

## Expansion

The 1880's saw a period of aggressive railroad expansion in Iowa and in the Midwest. With minor exceptions this decade witnessed the completion of practically all of the North Western's Iowa lines. Much of the expansion took the form of extensions of lines previously constructed in the late seventies and early eighties by roads associated with the North Western. The Omaha Road, as has been pointed out, was an exception in that it was built mostly by independent interests.

Another independent line was The Des Moines and Minnesota Rail-Road Company, organized in 1870. Its three-foot-wide track was running from Des Moines to Ames by 1874. Under the banner of The Des Moines and Minneapolis Rail Road, the little railroad reached Callanan (now Jewell) four years later. The latter community was named after the road's president, James Callanan, a prominent Des Moines banker and real estate operator. During this period the North Western purchased control and changed the gauge to standard. The short line proved to be valuable in routing freight between Des Moines and the Twin Cities in conjunction with the Toledo and Northwestern-Omaha Road via Elmore, Minnesota.

The Toledo and Northwestern was further strengthened by a 26-mile branch from Eldora Jct. to Alden. Organized in 1882 as the high-sounding Chicago, Iowa & Dakota Railway Company, it was completed in two years. The line picked up most of its traffic from a large lime quarry in Alden. Incidentally, some of its original 54-pound rails are still in service. In 1886 the Toledo and Northwestern built a 15-mile extension from Lake City to Wall Lake Jct., thereby connecting that line with The Maple River Rail Road Company.

In 1886 a 20-mile line from Mapleton to Onawa, on the Missouri River, was built by the Maple Valley Railway Company. Farther to the north the Sioux City branch was heading toward completion when the 9-mile Kingsley-Moville section was finished in 1887 by the Sioux Valley Railway Company. The 20-mile gap between Moville and Sioux City (Sergeant Bluff) was finally spanned in 1901 by the Moville Extension Railway Company.

The Boyer Valley Railway Company, organized on October 17, 1898, constructed the 61-mile branch line from Boyer to Mondamin on the Missouri River and the 25-mile Wall Lake-Denison branch line in 1899. This gave the Wall Lake area three lines to the Missouri River, two to the North Western's main stem on the south, and an easterly connection via Wall Lake Jct. to Jewell, Tama and other eastern points. In its heyday as a

railroad junction, Wall Lake (population 766) had twelve passenger trains going in six directions! Two of these carried sleepers.

The biggest Johnny-come-lately in the North Western's Iowa domain was the 195-mile Iowa, Minnesota and Northwestern Railway Company. Organized in 1898, completed and sold to the North Western in 1900, the road was built with Blair-like rapidity. In 1899 the fifty-nine miles from Blue Earth, Minnesota, to Mason City, Iowa, were in operation. By the end of the following year the railroad had spiked down rails from Mason City to Belle Plaine and from Blue Earth to Fox Lake in Minnesota. As its name suggests, the line runs in a northwesterly direction more than half way across Iowa and catercornered into a large section of southwestern Minnesota.

Another interstate line built during this period was the Minnesota and Iowa Railway Company, incorporated in 1898. It built from Burt, Iowa, on the Elmore-Des Moines line, through Fox Lake and Sanborn to Vesta, all Minnesota towns. When acquired by the North Western in 1900 it had a 118-mile line.

The North Western's boldest incursion into territory south of its Clinton-Council Bluffs high iron, began with the line from Belle Plaine to the mining town of Muchakinock. The 60-mile coal road, organized in 1883 as the Ottumwa, Cedar Falls and St. Paul Railway Company, was com-

pleted the next year. In 1901 a 21-mile extension built by the Southern Iowa Railway Company gave it access to the Negro colliery of Buxton. At one time the mines along this railroad are said to have furnished the North Western with enough coal for nearly the entire system.

To round out the lower Iowa railroads, mention should be made of the 6-mile addition to the Carroll-Kirkman branch. Built by the Harlan and Kirkman Railway Company in 1899, it served the two Shelby County towns from which it was named.

From time to time the North Western sought to purchase its many controlled and affiliated lines and thereby simplify its corporate structure. The first big purchase came in 1884 and included the following Iowa companies:

Cedar Rapids and Missouri River Railroad  
Chicago, Iowa & Nebraska Rail Road  
The Des Moines and Minneapolis Rail Road Company  
Iowa Midland Railway Company  
Iowa South Western Railway Company  
The Maple River Rail Road Company  
Ottumwa, Cedar Falls and St. Paul Railway Company  
Stanwood & Tipton Railway Company

In 1887 four more were acquired:

Iowa Railway, Coal and Manufacturing Company  
Linn County Railway Company (Cedar Rapids by-pass)  
Maple Valley Railway Company  
Sioux Valley Railway Company

In 1890 the 385-mile Toledo and Northwestern Railway was purchased. At the turn of the century the following were purchased:

Boone County Railway Company (Line revision)

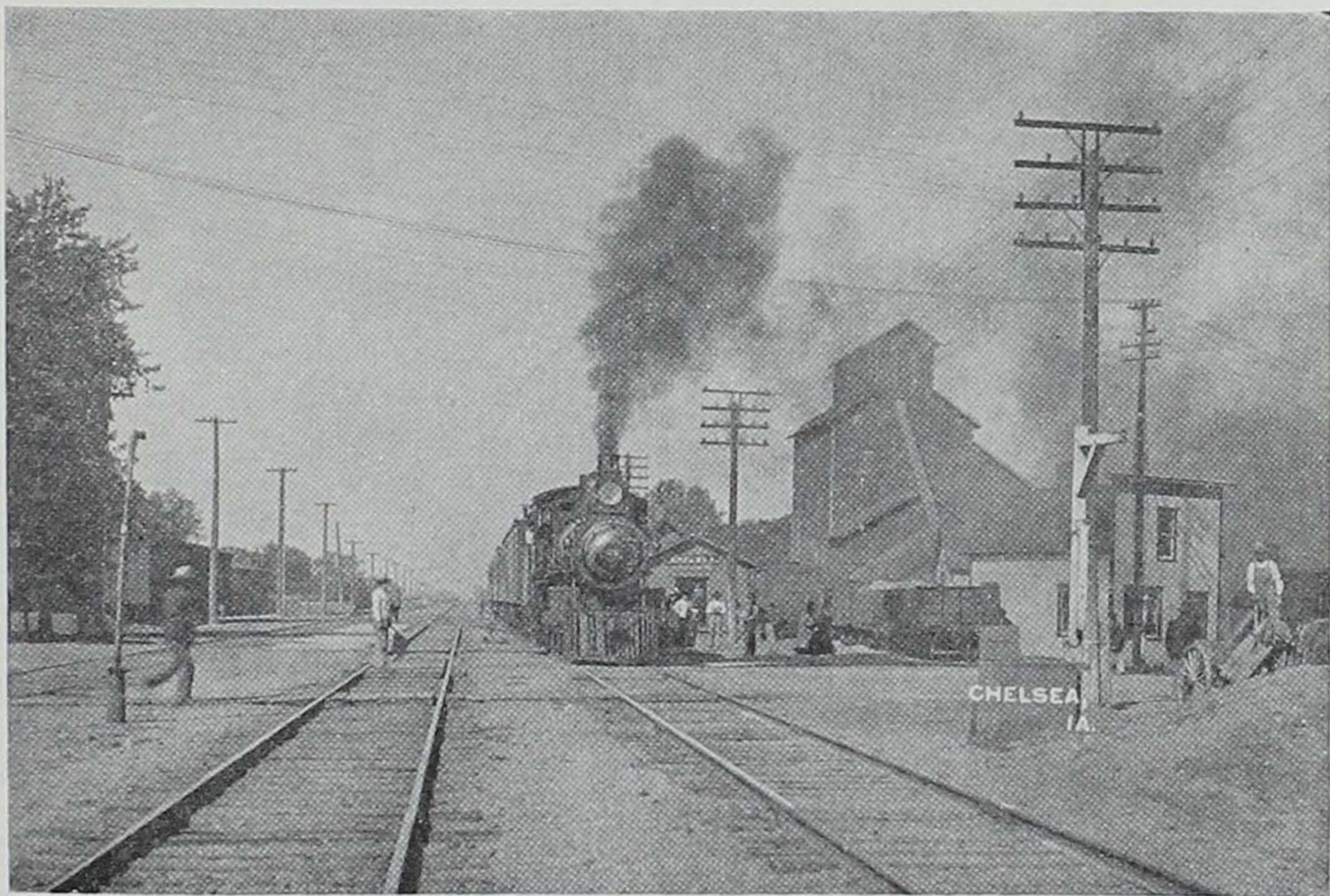
Boyer Valley Railway Company

Harlan and Kirkman Railway Company

Iowa, Minnesota and Northwestern Railway Company

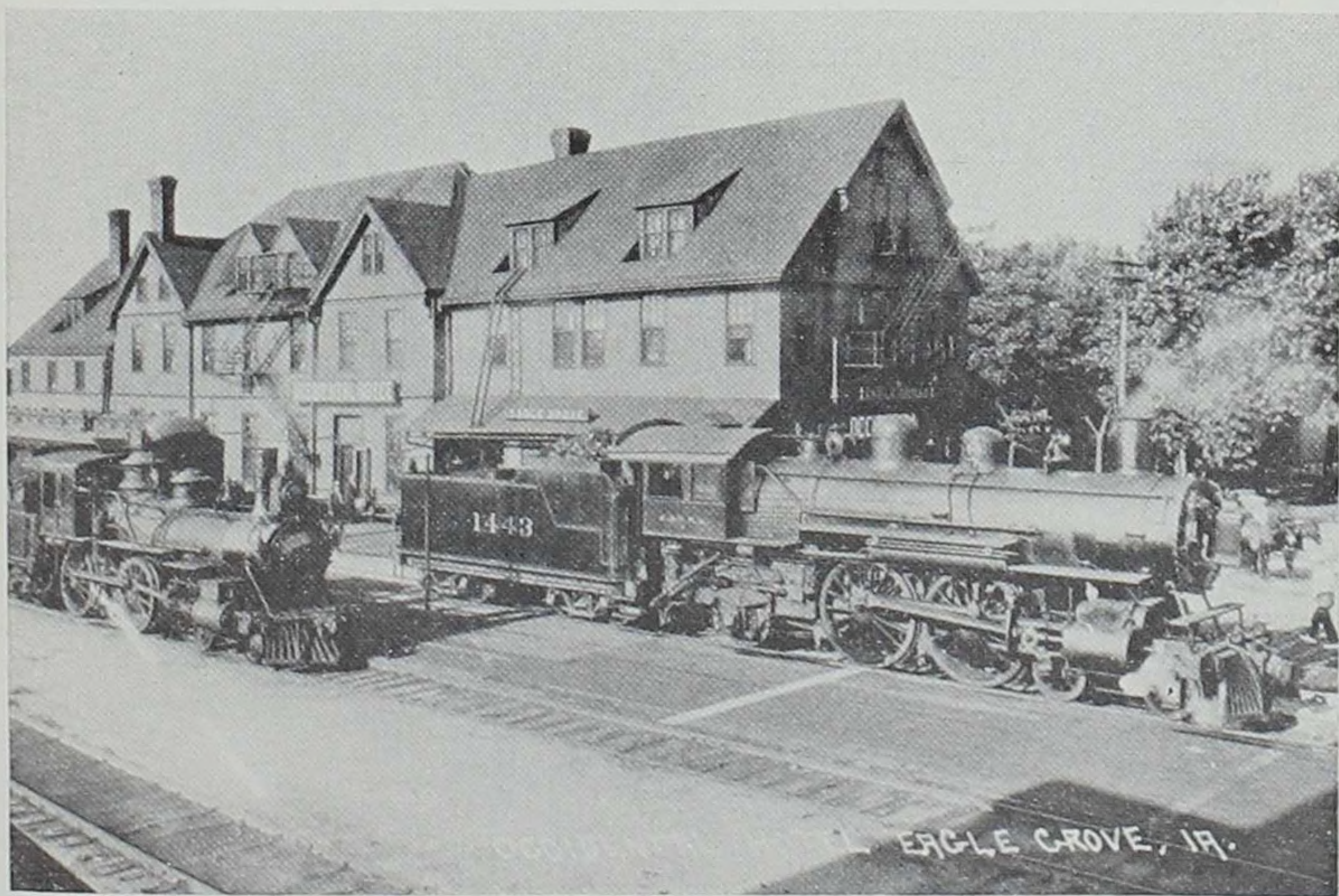
By 1901 the North Western had corralled the Southern Iowa Railway Company along with the Sioux City and Pacific Rail Road Company. In 1903 the little Chicago, Iowa and Dakota Railway and the big Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley Railroad were purchased.

With the purchase of the "Missouri Valley" the last of the major Blair roads was taken over by the North Western. It is here that we should say a few more words about this railroad builder who meant so much to Iowa. Blair, while retaining his beloved Blairstown, New Jersey, residence until his death, always had one foot in Iowa from the time of his first visit to Cedar Rapids. Indeed, the headquarters of his far-flung railroad empire was in the three-story brick structure known as the Blair Building in that city. The imposing \$60,000 building was financed by his two principal Iowa railroads, his land company and by the First National Bank, which he helped organize in 1864. Also housed therein was the Iowa Rail Road Land Company and similar organizations he formed to promote new towns.



*J. P. Vander Maas Collection*

Traintime at Chelsea. Note crossing watchman at left. Photo shows left-hand operation which is standard practice on North Western.



*Dr. Robert McGrath Collection*

Station and Occidental Hotel at Eagle Grove in 1910. Important junction where Hawarden branch meets Des Moines-Blue Earth line.

**CHICAGO, IOWA & NEBRASKA R. ROAD**  
Time Table No. 2.  
To go into effect Sunday, April 15th, 1860.  
For the Government and Information of Employees only.

