N and was elected president of the line. His son, Samuel K., then became the Solicitor General, remaining in that position until the line's sale 21 years later. A second son, George S., was for a time Assostant Solicitor, and Joshua Tracy's son-in-law, W.P. Brady, was Assistant Superintendent of the line in Cedar Rapids.

Judge Tracy died suddenly in 1884 and was succeeded as president by Charles J. Ives. Ives was a native of Cedar Rapids who moved to Burlington and had formerly spent eight yearrs with the Burlington and Missouri River Rarilroad and fourteen years with the B,CR&N. The rai line continued to thrive under Ives' direction and the new freight house was constructed in 1898.

The influence of Burlington on the road and, in turn, the B,CR&N influence on local commerce is indicated by the new steel rolling mills started in 1884. The Burlington Rolling Mills (later the Iowa Rolling Mills) was incorporated by a group of Burlingtonians who were investors and directors of the B,CR&N (familiar names such as J.H. Gear, Josh. Tracy, Lyman Cook, Jno. G. Foote and others) and two B,CR&N officials from Cedar Rapids -- S.L. Dows and C.J. Ives, Superintendent of the line. Construction began on thirty-two acres of land adjacent to B,CR&N property in the Bottoms north of the riverfront and was connected by a switch to the B,CR&N. Dow and Ives had tried to get the mills built in Cedar Rapids, but the "excellent facilities of water and rail weighed in favor of the Burlington location". The mills manufactured agricultural, bar and car iron. It was the first manufacturing enterprise of importance to locate in the Bottoms, an area that was to develop into the first major Burlington industrial area outside of the Hawkeye Creek Valley. The relationship between river, rail and commerce was the key to Buflington's development.

IMPACT ON THE RIVERFRONT: The Freight House built in 1898 replaced a smaller, earlier (1873) building which sat immediately to the south and slightly east. Both B,CR&N freight depots were placed on Front Street, the southernmost portion of that railroad's property, in a conscious effort to be a part of the bustling commercial scene on the main riverfront. The Freight House was described by the Hawkeye Newspaper thusly, "This solid, substantial brick building with slate roof and heavy cornice will be a credit to the road and to the city." The Burlington shops for the line were located considerably north of the riverfront in an area known as "the Bottoms". The original passenger depot and ticket office was located in an existing commercial building at Jefferson & Front Streets, and was later moved into the C,B&Q's Union Depot.

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The southern end of the B,CR&N property was also the northern end of the Burlington riverfront. The new freight house was placed on the riverfront not only for practical transfer of freight from boat to rail, but also to serve as an architectural symbol of the B,CR&N's importance in the transfer of goods so vital to Burlington's commerce. Through its five main branches and numerous connections with other lines, the B,CR&N provided valuable routes to markets for Burlington area farmers and local industries.

There is a lineal aspect to Burlington's riverfront today because of the early traffic patterns established by river traffic and the rail lines. To some extent undeveloped now, the stretch of riverfront basically owes its existence to the continuously shifting freight transfer facilities over the years. The B,CR&N Freight House was the only substantial building on the riverfront, outside of the C,B&Q buildings considerably further to the south. Other warehouses were private buildings on the west side of Front Street and there has been a high attrition rate of the associated railroad and warehouse buildings in this vicinity. The substantial brick Freight House serves as an anchor for the north riverfront and symbolizes Burlington's railroad and transportation heritage.



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**CONTINUATION SHEET**    **BIBLIOGRAPHY**    **ITEM NUMBER** 9    **PAGE** 1

