

The
PALIMPSEST



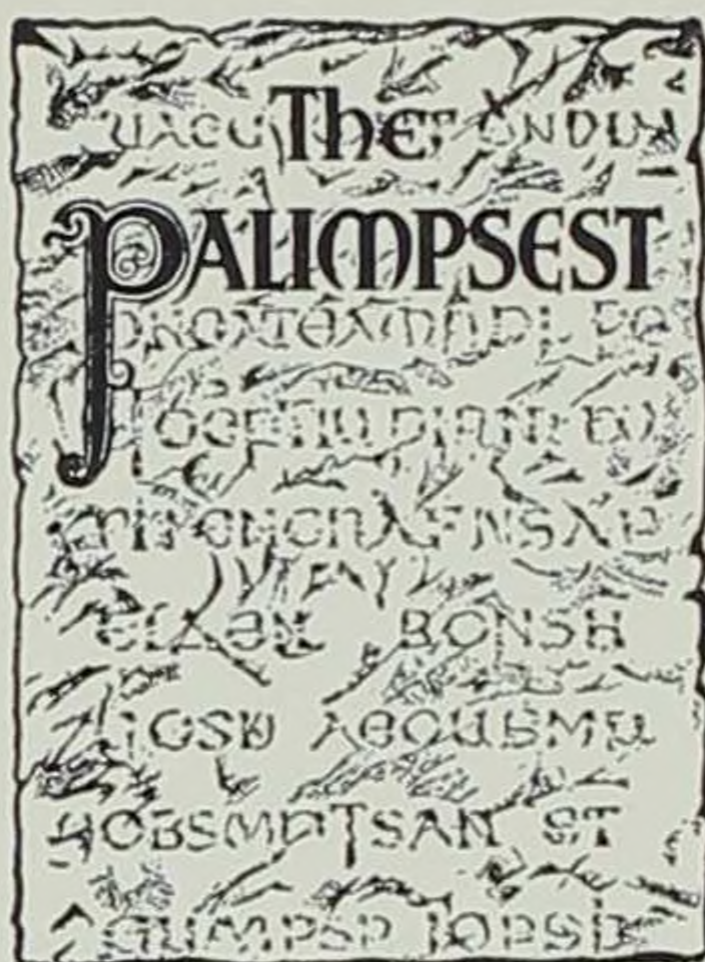
The Illinois Central in Iowa

Published Monthly by

The State Historical Society of Iowa

Iowa City, Iowa

JUNE, 1962



The Meaning of Palimpsest

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the record of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

Contents

THE ILLINOIS CENTRAL IN IOWA

FRANK P. DONOVAN, JR.

Dubuque's First Railroad	265
The Dubuque & Sioux City	271
The Illinois Central Takes Hold	279
Rounding Out the System	289
Main Line — West	295

Illustrations

All illustrations, unless otherwise noted, are from Clifford S. Massoth, Public Relations Officer of the Illinois Central, and other personal railroad fans of Mr. Donovan. Two photos were furnished by Mrs. Guy Mills of Sioux Rapids.

Author

Frank P. Donovan, Jr., is the author of *Mileposts on the Prairie* and he has articles on the Minneapolis & St. Louis, the Chicago Great Western, Interurbans in Iowa, the Manchester & Oneida, Harry Bedwell — Railroad Raconteur, Iowa Railway Historical Museum, all appearing in previous issues of *The Palimpsest*.

ENTERED AS SECOND CLASS MATTER JULY 28 1920 AT THE POST OFFICE AT
IOWA CITY IOWA UNDER THE ACT OF AUGUST 24 1912

PRICE — Included in Membership. Single copies, 25 cents.
MEMBERSHIP — By application. Annual Dues \$3.00
ADDRESS — The State Historical Society, Iowa City, Iowa

THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

VOL. XLIII

ISSUED IN JUNE 1962

No. 6

Copyright 1962 by the State Historical Society of Iowa



Dubuque's First Railroad

In the middle of the nineteenth century the largest towns in Iowa were along the Mississippi River. They were Burlington, Dubuque, Muscatine, and Keokuk in that order. Iowa City, then the capital of the state, had only 1,250 inhabitants; whereas Burlington had 4,082, Dubuque 3,108, Muscatine 2,540, and Keokuk 2,478. It was clearly evident that the Father of Waters was responsible for most of the population of the Hawkeye State.