TRAINS WEST			TRAINS EAST		
2	1	STATIONS	1	2	
PASS	FREIGHT		PASS	FREIGHT	
P. M.	A. M.		A. M.	P. M.	
4:05	8:30	CLINTON	10:45	4:00	
4:20	8:50	Camanche	10:32	3:40	
4:35	9:10	Low Moor	10:20	3:25	
4:45	9:25	Ramessa	10:10	3:10	
5:05	9:50	De Witt	9:50	2:45	
5:20	10:10	G'd Mound	9:30	2:20	
5:40	10:30	Calmas	9:18	1:55	
5:50	10:45	Yankee Run	9:04	1:40	
6:05	11:05	Louden	8:52	1:25	
6:25	11:35	Onion Grove	8:31	1:00	
6:55	12:20	MECHVILLE	8:03	12:20	
7:15	1:05	Lisbon	7:42	11:50	
7:23	1:20	Mt. Vernon	7:36	11:25	
7:45	1:45	Bertram	7:15	10:50	
8:15	2:25	CEDAR RAPIDS	6:45	10:10	
P. M.	P. M.		A. M.	A. M.	

Trains will meet and pass at Stations indicated by full face figures.  
Train No. 2 West and No. 1 East have the right to the road against all other Trains for one hour after their own time at any Station as per table.  
After that time the right of the road belongs to the other Train.  
Train No. 2 East has the right to the road against No. 1 West for one hour after their own time at any Station as per table. After that time the right of the road belongs to No. 1 West.

**M. SMITH, Sup't**

Employees Timetable issued one year after Iowa & Nebraska Rail Road was completed between Clinton and Cedar Rapids.

**CHICAGO AND North Western RAILWAY.**

THE SHORTEST LINE  
FROM  
**CHICAGO**  
TO  
**COUNCIL BLUFFS**  
VIA  
**CHICAGO AND NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY.**  
TO  
**ALL POINTS**  
AND THENCE  
**NORTH-WEST**  
QUICK TIME!

**OMAHA**

**DENVER**  
**SALT LAKE**  
**SAN FRANCISCO**  
And all parts of  
**CALIFORNIA AND THE TERRITORIES**

Fullman Palace Sleeping Cars on all Night Trains

MARVIN HUCHITT, General Superintendent      H. F. STANWOOD, General Ticket Agent

Poster advertising the North Western's "direct route" through Omaha Gateway to "California and the Territories" in 1872.

**CHICAGO AND NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.**

**TRAIN SERVICE**

THOROUGHLY ORGANIZED.  
FULLY EQUIPPED.

Between  
**CHICAGO**  
ST. PAUL & MINNEAPOLIS,  
COUNCIL BLUFFS & OMAHA,  
DENVER & THE BLACK HILLS,  
& ALL POINTS IN  
**SOUTH DAKOTA**  
COLORADO,  
CALIFORNIA,  
OREGON & WASHINGTON.

It is the pleasure of  
Ticket Agents, at all  
Coupon Stations, on all connecting  
lines to furnish information and  
through tickets over this great  
Highway.



CHICAGO OFFICES  
206 & 208 CLARK ST.  
J. M. WHITMAN, G. C. WILKINSON, E. P. WILSON  
Gen'l Mgr.      Gen'l Mgr.      Gen'l Ticket Agent



OFFICIAL SCORE

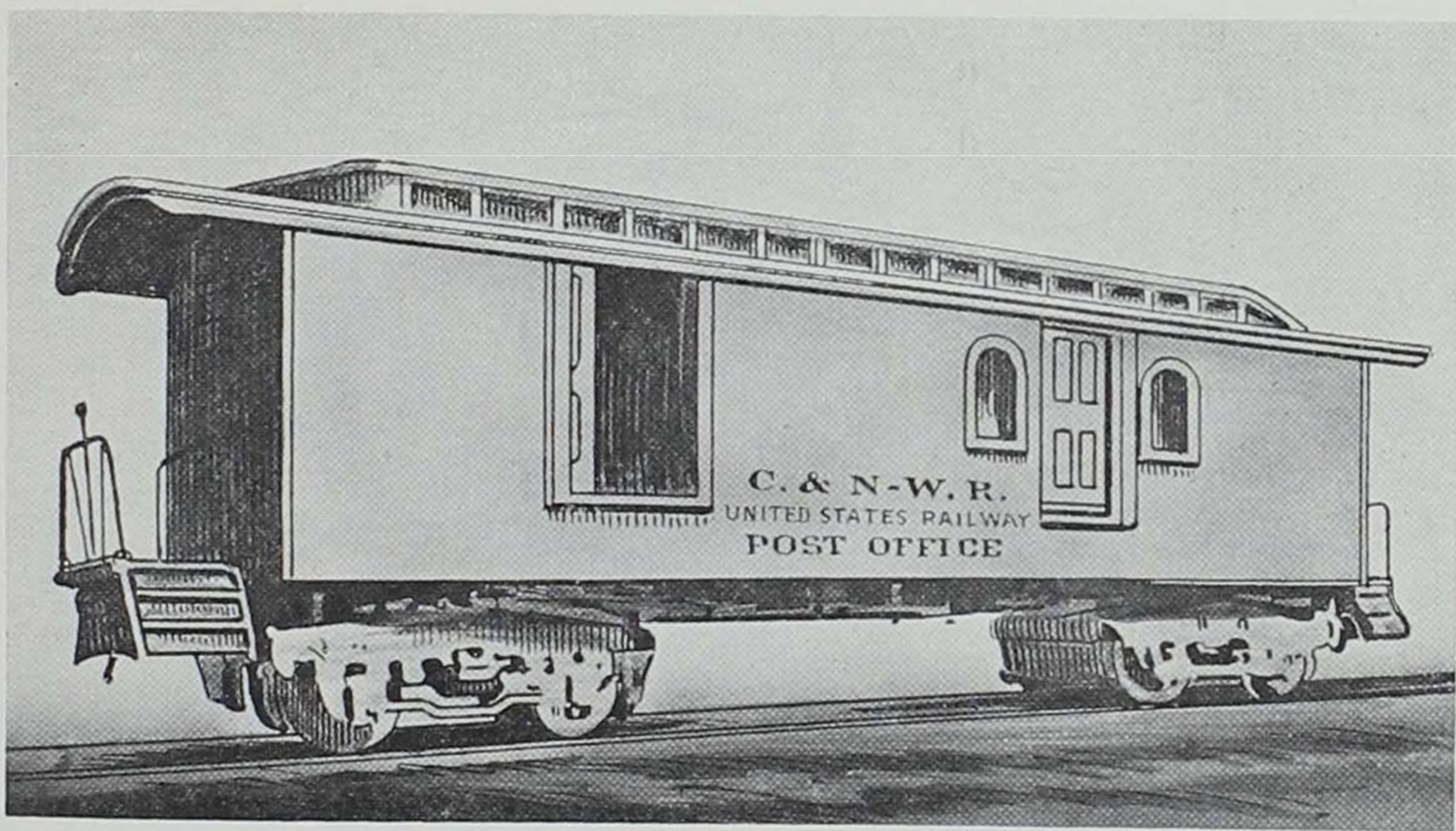
1889

N. TREU PFEIFFER

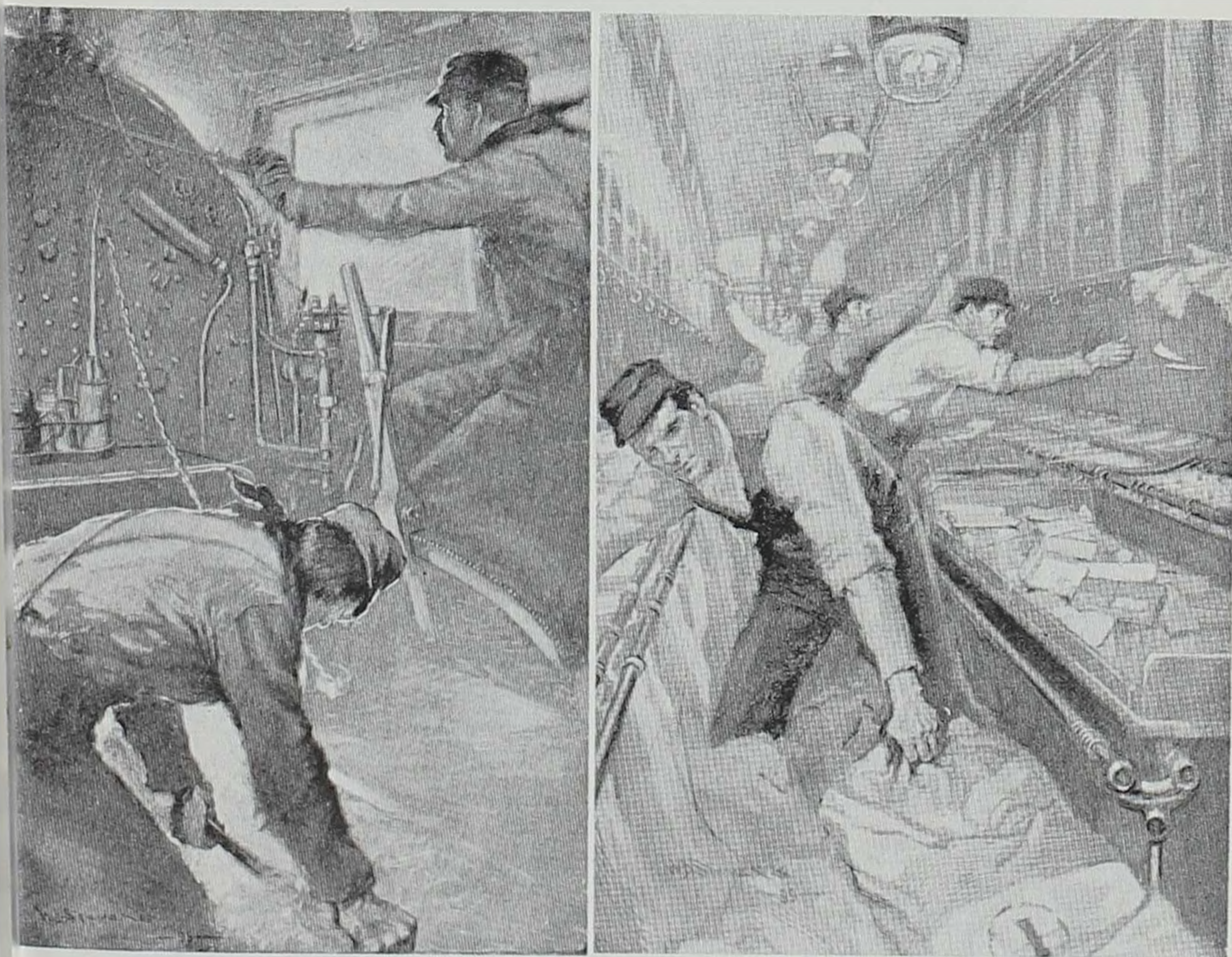
North Western Railway Photos

North Western advertisement on back of 20-page baseball score program featuring Chicago White Stockings [Cubs] and New York Giants on September 28, 1889.



*North Western Railway Photo*

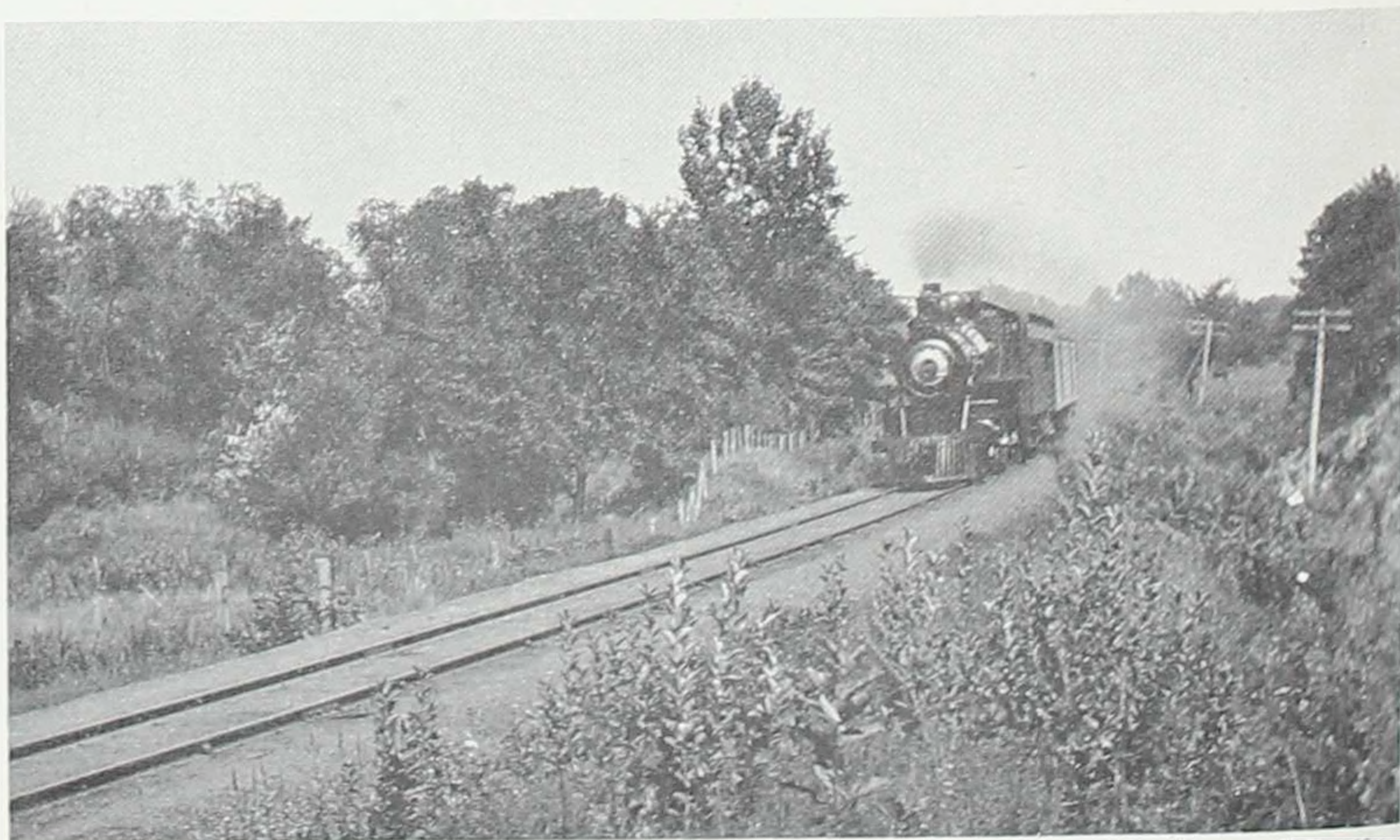
Sketch of first Railway Post Office car, a rebuilt baggage car, which made its initial run between Chicago and Clinton on August 28, 1864.