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CONTINUATION SHEET    GEOGRAPHICAL    ITEM NUMBER 10    PAGE 1

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

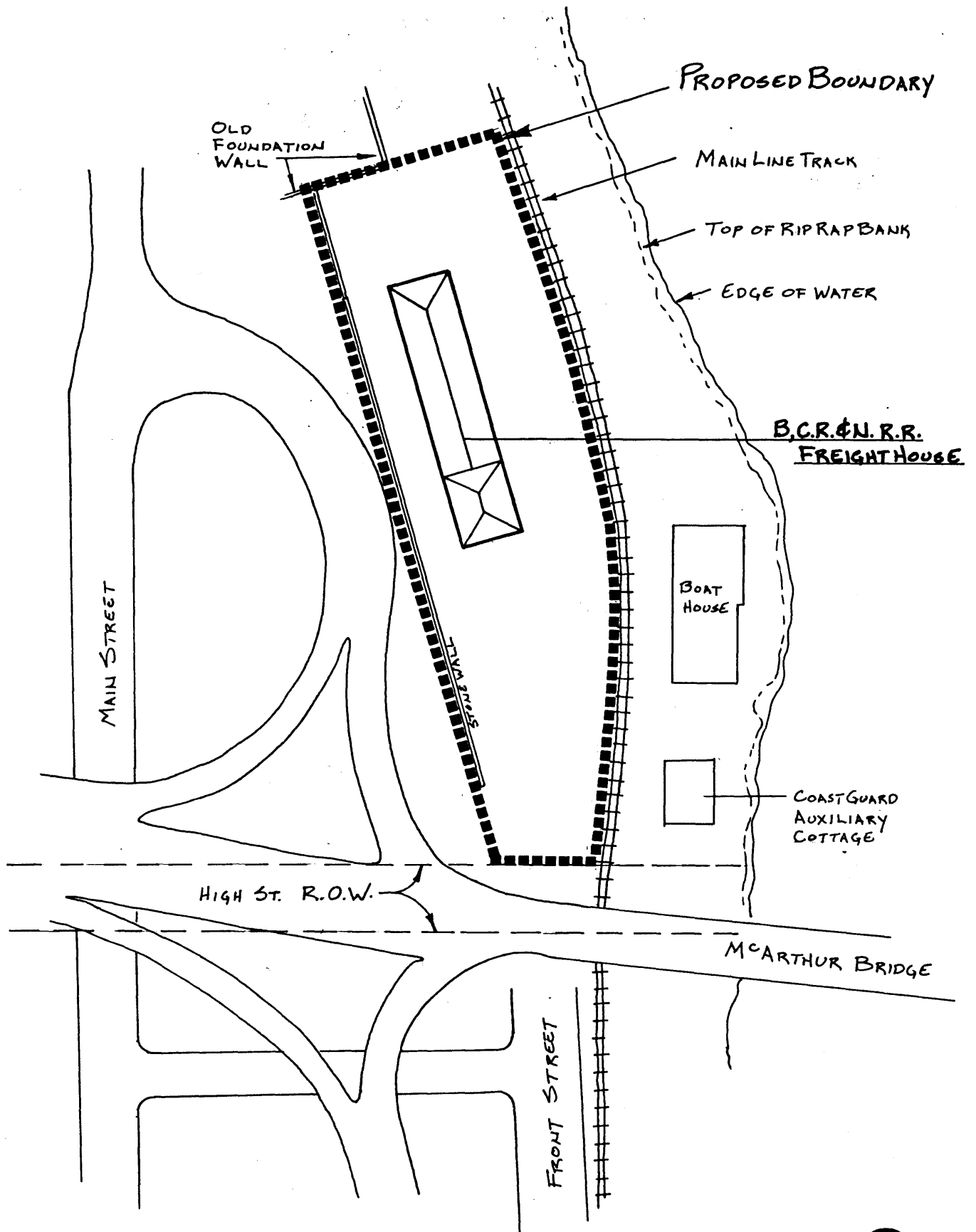
Beginning on the north edge of the High Street right of way at a point approximately 225' south and 36' west of the southwest corner of the Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Northern Freight House;

thence north along and including the stone wall that runs parallel to the building approximately 33' from it, to a point intersecting the concrete foundation for the old waterworks approximately 84' north and 36' west of the northwest corner of the building;

thence east along the line of the concrete foundation to a point at the west edge of the main line railroad tracks;

thence south approximately 509' along the west edge of the tracks in a curved line approximately 70' from the building to a point at the north edge of the High Street right of way;

thence west along the north edge of the High Street right of way approximately 70' to the point of beginning.