By 1850, however, far-sighted men in the river towns saw the railroad as a means of fostering travel westward from the Mississippi across the state. Even before this time, the citizens of Dubuque were exhorted not only to span Iowa by rail, but to continue it on to the Pacific Ocean. What is believed to be the first public meeting to promote a railroad to the Pacific was held in Dubuque in 1838. The spokesman was John Plumbe, Jr., who had migrated to Dubuque from the East, where he had worked under the famous civil en-

gineer, Moncure Robinson, in surveying the Allegheny Portage Railroad in Pennsylvania. Plumbe subsequently was a superintendent of a pioneer Virginia railroad. Later he turned to photography, in which he achieved considerable success.

Plumbe envisioned a railroad from Milwaukee to Dubuque, thence westward to the Pacific Coast. He seems to have enlisted very little support, and his name is scarcely remembered today. But in 1838 he did get \$2,000 from Congress to survey a route from Milwaukee to Sinipee, Wisconsin, on the Mississippi above Dubuque. The grant was largely through the efforts of Territorial Delegate George Wallace Jones, later United States Senator from Iowa. Furthermore, Plumbe made a trip to California on his own, which convinced him even more that a transcontinental railroad was feasible.

While John Plumbe was ahead of his time, and was for the most part regarded as an impractical visionary, he planted the germ which culminated in Dubuque's "railroad fever" of the 1850's. Once the germ was planted, others nurtured it. Foremost among these was George Wallace Jones, and his colleague Augustus Caesar Dodge, the first two United States Senators from Iowa, who insisted that the rapidly-building Illinois Central Railroad terminate on the Mississippi River opposite Dubuque. Heretofore the Illinois Central had planned to end its tracks at Galena, Illinois, sev-

enteen miles east of the Mississippi on the Fever River.

Once assured that the Illinois Central would come to Dunleith (known today as East Dubuque), it was up to Dubuquers to build their own railroad. Already plans were hatching for railroads into the hinterlands from Davenport, Burlington, Keokuk, and the Clinton-Lyons area. Iowa newspapers were full of "railroad talk" and Dubuque must not be caught napping.

One by one the business men and leading citizens in Dubuque rallied to the cause. Preliminary meetings were held in which Lucius H. Langworthy, pioneer Dubuque lead miner, acted as spokesman. Hardly less important was Jesse P. Farley, merchant, ex-mayor, and pioneer steamboat builder and operator. These meetings led to the chartering of the Dubuque & Pacific Railroad Company on April 28, 1853.

From the start, several of the Illinois Central's key men were active in promoting Dubuque's first railroad. Farley was elected President and Colonel Roswell B. Mason, Chief Engineer of the Illinois Central, was made Engineer-in-Chief. Other officers included Platt Smith, a prominent Dubuque lawyer, who became Solicitor of the road, and Frederick S. Jesup, a local banker, who was made Treasurer. Among the original incorporators were Robert Schuyler, President of the Illinois Central, and General C. H. Booth, first

mayor of Dubuque and owner of the city's earliest sawmill and its pioneer flour mill. Senator George Wallace Jones, who did so much to foster railroads in Iowa, was elected Chairman of the Board of the Dubuque & Pacific.

Despite the impressive list of important Dubuquers associated with the project, the new company encountered many difficulties. While the people of Dubuque County subscribed to approximately \$250,000 worth of stock, bonds sold as low as 50¢ on the dollar, and land and other collateral was accepted in lieu of cash. By the summer of 1855 there was little to show for its existence except a surveyed route a few miles westward from Dubuque.

On July 31, 1855, Colonel Mason resigned as Chief Engineer, and B. B. Provoost, a Division Engineer on the Illinois Central, succeeded him. At this juncture the "paper" railroad made a contract with the firm of Mason, Bishop & Company, which Colonel Mason headed, to construct the line to Dyersville. Meanwhile the Illinois Central had reached Dunleith, so that railroad was more interested than ever in backing a friendly connection west of the Mississippi.