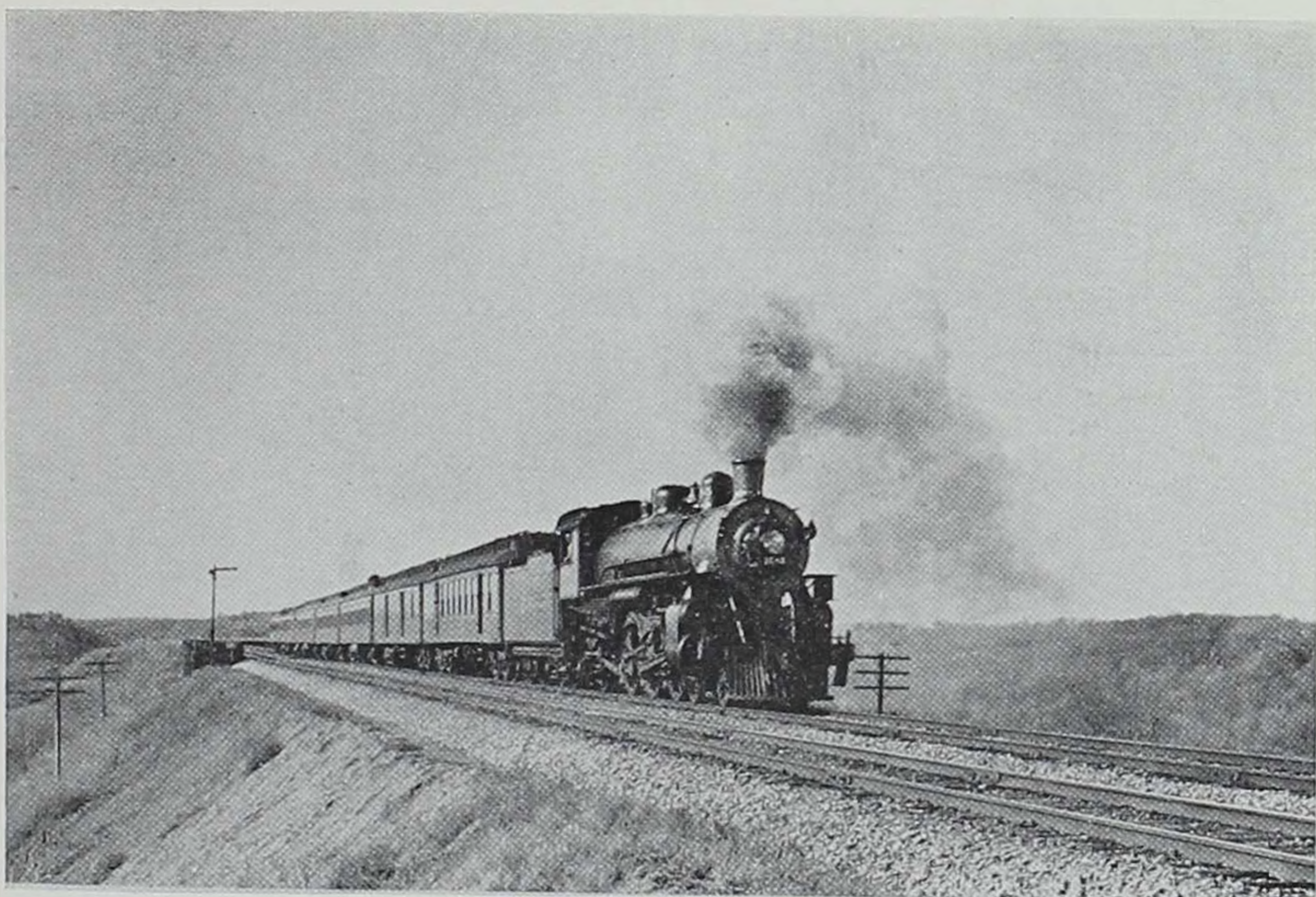
Drawings by W. D. Stevens for article by Cleveland Moffett entitled "At Ninety Miles an Hour" in *McClure's Magazine*. The engine room and mailroom depict the struggle between the Burlington and North Western for the "million dollar mail contract."



*North Western Railway Photo*  
Station Agent Kate Shelley at her Moingona Station.

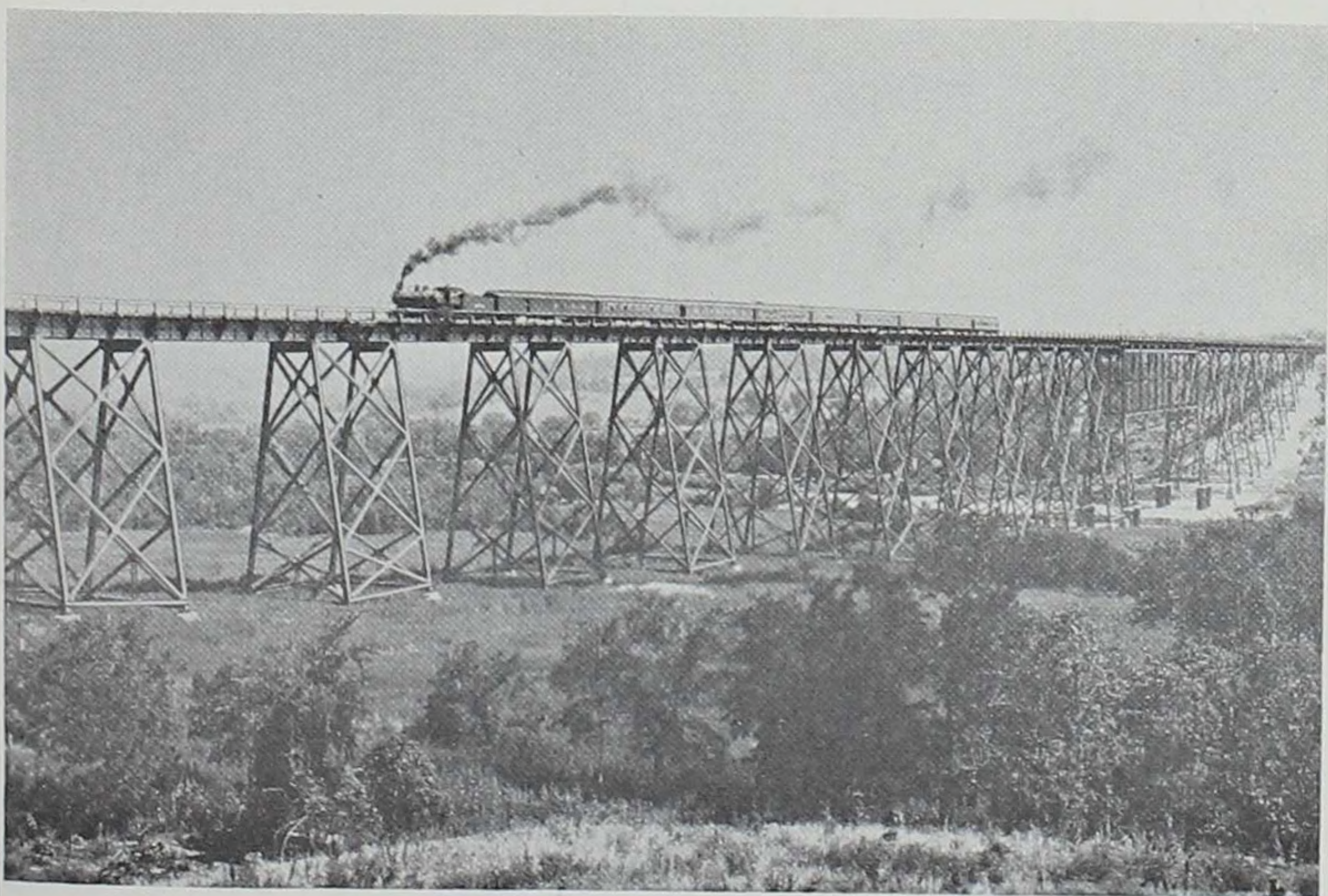


*Edward H. Meyers Collection*  
Old main line through Moingona 1¼ miles south of Boone in 1900.



*Edward H. Meyers Collection*

Eastbound train speeding over high embankment after crossing Kate Shelley bridge in 1912.



*North Western Railway Photo*

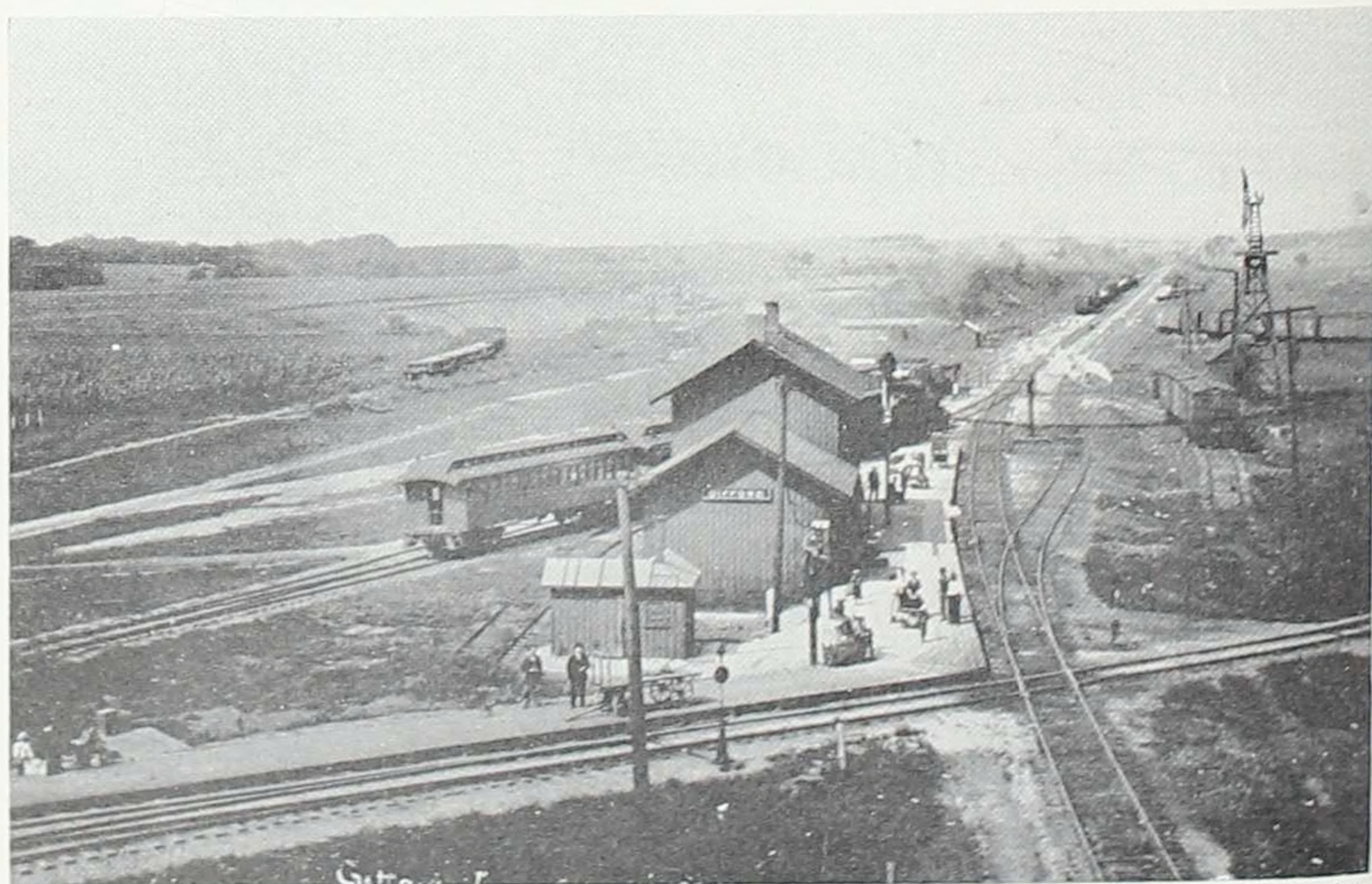
Westbound Overland Limited crossing Kate Shelley bridge over Des Moines River in 1901. The American type (4-4-0) locomotive was later relegated to Chicago suburban service.



This Photo, taken year of 1879, 10 miles north of Ames, Iowa, was the Des Moines and Minneapolis (Narrow-gage) Railroad. Now the Chicago and North-western.