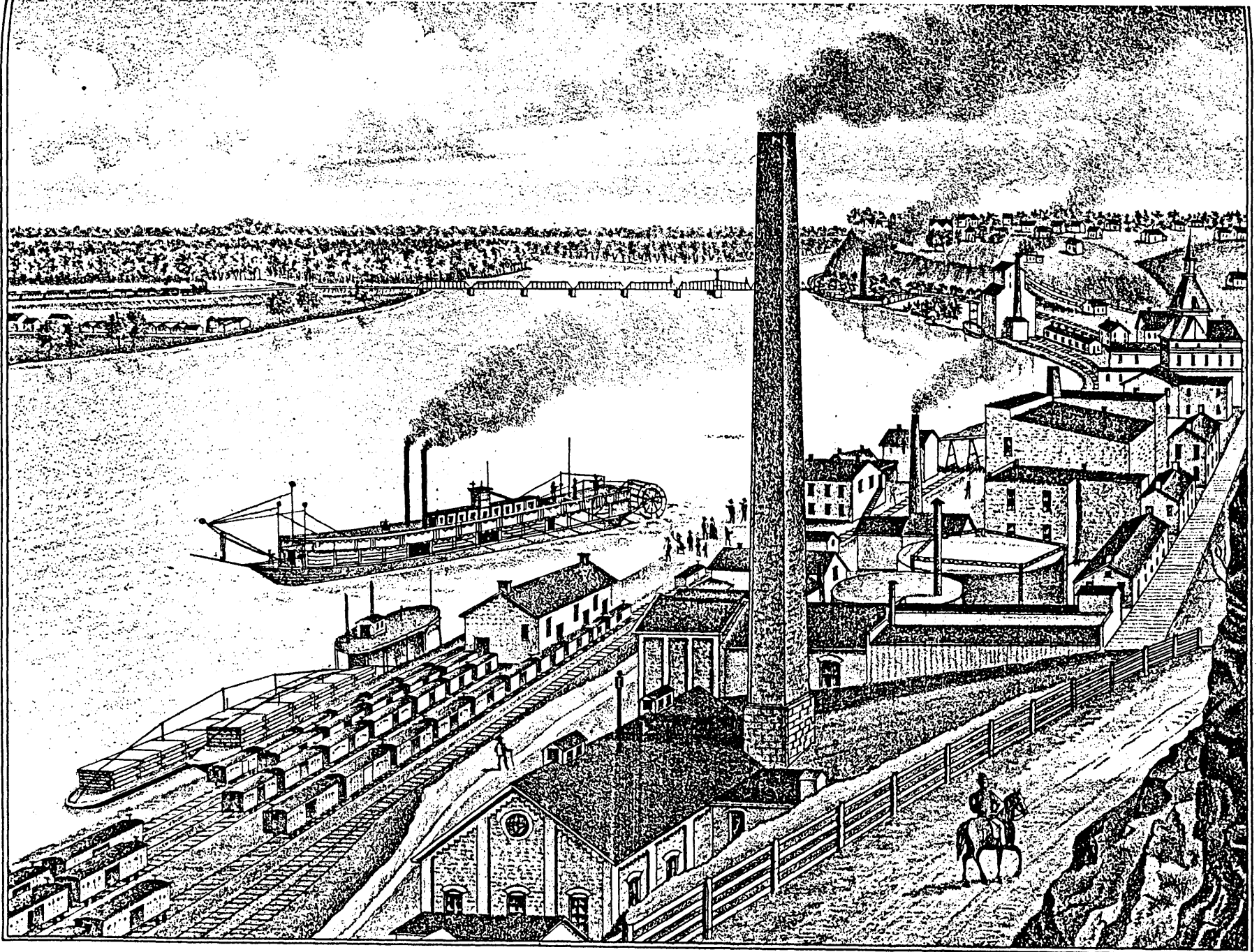


**LOCATION MAP**

SCALE: 1" = 100'



BURLINGTON, CEDAR RAPIDS & NORTHERN RAILROAD FREIGHT STATION  
PROPOSED HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARIES BURLINGTON IOWA