On October 1, 1855, George Wallace Jones dug the first shovel of earth for the Dubuque & Pacific. The following spring construction went on apace through the rocky, hilly Dubuque County terrain. On September 10, 1856, the first


locomotive, the *Dubuque*, was ferried across the Mississippi from Dunleith, marking the occasion when the first steam engine turned a wheel in northern Iowa. The crude wood-burner was outshopped by the historic firm of Rogers, Ketchum & Grosvenor of Patterson, New Jersey. Not long afterward a second locomotive, the *Jesse P. Farley*, named in honor of the road's president, arrived on the scene.

It was on May 11, 1857, that the first train made the twenty-nine-mile run from Dubuque to Dyersville. The *Jesse P. Farley* pulled an assorted "consist" of passenger coaches and freight cars filled with joyful celebrants. In traveling the unballasted line, the engine jumped the track three times before completing the historic run. James S. Northrup was the conductor while Thomas W. Place pulled the throttle. Place later became chief mechanical officer of the road. When he retired in 1901 the Waterloo roundhouse shopmen presented him with a trim horse and carriage as a tribute to his leadership.

The Panic of 1857 halted construction, and for two years the Dubuque & Pacific had its "end of track" at Earlville, "a crossroads which boasted two houses," eight miles west of Dyersville. Even the road's extensive land grant of 1,162,373 acres (thanks to the efforts of George Wallace Jones) was of little use since it did not become available until the road reached the respective areas stipu-

lated in the grant. Not until a very substantial part of the road was completed would the struggling Dubuque & Pacific realize much from its land sales. Furthermore, what little land there was available along the constructed line brought low prices due to the business depression.

As a result of unfavorable economic conditions, poor credit and lack of significant western terminal, the Dubuque & Pacific defaulted on its bonds and underwent reorganization. But it was still in business, although feeble and halting in operation. In short, it was marking time. Its future was uncertain . . . if, indeed, it had a future.

DUBUQUE & SIOUX CITY RAILROAD			
			
TIME TABLE.			
Moving West.	Names of Stations.	No. of Miles.	Moving East.
11 10	Dubuque		1 50
11 50	Julien	9½	1 10
12 10	Peosta	5	12 50
12 30	Epworth	4½	12 30
12 50	Farley	4	12 10
1 20	Dyersville	6½	11 40
1 50	Earlville	7½	11 10
2 06	Delaware Center	4	10 54
2 30	Arr. at	} Manches'r	10 30
2 45	Leave		10 25
3 15	Masonville	6¾	9 55
3 50	Winthrop	7½	9 20
4 27	Independence	8½	8 43
5 05	Jesup	8½	8 05
5 45	Raymond	8¾	7 25
6 15	Waterloo	6½	6 55
6 40	Cedar Falls	6¼	6 30

Dubuque & Sioux City Railroad

How and why John Edgar Thomson became president of the Dubuque & Pacific in 1859 would provide an interesting chapter in a biography of that great railroad executive. Thomson had built the Pennsylvania Railroad by sound expansion and through such uncanny foresight that for many decades it was known as "The Standard Railroad of the World." And, while Thomson headed the lucrative Pennsylvania, his almost boundless energy spilled over to the weak, ailing, 37-mile long prairie road that was the Dubuque & Pacific.

Perhaps Thomson was put on the Dubuque & Pacific to attract Eastern capital. He may have viewed the potentialities of the Iowa line as a feeder to the Pennsylvania — along with having designs on the Illinois Central. At any rate, his incumbency on the Dubuque & Pacific was short, but it marked the turning point in that road's future. Construction was resumed in the summer of 1859. By the end of the year, track was extended through the thriving town of Manchester to Independence. In the spring of 1860 its rails reached the western border of Buchanan County where a station was erected called "Jesup," named after Morris K. Jesup, brother of Frederick Jesup.

Morris Jesup held many of the Dubuque & Pacific's defaulted bonds and wished to reorganize the road and put it on a sound financial basis. To do this he forced the road into receivership. It was reorganized as the Dubuque & Sioux City Railroad Company and incorporated August 1, 1860. Although Herman Gelpcke was elected president (and he was to be followed by Edward Stimson), it was really Jesup who dominated the company. Jesup was active in its management for twenty-seven years. He held the presidency from 1866 to 1887.

Morris Ketchum Jesup was a God-fearing Connecticut Yankee who, after a meager education in New York City, entered the employ of Rogers, Ketchum & Grosvenor locomotive builders. After rising to become manager of their New York office he went into partnership in forming a small business dealing with railroad supplies on a commission. Later he switched to banking and with John S. Kennedy formed the house of Jesup, Kennedy & Company. This firm, specializing in railroad "paper," became very prosperous.