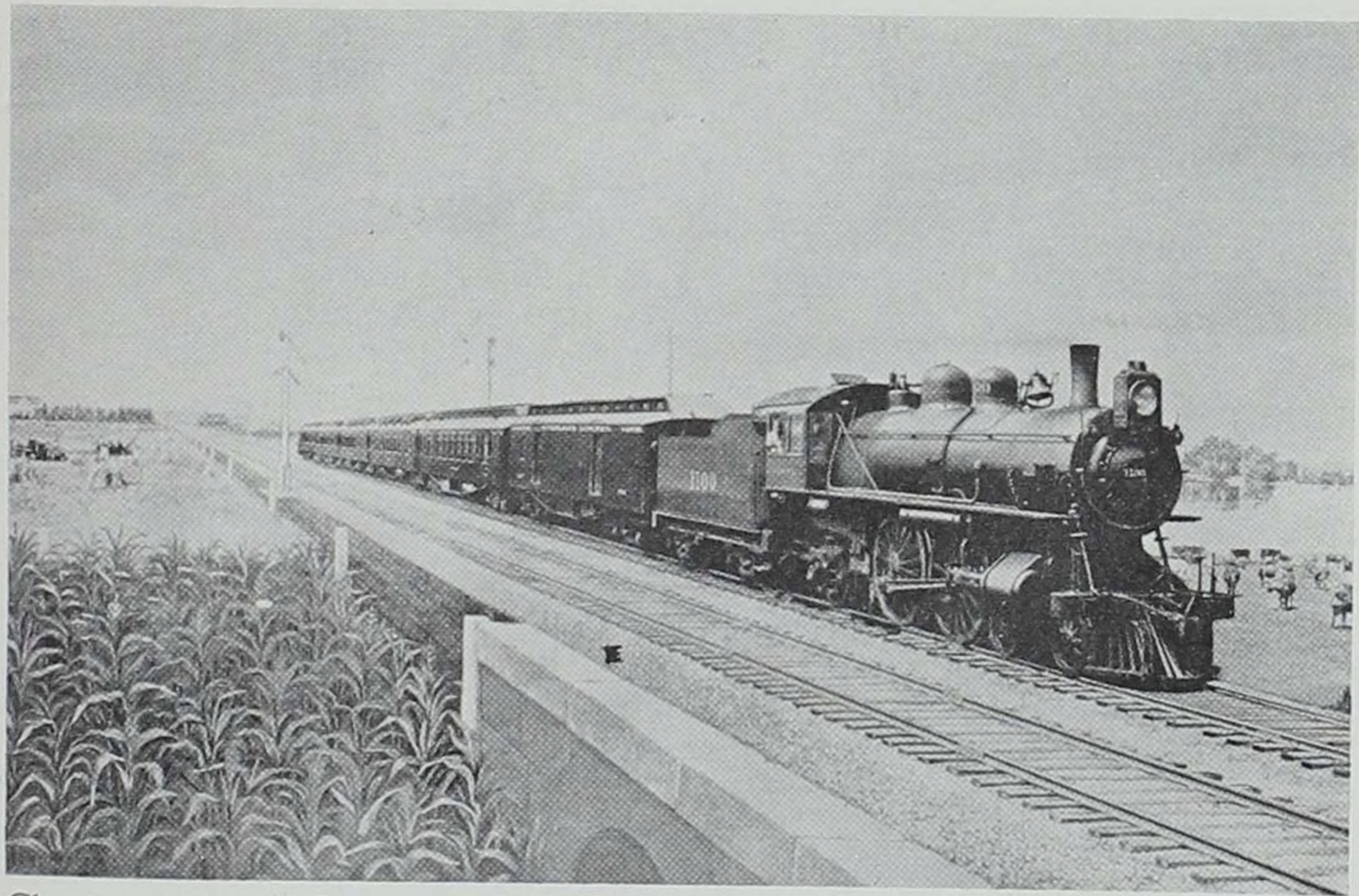
*North Western Railway Photo*

Des Moines and Minneapolis narrow gauge mixed train crossing trestle ten miles north of Ames.

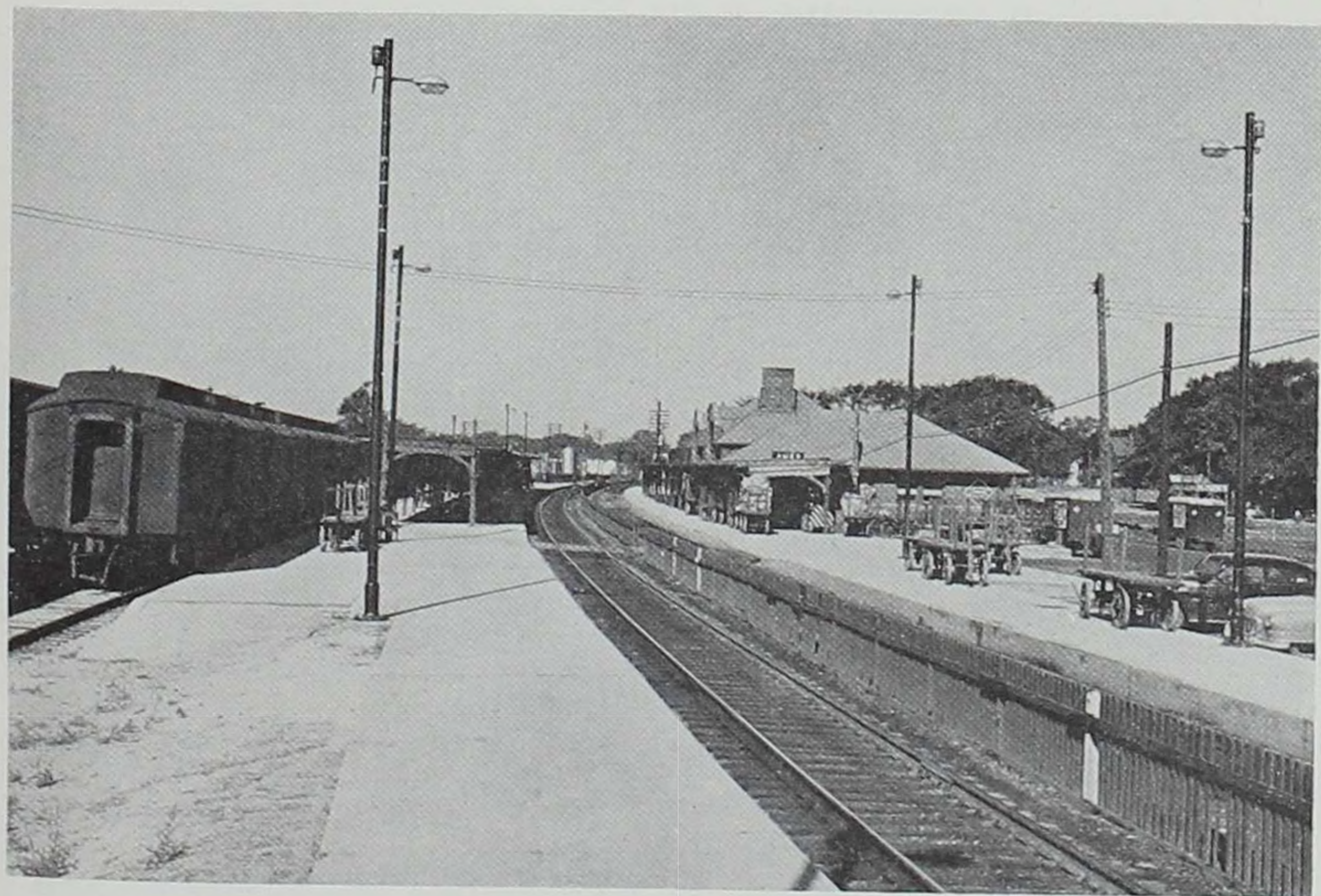


*Edward H. Meyers Collection*

Junction at Gifford showing the North Western's Tama-Wall Lake branch (right) with M. & St. L. main line in foreground.

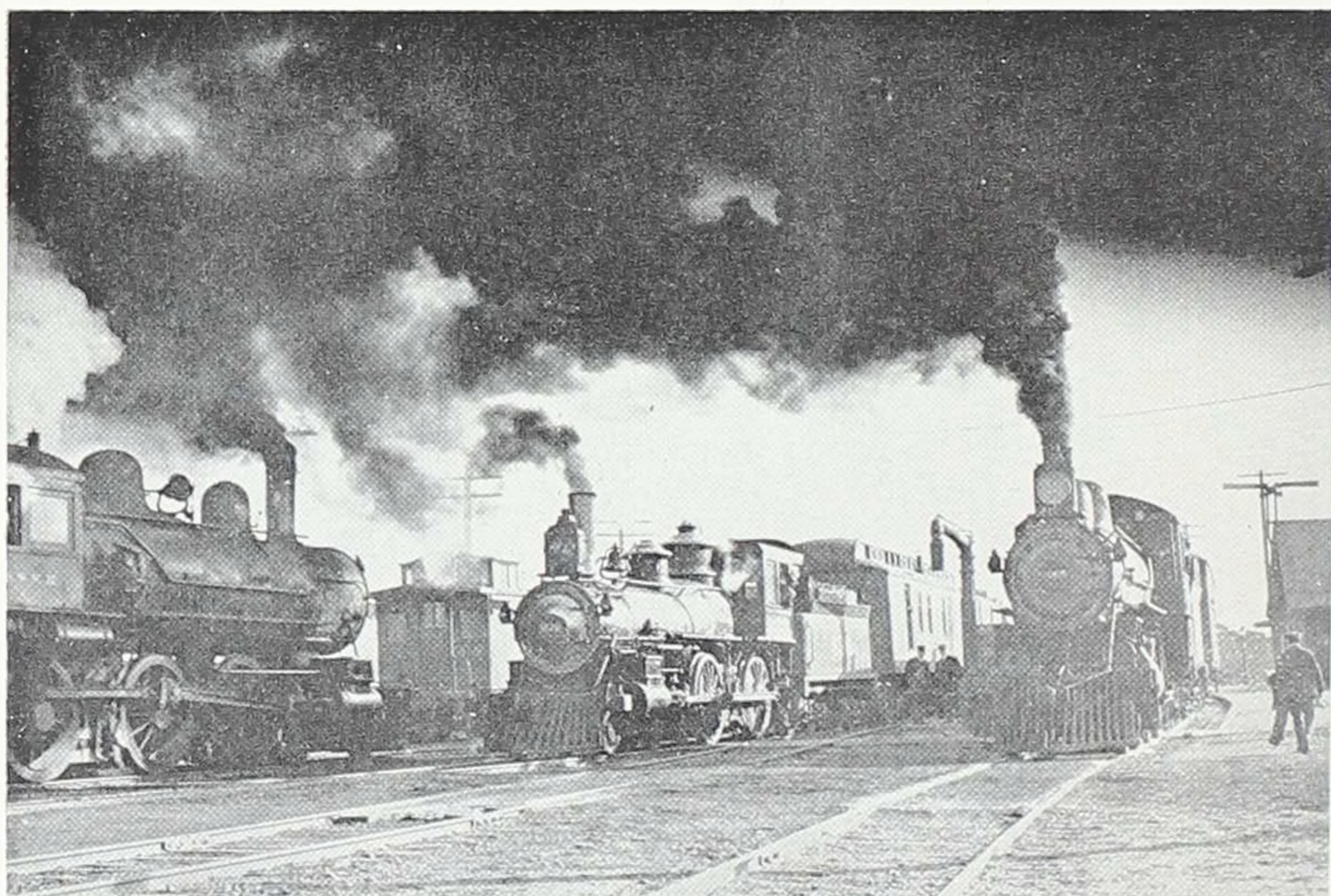


Classic picture of Overland Limited around 1900 showing authentic photo of train superimposed on a painted-in Midwest background.



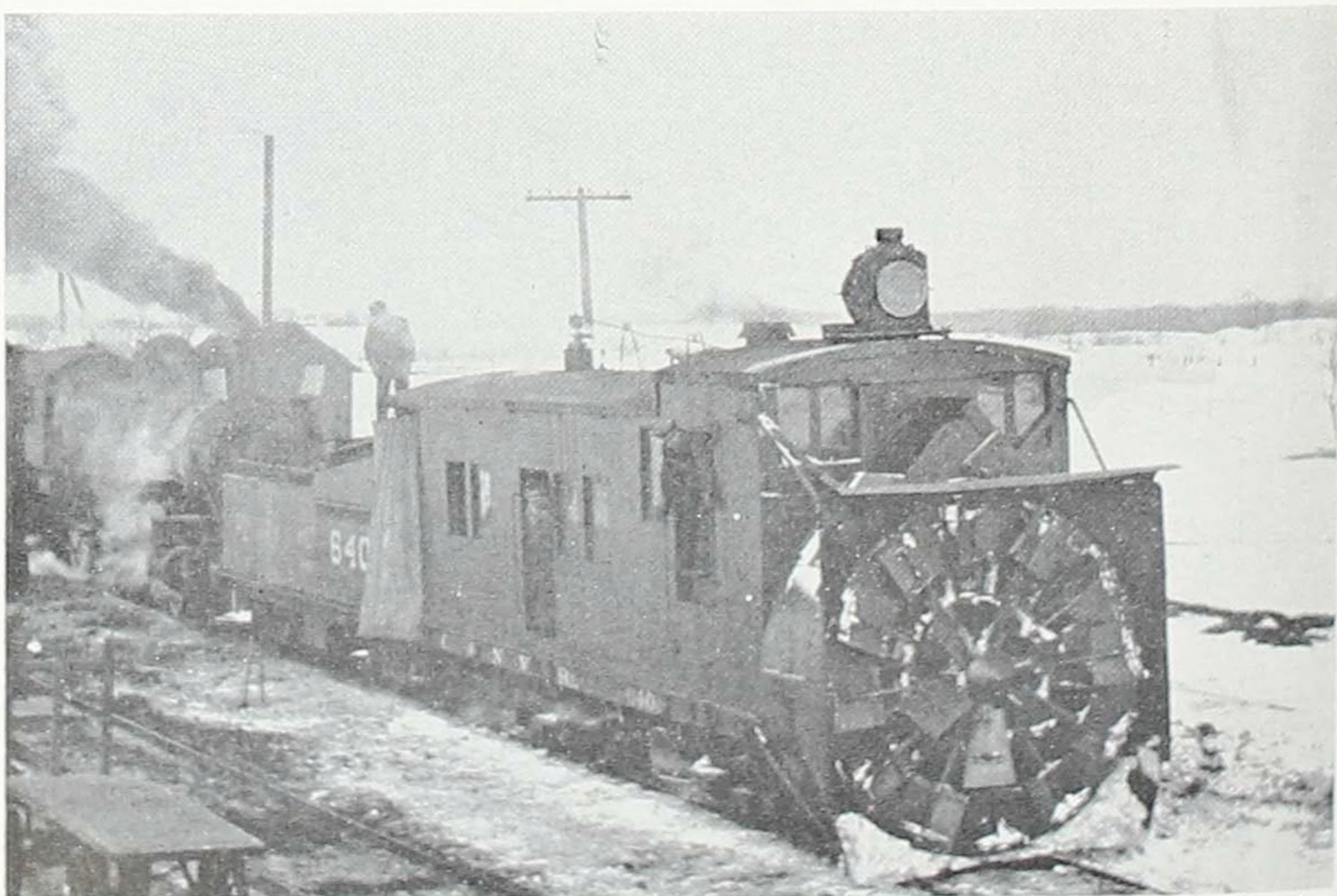
*North Western Railway Photos*

Long trains once stopped at this graceful curve at Ames to discharge thousands of Iowa State College (now University) students each term.