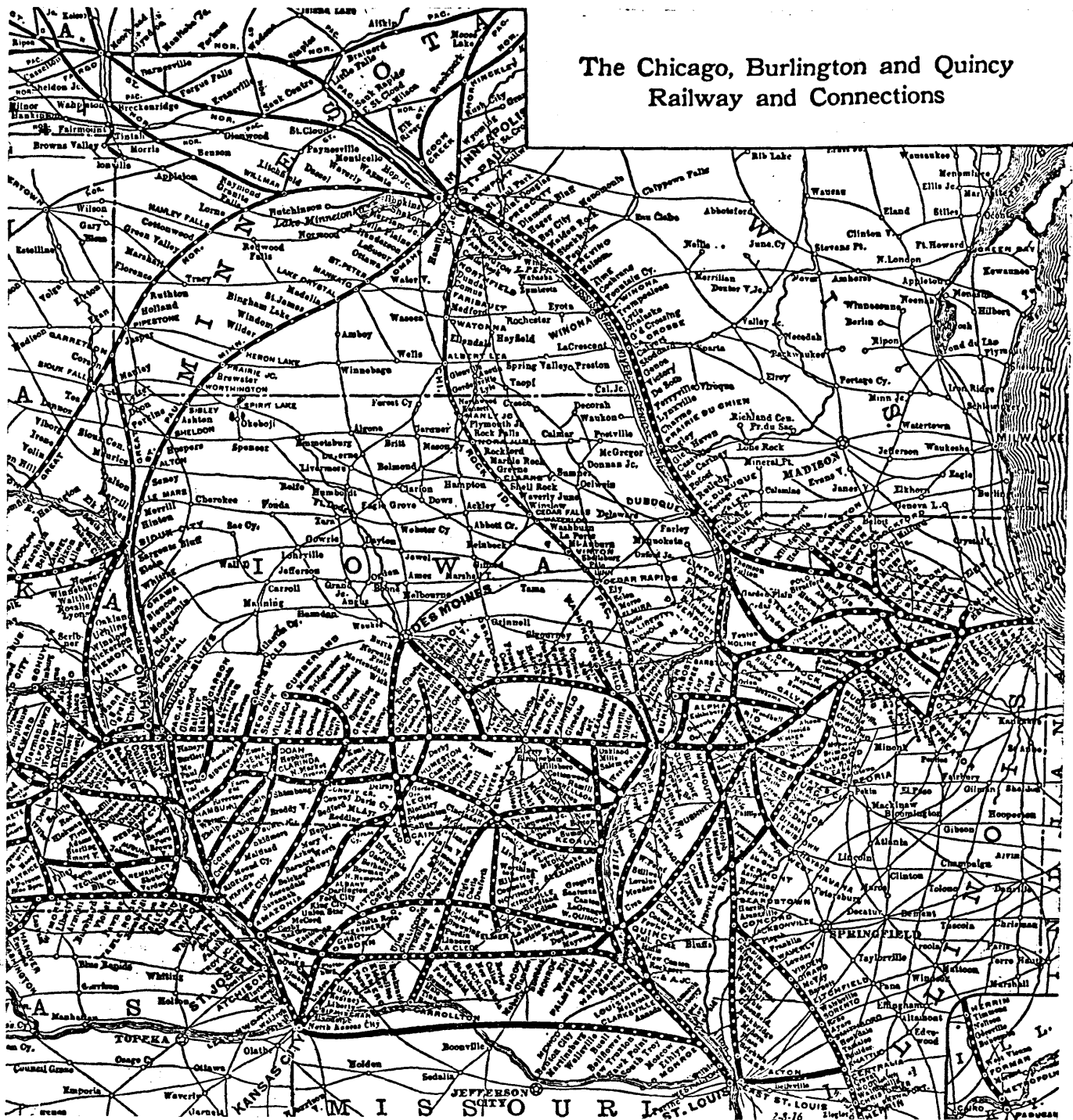


See item #7 Physical Description

VIEW FROM NORTH HILL-SHOWING RIVER FRONT, BURLINGTON, IOWA.

G. IV. SALISBURY, DEL. ELGIN, ILL.

# The Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railway and Connections



This 1922 map shows the "Iowa Route" of the B,CR&N Railroad after its purchase by the C,RI&P. The Burlington and Rock Island system had joint control of the B,CR&N until 1902 when the C,B&Q sold its share to the C,RI&P. It is interesting to note that the route is shown among the Burlington system's connections in 1922. The C,B&Q map was chosen to represent the original B,CR&N route, rather than a Rock Island map, because the route is less readable among other Rock Island system lines which intersect it.



**VICINITY MAP**

BURLINGTON, CEDARRAPIDS & NORTHERN RAILROAD FREIGHT STATION  
BURLINGTON, IOWA

UTM REFERENCE