A person of varied talents and wide interests, Jesup was active in Protestant church work, in the study of natural science, and in numerous philanthropic organizations. He also helped finance Robert Peary's Arctic expeditions, but died before Admiral Peary discovered the North Pole. Cape Morris Jesup in Greenland was named for him.

Jesup saw to it that the Dubuque & Sioux City had funds to push westward. Waterloo soon rejoiced to the sound of the engine whistle. By the end of March, 1861, the railhead was established at Cedar Falls, six miles beyond Waterloo.

Cedar Falls had patiently waited for the railroad for seven years. Its 1,600 inhabitants were alternately elated or dejected by its progress or lack of progress. A cheerful note in the Cedar Falls *Gazette* brought joy to the people in the Cedar River Valley. Periods of inactivity and scant news of railroad construction elicited doubts and depression. In July, 1860, the Dubuque *Herald* made the prediction that trains could be expected in Cedar Falls in ninety days. The news was relayed with enthusiasm. Later the *Gazette* set the date at December 1st. But there were delays — winter came and went — and still no trains.

The spring of 1861, however, found crews grading the line, laying rails and building the Cedar Falls station. With this tangible assurance of a railroad the whole town prepared to greet the Dubuque & Sioux City with the most elaborate preparations ever planned in that community. A preliminary ovation would welcome the first train at five o'clock in the afternoon on Easter Monday, April 1, 1861. But the wonderful city-wide celebration proclaiming a new era for Cedar Falls was slated for April 11th.

The first train arrived on schedule with Engineer Cawley at the throttle and Conductor Northrup punching tickets in the coaches. Amid incessant whistling and continuous bell-ringing the locomotive steamed into town. When the train stopped, Chief Marshal John Milton Overman gave the signal for the bugler to sound reveillé. Then the train crew was escorted up town to the strain of patriotic airs befitting visiting nobility. At the American House the railroaders were toasted and dined.

Virtually every able-bodied citizen had a hand in the grand celebration. Men and boys ranged the river banks for cedar boughs. Women and girls wove these evergreens into elaborate festoons. The festoons lined the streets and also served as a triumphal arch spanning the railroad tracks under which the engine would go to receive a giant cedar crown to be placed around its smokestack.

To this crown were attached pennants eulogizing the men who built the line, and extolling the virtues of the railroad. On the pennants were such inscriptions as "Herman Gelpcke, the Fuel and Steam of the D. and S.C.R.R."; "Edward Stimson, Esq., The Tender of the D. and S.C.R.R."; "Platt Smith, the Driving Wheels of the D. and S.C.R.R."; "The Iron Horse, the Best Blue Blood of Modern Stock"; and "Ladies of Dubuque and Cedar Falls, The True Moral Conductors on the

Great Railroad of Life"; "Iowa, the Granary of the West"; and "Cedar Falls, the Paradise of the West."

The reception committee was composed of 128 representative citizens headed by Chief Marshal Overman. It also included Mayor J. F. Jaquith and Master of Ceremonies Sheldon Fox. In spite of inclement weather the celebration was staged with railroad-like reliability. When the locomotive came to a slow stop the big cedar lei was lowered so it encircled the puffing smokestack. Through the mud and rain a cavalcade of carriages and wagons met the train and took the honored guests to the Overman Block. Here they listened to welcoming speeches, to which Platt Smith responded on behalf of the railroad. In the evening they repaired to the American House for dinner accompanied by the Germania orchestra from Dubuque.

At ten o'clock the celebrants danced in Overman Hall, dimly lit by candles and swaying kerosene lamps, and redolent of the ever-present cedars. The party is said to have lasted until sun-up. Among those who could not stay to the end was Editor George D. Perkins of the *Gazette*. He left early to go down to the editorial office on the first floor, light a tallow candle and write as follows:

The Railroad is completed, the cars running regularly into Cedar Falls, the event so ardently wished for, so long

expected, yet so long deferred, the advent of "the Iron Horse" into our city is at length realized, and the "Metropolis of the Great Cedar Valley and its Tributaries" is bound with iron bands to the great commercial marts of the world.