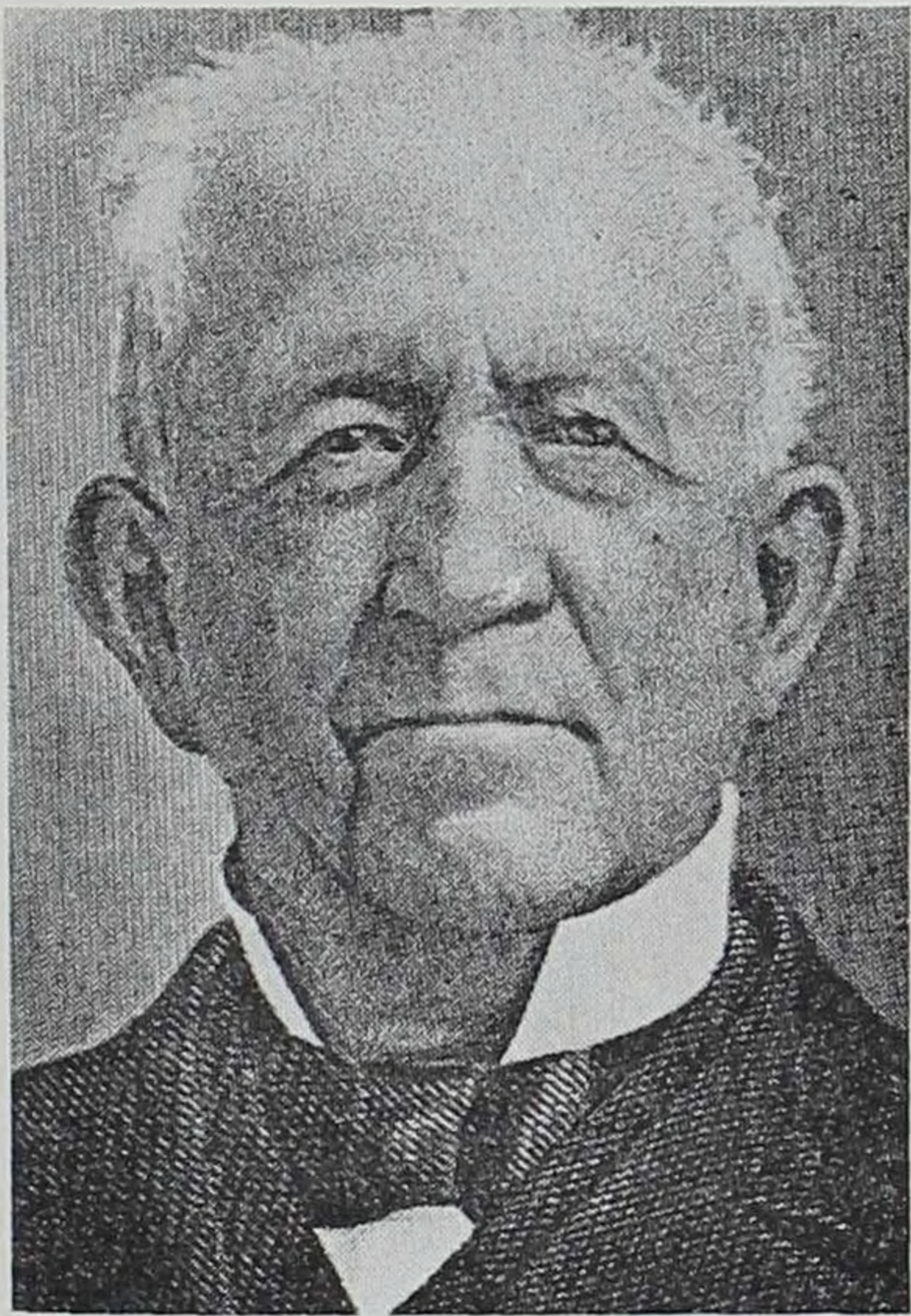
*Edward H. Meyers Collection*

Billowing smoke darkens sky at Jewell while firemen stoke their engines. Jewell has North Western lines going in four directions and formerly had numerous passenger trains.



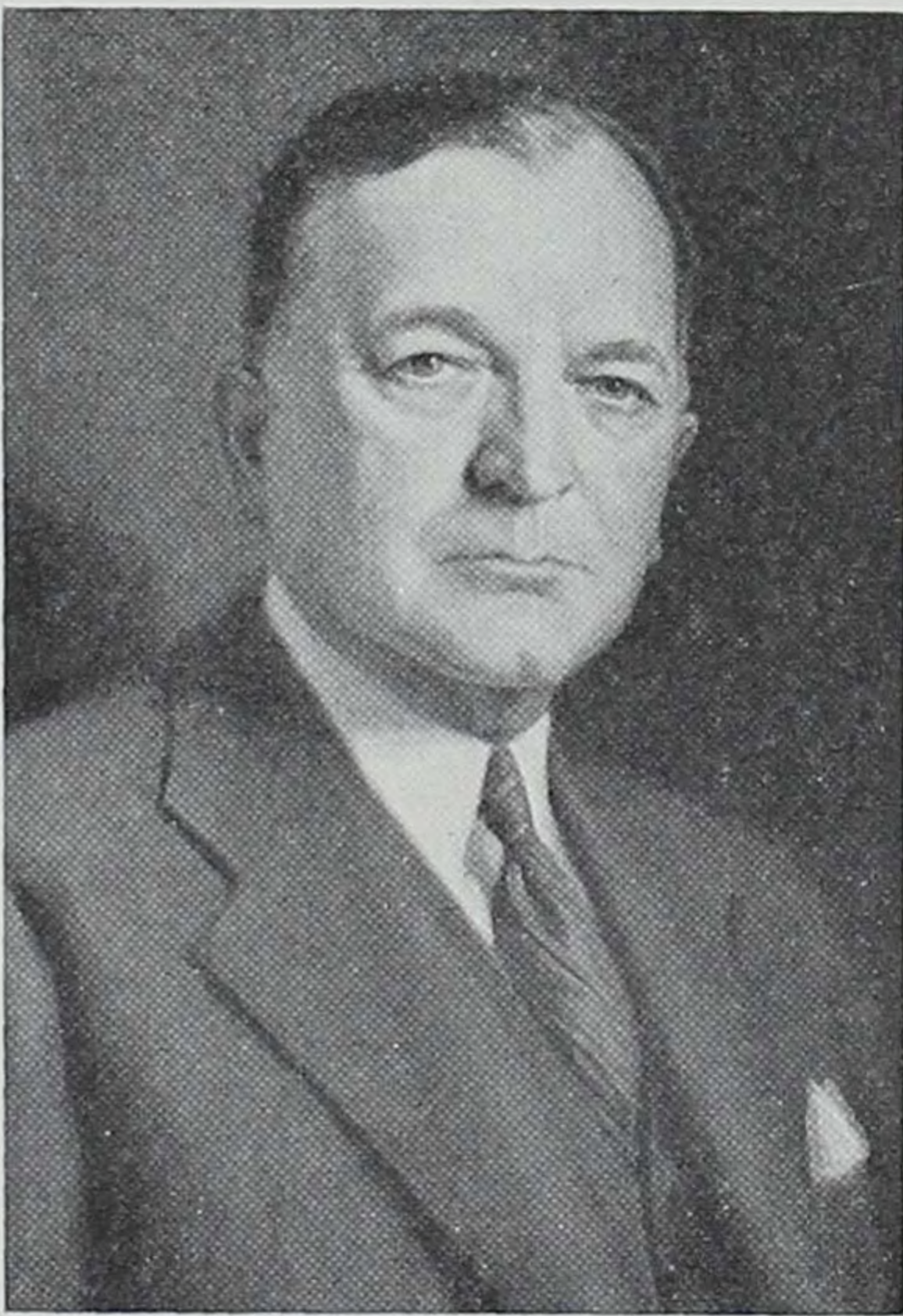
*Edward H. Meyers Collection*

Rotary plow at Gifford about 1910. White flags on engine indicate it was an extra train, probably recalled after battling drifts along Tama-Wall Lake branch.



*Blairstown Centennial Book*

John I. Blair — builder of the North Western in Iowa and surrounding states.



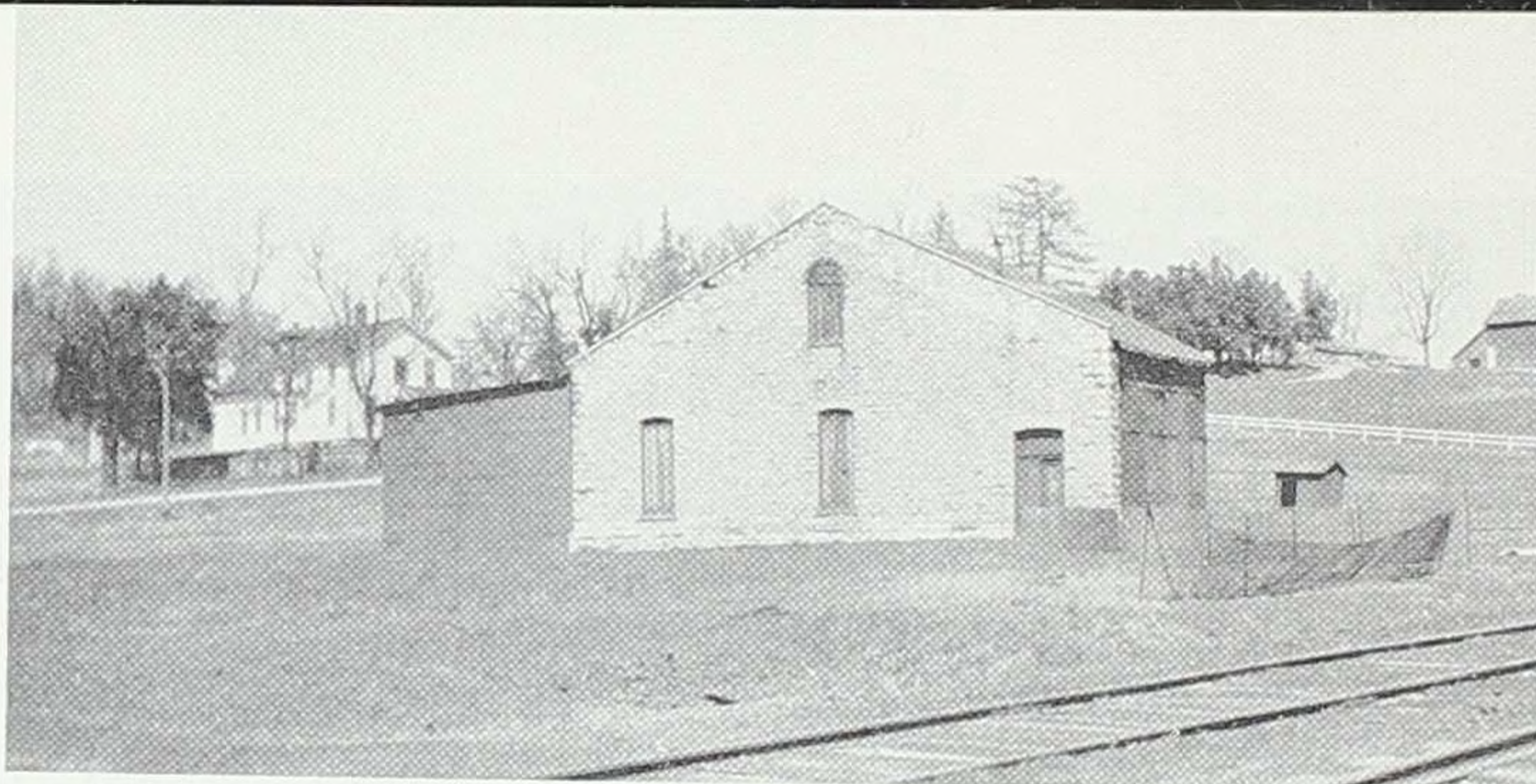
*North Western Railway Photo*

Fred W. Sargent — Iowa-born president of North Western from 1925-1940.



*J. P. Vander Maas Collection*

Wreck at DeWitt on main line early in 19th Century.



*Wm. Armstrong Collection*

Old enginehouse at Anamosa on the abandoned Anamosa-Clinton branch.