The Civil War ended further construction except for a feeder line called the Cedar Falls & Minnesota Railroad Company, incorporated April 16, 1858. It was controlled by Platt Smith, Roswell B. Mason and others largely associated with the Dubuque & Sioux City. Most of the stock was held locally. Peter Melendy of Cedar Falls, an avid railroad enthusiast, and William McCoy, were given the contract "to grade and tie" the first ten miles of line. This was between Cedar Falls and Janesville. They also subcontracted the remainder of the road to Waverly. Messrs. Melendy and McCoy fulfilled their terms of the contract for the grading, but the company failed. In his autobiography Melendy tersely relates:

McCoy and I took contract on the Cedar Falls and Minnesota Railroad, from Cedar Falls to Waverly to Grade, Bridge, Culvert and Pile—on the 29th day of September, 1860. Company failed and we lost \$3000.

Later the road was reorganized. After many delays it was completed to Waverly the latter part of 1864.

Construction crews and tracklayers advanced rapidly west from Cedar Falls following the close of the Civil War. By June, 1865, rails were

spiked to ties in Boyd; by October trains were running to Ackley. On June 1, 1866, through service was inaugurated from Dubuque to Iowa Falls, 143 miles from the Mississippi. The fledgling railroad now was almost halfway across the state.

On each train came an influx of hearty immigrants: settlers from New England and the eastern states, homesteaders from the central states, sturdy foreigners from the Scandinavian countries, and a heterogeneous mixture of newcomers from England, Ireland, and Scotland.

While the Dubuque & Sioux City was plodding slowly westward, other roads were racing across Iowa to Council Bluffs and Omaha. The first transcontinental railroad was nearing completion with Council Bluffs as its eastern terminus. The road which won the race across Iowa to meet the Union Pacific would more than likely get most of the traffic and be a favored connection. At different periods during the spectacular contest to reach Council Bluffs first, the Burlington, the North Western, and the Rock Island forged steadily westward in their effort to win the prize.

Back in Chicago a railroad president sat in his office greatly disturbed by this turn of events. He was John M. Douglas, the new head of the Illinois Central. The year 1867 was a trying one, for the Illinois Central had come through the Civil War badly battered and almost bankrupt. Moreover,

the road's line west was a big disappointment to him. Three great railroads were rushing to Council Bluffs, and his own Illinois Central was marking time at the Mississippi. Its Iowa connection was accessible only by ferry; and the Dubuque & Sioux City's rails petered out on the prairie scarcely halfway across the state. To be sure, there were some friendly men on the Dubuque & Sioux City board, but the Illinois Central had only a nominal interest in the property. What if a competing line gained control of the Iowa road? The Illinois Central's route from Freeport to Dunleith would wither and die. The predicament is summed up by Carlton J. Corliss in his *Main Line of Mid-America — The Story of the Illinois Central*:

. . . it was learned on good authority that Jesup and associates had lost interest in completing the road to Sioux City and were flirting with the idea of disposing of their holdings to a rival railroad company. It seemed almost certain that if the Illinois Central did not take steps to gain control of the Iowa lines another Chicago railroad would do so, thus depriving the Company of its most logical and profitable western connection and practically shutting it out of northern Iowa.

After carefully studying the problem and conferring with associates, John Douglas determined it was time for the Illinois Central to step in and complete the Dubuque & Sioux City to the Missouri River.

The Illinois Central Takes Hold

The first step in the Illinois Central's western program was to lease the Dubuque & Sioux City. It would then be able to control its policies and could expedite construction to Sioux City. Accordingly, on October 1, 1867, the Dubuque & Sioux City (including the Waverly branch) was leased to the Illinois Central for twenty years. The agreement stipulated the IC was to pay 35 per cent of the Dubuque & Sioux City's gross earnings for the first ten years of the contract and 36 per cent for the remainder of the lease.

Working closely with the Illinois Central management was Platt Smith, vice president of the Iowa road. He was also instrumental in forming a subsidiary, the Iowa Falls & Sioux City Railroad Company, at the time the IC lease became effective, acquiring with it the franchise, right of way, and land grants of the Dubuque & Sioux City west of Iowa Falls to Sioux City.