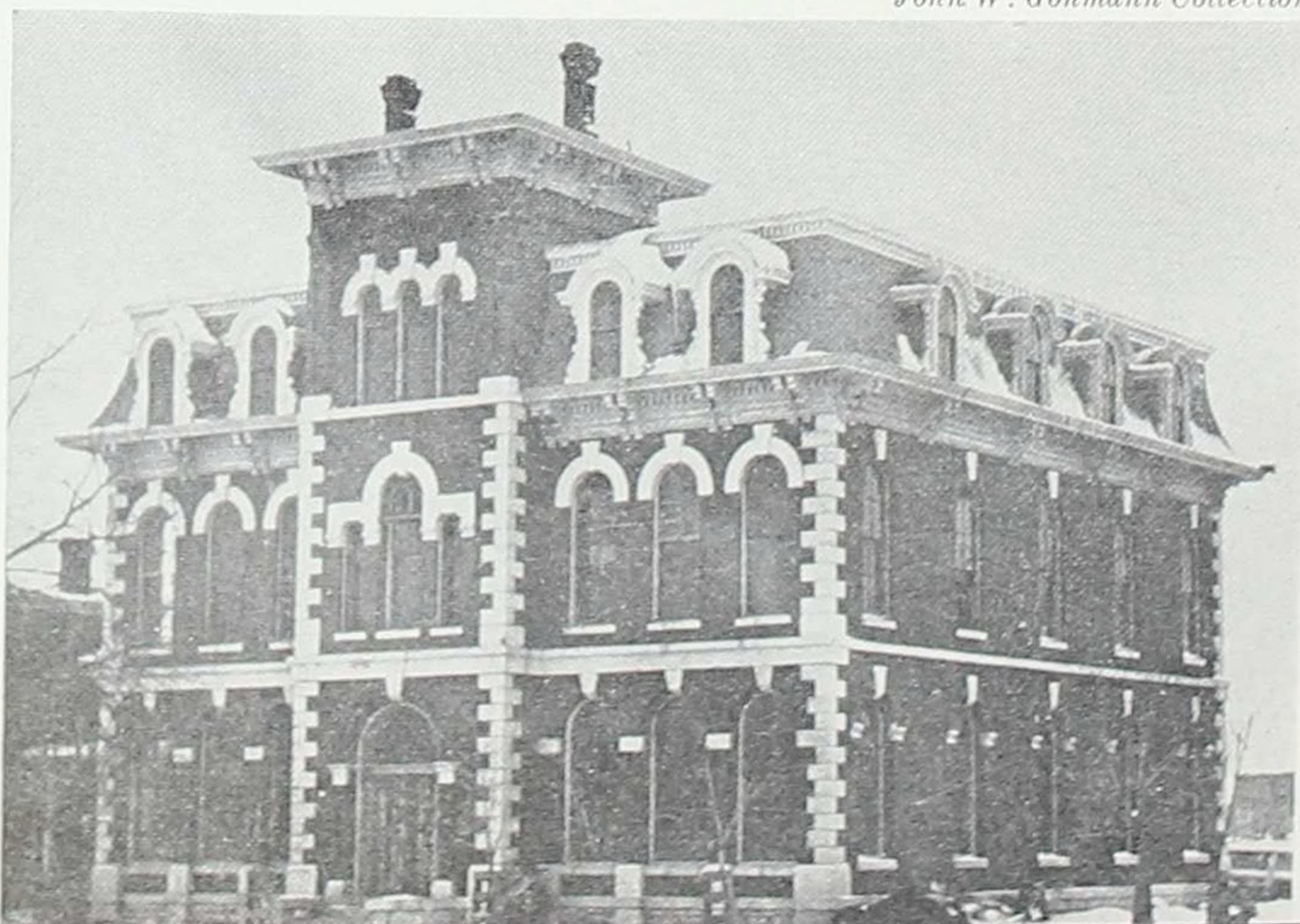


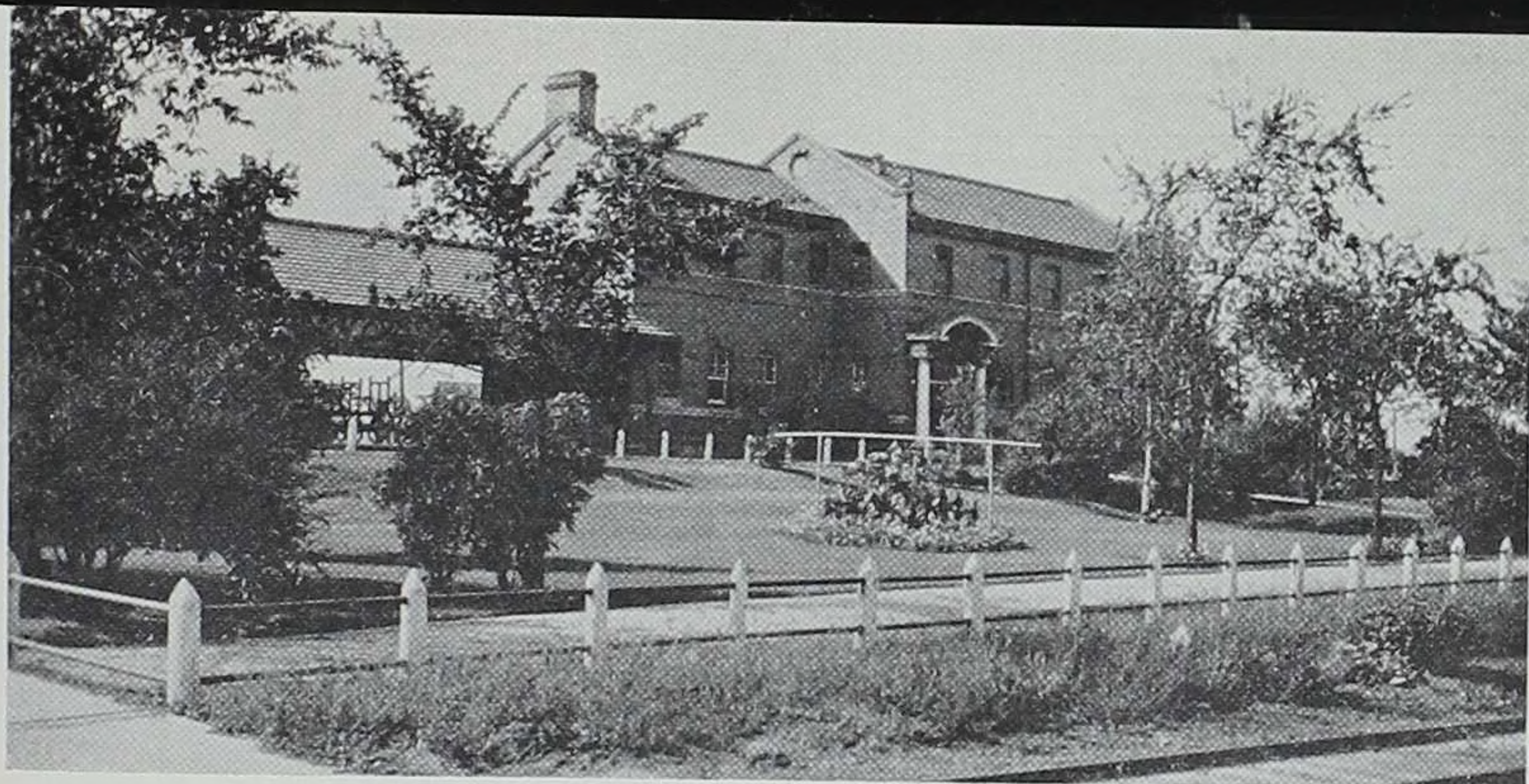
*Wm. Armstrong Collection*

*Above:* Sturdy brick station on the Alden branch at Eldora.

*Below:* Blair Building in Cedar Rapids. Headquarters of John I. Blair's railroads. Built in 1869; razed in 1889.

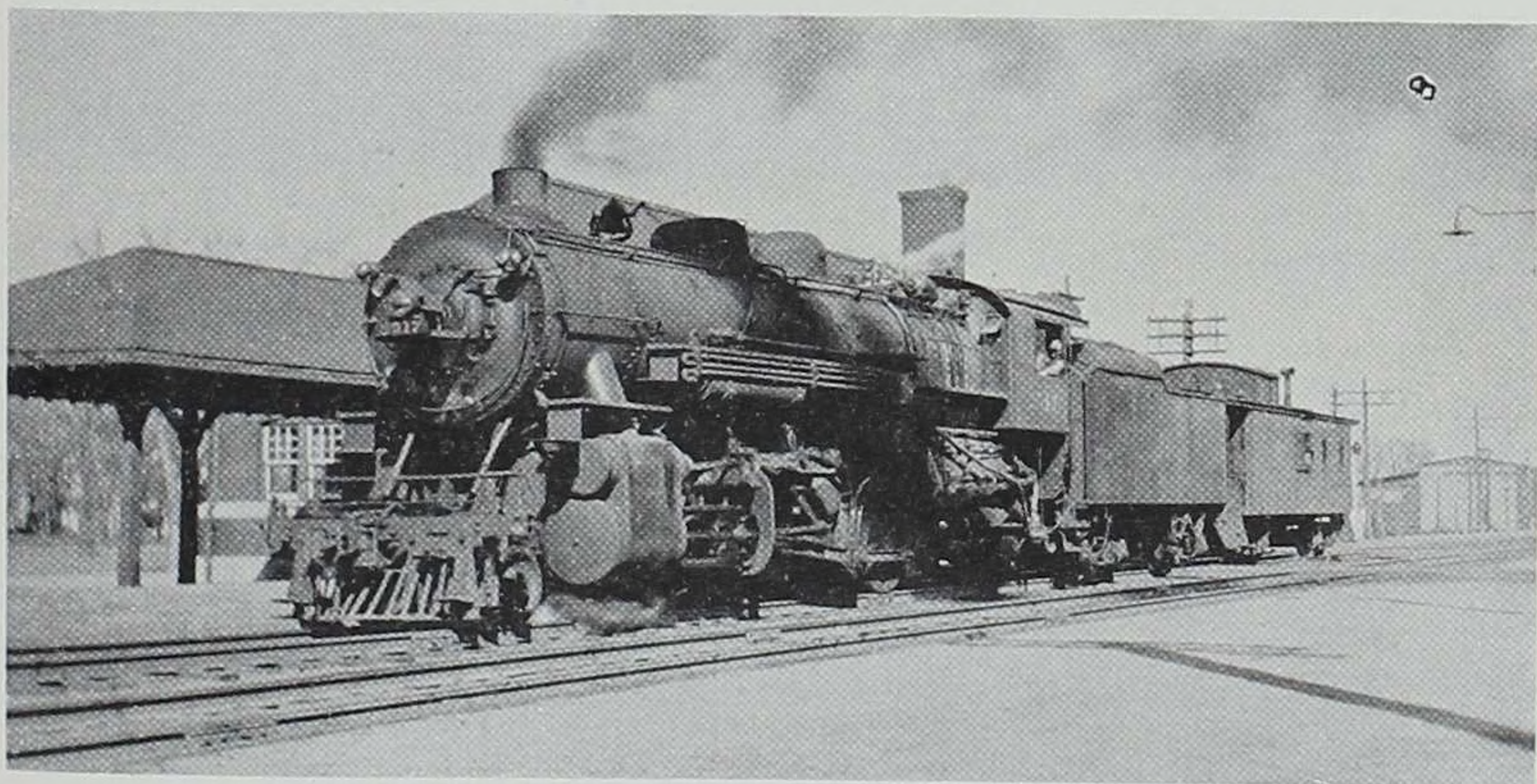
*John W. Gohmann Collection*





*Wm. Armstrong Collection*

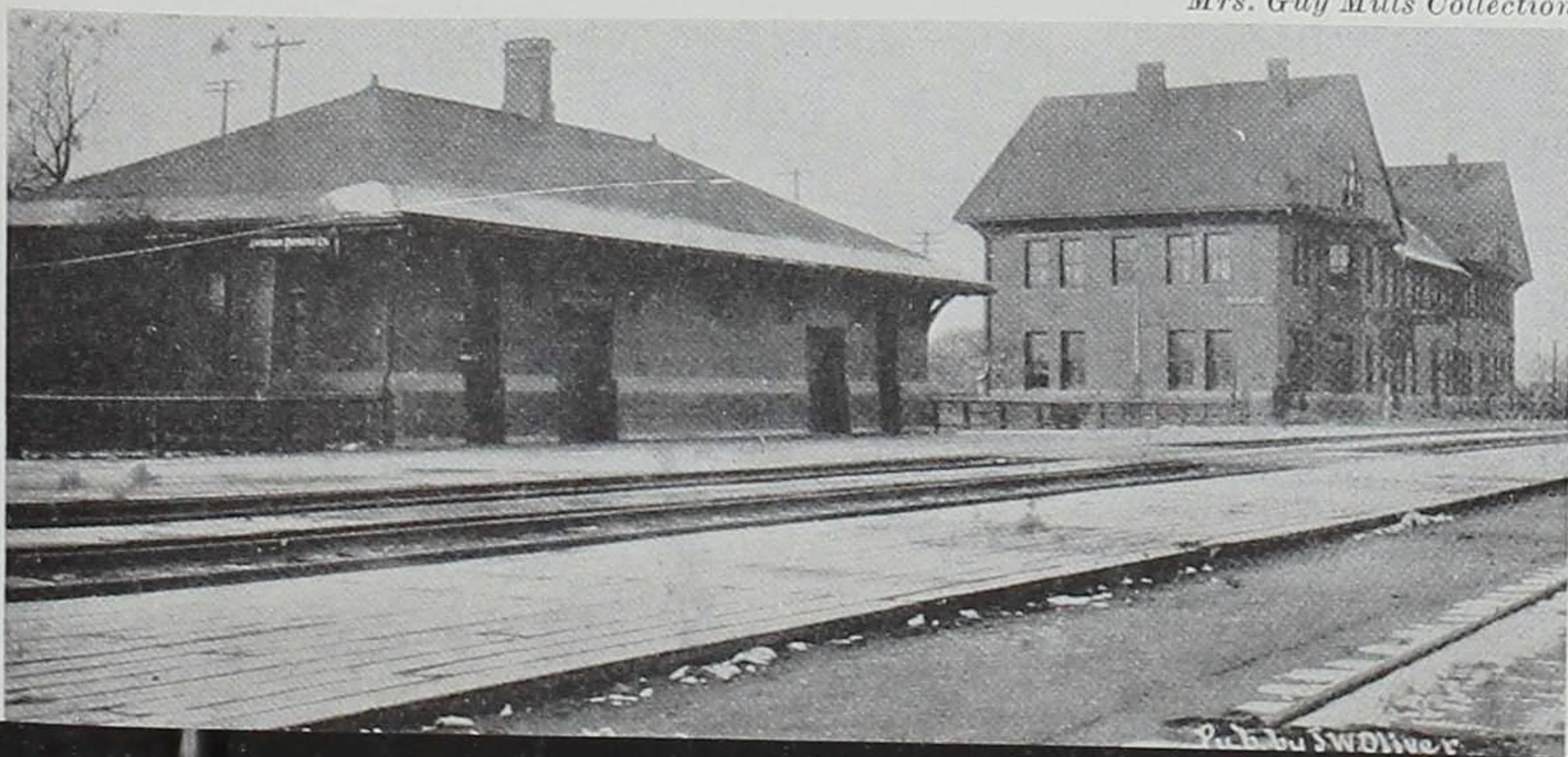
North Western Station at Mason City in 1914. This became Division Office on M. & St. L. in October, 1962.



*Wm. Armstrong Collection*

Above: "Caboose hop" at the Nevada station. Engine is powerful 2-4-2 type.  
Below: Boone station and Iowa Division headquarters.

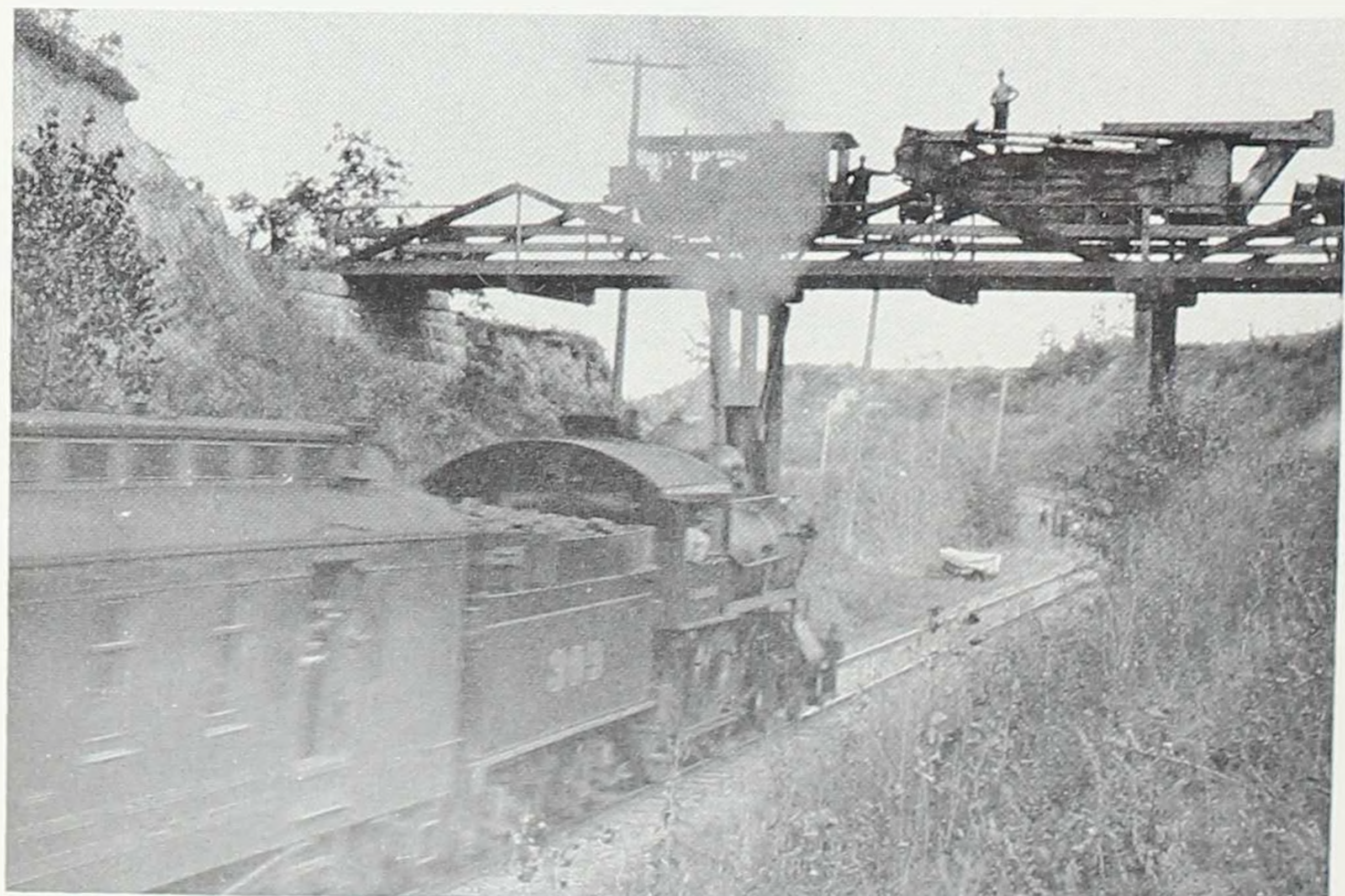
*Mrs. Guy Mills Collection*





*North Western Railway Photo*

Freight train leaving Council Bluffs yards — Chicago-bound.



*Edward H. Meyers Collection*

North Western mail train #3 speeding west of Stratford toward Wall Lake in 1913. Note section hands standing aside while steam tractor operator pauses on bridge to watch train.



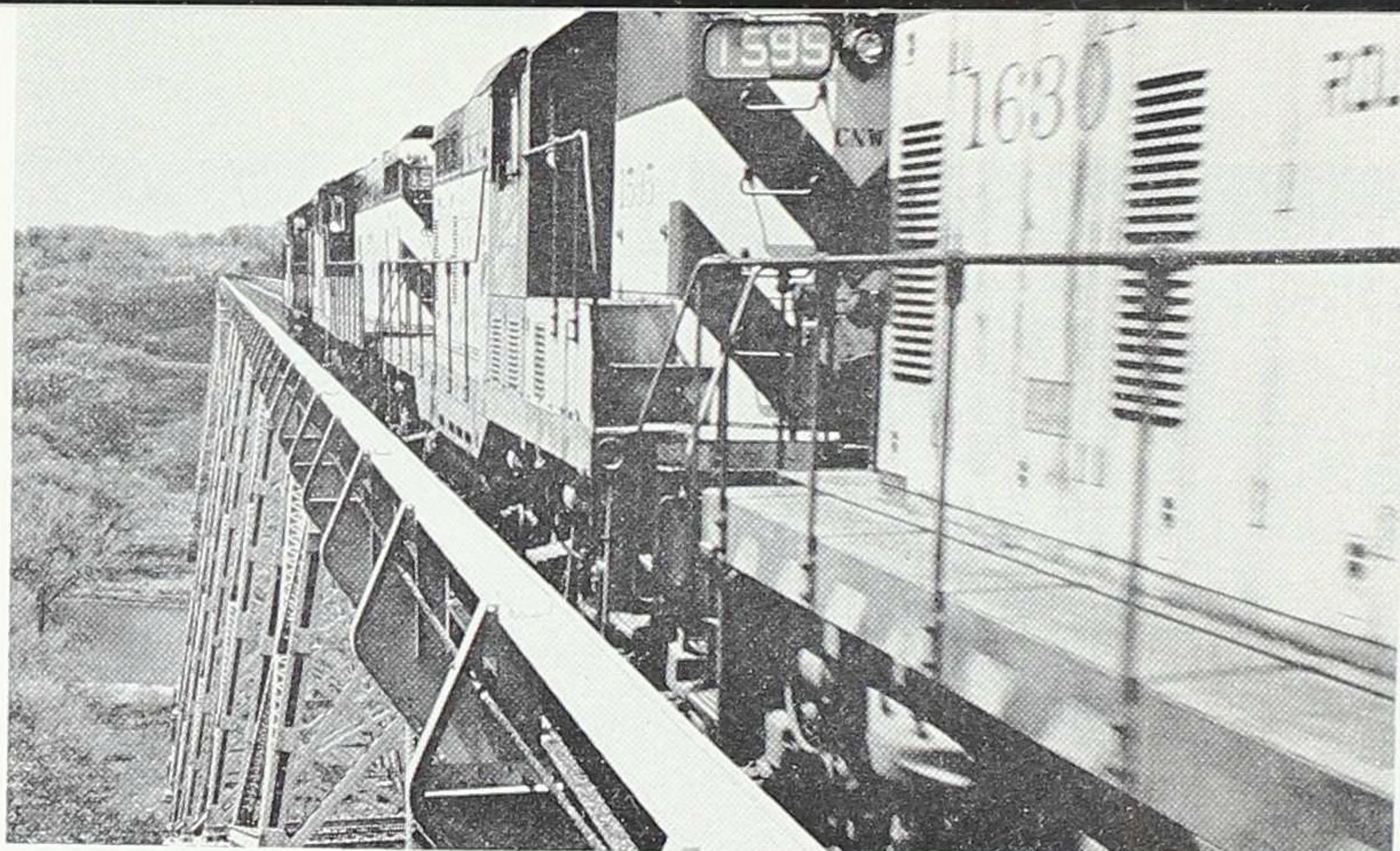
*Edward H. Meyers Collection*

Now leaving on Track One! Five o'clock train ready to leave North Western's stub-end Sioux City station in 1913 — probably the Des Moines local.



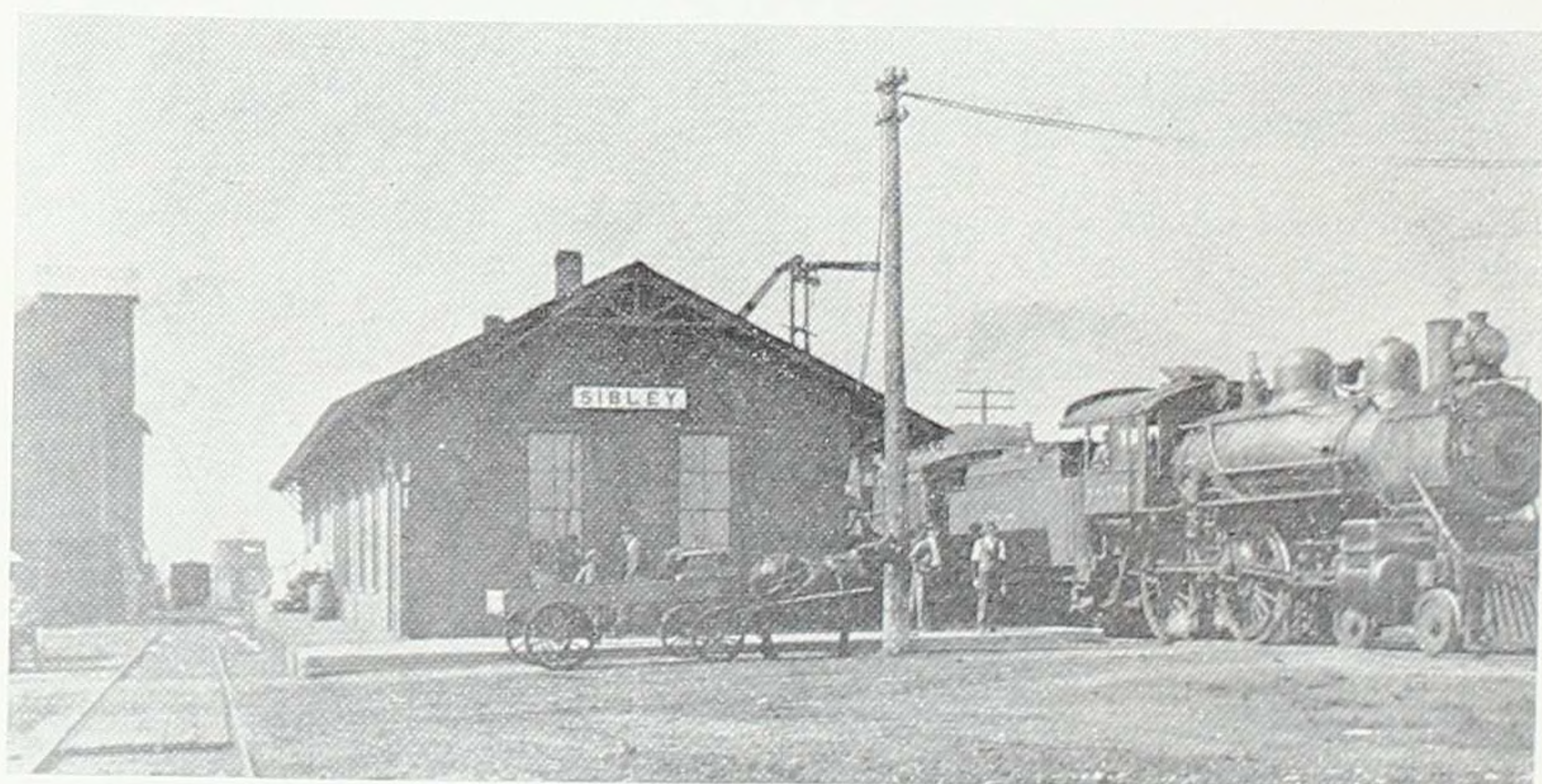
*North Western Railway Photo*

North Western passenger train rounding curve near Council Bluffs.



*North Western Railway Photo*

Time freight crossing Kate Shelley bridge on modern double tracks.

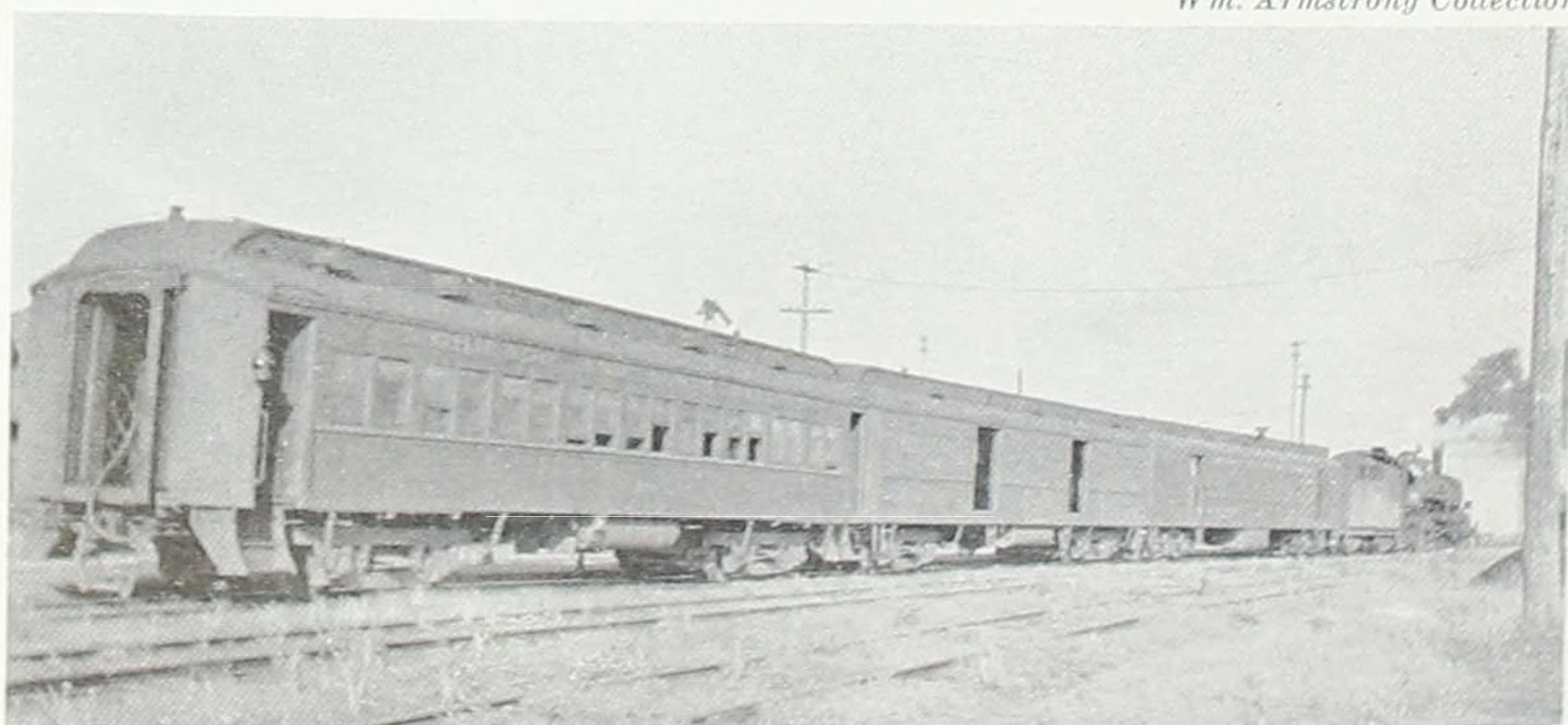


*Basil Koob Collection*

*Above:* High-wheel American type engine at Sibley on Omaha Road in 1908.

*Below:* Typical branch line local during last year (1953) of passenger service on the Hawarden branch at Jewell.

*Wm. Armstrong Collection*





*Edward H. Meyers Collection*

Motor car with coach waiting for the "highball" at Jewell Junction.



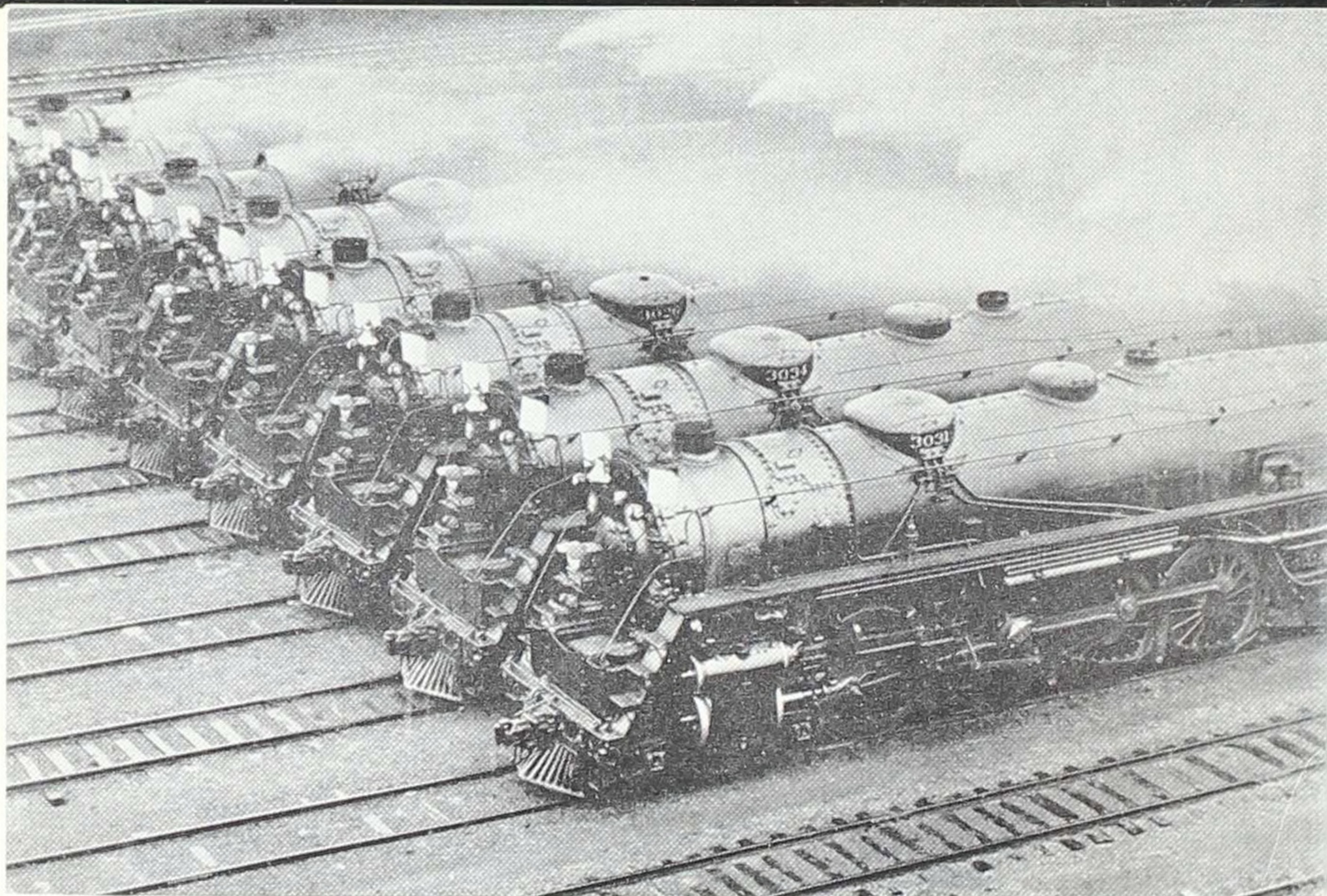
*Wm. Armstrong Collection*

*Above:* Last run of the North American leaving Council Bluffs for the Twin Cities on October 24, 1959.

*Below:* A familiar scene re-enacted in Boone when the Milwaukee Road detoured UP streamliners over the North Western due to mud slide near Dedham in March, 1962.

*Edward H. Meyers Collection*

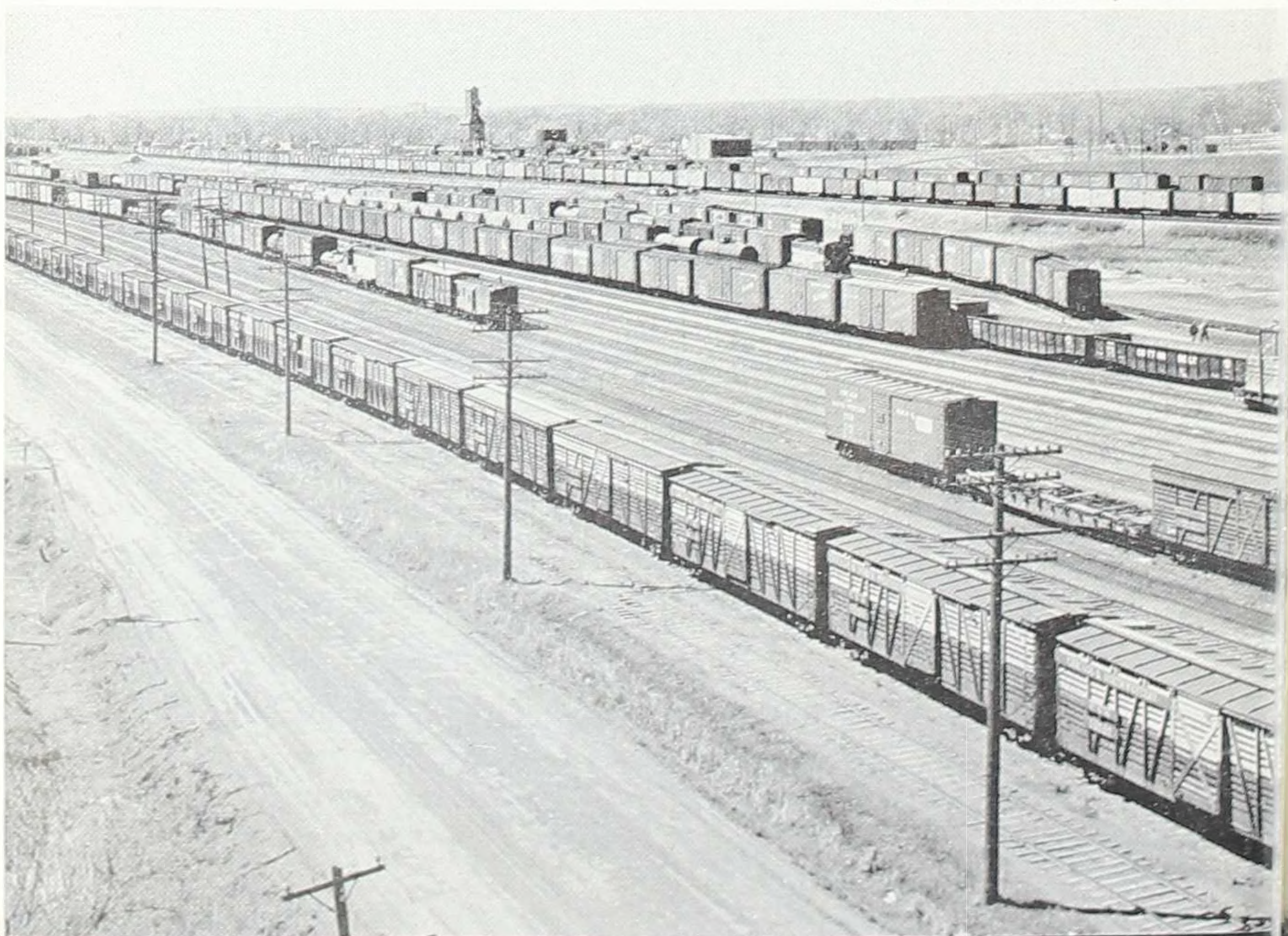




A fleet of the famous Class H engines lined up at Chicago. Built by Baldwin in 1929, they were the pride of the North Western, and were put on display in Iowa and elsewhere before going into regular service.

Chicago and North Western Yards at Council Bluffs.

*North Western Railway Photos*



Blair is said to have laid out more than eighty townsites. He is known to have personally named at least twenty communities in Iowa. Among these are Ames, Belle Plaine and Ogden. The first is named after his friend, backer and Union Pacific official, Oakes Ames; the second is believed to be in honor of his granddaughter, Isabelle Scribner, whose father was Charles Scribner, the publisher; and the last is a tribute to Chicago's first mayor and first president of the North Western, William B. Ogden.

Others include Scranton (Green County), probably named after his two early New Jersey business associates, George W. and Selden T. Scranton; Whiting (Monona County) named for Judge Charles E. Whiting, a local farmer; and Colo (Story County), so called from a child's pronunciation of Carlo, the favorite dog of a person who owned land on which the station was built. All are on the North Western.

Blair was a man of simple tastes. A teetotaler, he inserted clauses in deeds of lots he sold prohibiting the vending or manufacture of liquor. A staunch Presbyterian, Blair, by donating land and money, helped build more than one hundred churches of all communions on his townsites. He is estimated to have given \$5,000,000 to charitable and educational institutions. When Iowa College (now Grinnell) was demolished by the tornado of 1882, Blair contributed to its restoration.

At one time Blair headed sixteen railroads. His Western holdings were scattered in Wisconsin, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Dakota and Texas, to say nothing of Iowa. In spite of being a millionaire, the poverty of his youth made him frugal and almost parsimonious. A story is told of Blair's having had a meal at a restaurant on one of his Iowa lines leased to the North Western. The owner of the eating house told him the price was fifty cents. Blair brought out a quarter instead. After some altercation, the vendor admitted the charge to railroad men was twenty-five cents. "I am a railroad man," snapped Blair. "I own this road!" and he walked out angrily.

A person of remarkable vitality, he is reputed to have taken "two steps at a time" when going upstairs. Attired in a Prince Albert coat, a white waistcoat and a beaver hat, under which he sometimes carried his papers, Blair made many trips to personally supervise his railroad holdings. When in his sixties he used to travel up to 40,000 miles a year. At eighty-five, however, he was obliged to reduce this to 20,000. Never afraid of work, Blair, at ninety-two, was often at his desk at 5:30 a. m. He died in 1899 at ninety-seven.

Blairstown, in Benton County, one of the smallest Iowa towns on the railroad having the largest mileage in the state, honors a man who had come from a tiny village to build one of the biggest Midwestern railroad systems!