To insure speedy completion of the road across Iowa, the energetic John I. Blair, of Blairstown, New Jersey, was made head of the new company. Blair was characterized as "a human dynamo let loose in railway-mad Iowa." He built the Chicago & North Western to Council Bluffs months ahead

of schedule and was by common consent just the man for the job.

Meanwhile, concerted efforts were made to resurrect plans for a bridge across the Mississippi at Dubuque. Back in 1857 the Illinois legislature had granted a charter to the Dunleith & Dubuque Bridge Company for the purpose. But the Panic of 1857, the Civil War, and lack of funds left the project dormant. On April 8, 1867, however, the bridge company was reincorporated under the direction of William Boyd Allison, the able United States Senator from Iowa, who resided in Dubuque. Others associated with the enterprise were Platt Smith, Colonel R. B. Mason, and Joseph F. Tucker, general freight agent of the Illinois Central.

Andrew Carnegie, noted steelman and formerly a Pennsylvania Railroad division superintendent, was awarded the contract to build a new span. He, as head of the Keystone Bridge Company, while not the lowest bidder, had agreed to meet the minimum bid. It came about in this manner: the lowest bidder specified cast iron in the structure, whereas Carnegie's firm advocated wrought iron. To clinch the contract, Carnegie used all the arguments he could muster. He pointed out that if the bridge was hit by a boat, the cast iron would break, whereas the wrought iron in all probability would just bend. In his autobiography Andrew Carnegie writes:

One of the directors, the well-known Perry [Platt] Smith, was fortunately able to enforce my argument by stating to the board that what I said was undoubtedly the case about cast iron. The other night he had run his buggy in the dark against a lamp-post which was of cast iron, and the lamp-post had broken to pieces. Am I to be censured if I had little difficulty here in recognizing something akin to the hand of Providence, with Perry [Platt] Smith the manifest agent? "Ah, gentlemen," I said, "there is the point. A little more money and you could have had the indestructible wrought iron and your bridge would stand against any steamboat. We never have built and we never will build a cheap bridge. Ours don't fail."

The contract went to Carnegie.

Work began on the structure in January, 1868, and it was completed by December. The original bridge was 1,760 feet long, 16 feet wide, and consisted of seven spans, including a 360-foot draw span. Curiously enough, the cost of the steel bridge as contracted was \$570,900, or slightly less than half of the estimated \$1,200,000, which the bridge officials had first anticipated. Total cost, however, including tracklaying, approaches and betterments is carried in the valuation records as \$1,050,643.49.

The Illinois Central originally had about one-quarter interest in the bridge firm, but in 1888 stock control was effected. It was not until 1946, however, that the Illinois Central purchased all the stock and bonds. The bridge was rebuilt at

the turn of the century. During this time one span was eliminated by a "fill" on the Dubuque side near the city's historic Shot Tower. This shortened the length of the structure by 225 feet.

With the spanning of the Mississippi, rails and supplies were more readily moved to extend the track toward Sioux City. On August 16, 1869, regular train service was established between Chicago and Fort Dodge. While work was progressing westward, construction crews were pushing the rails eastward from Sioux City.

Although John I. Blair was always the dominant factor in building the line, he was aided by J. E. Ainsworth, who had charge of construction. Blair not only built railroads, he also named numerous towns along the line. What is more, he formed townsite companies to encourage the sale of lots and foster development of new communities. In naming towns, Blair drew on his family, his friends and his business associates. Aurelia in Cherokee County is named for his pretty daughter Aurelia Ann; and Marcus in the same county derives its name from his son Marcus L., who died in 1873.

Blair is also credited with naming Remsen and LeMars, both in Plymouth County. The former gets its name from Dr. William Remsen Smith, a pioneer Sioux City physician and a friend of Blair's. On the other hand, LeMars is so named because an excursion party could not agree on

what to call an end-of-track locale. Blair had arranged a trip to the westernmost part of the unfinished line and offered to let the ladies on the train name the new settlement. Finally, one lady suggested the place be spelled out by using the initial of each woman's Christian name. This resulted in a variety of spellings including "Selmar" and "LeMars." The majority favored "LeMars," and Blair readily consented to that name.

It is fitting that the two Iowa railroads on which John Blair built the most track should each have a town named in his honor. They are Blairsburg in Hamilton County on the Illinois Central, and Blairstown in Benton County on the Chicago & North Western. Both are on the main lines of the respective railroads crossing the state.

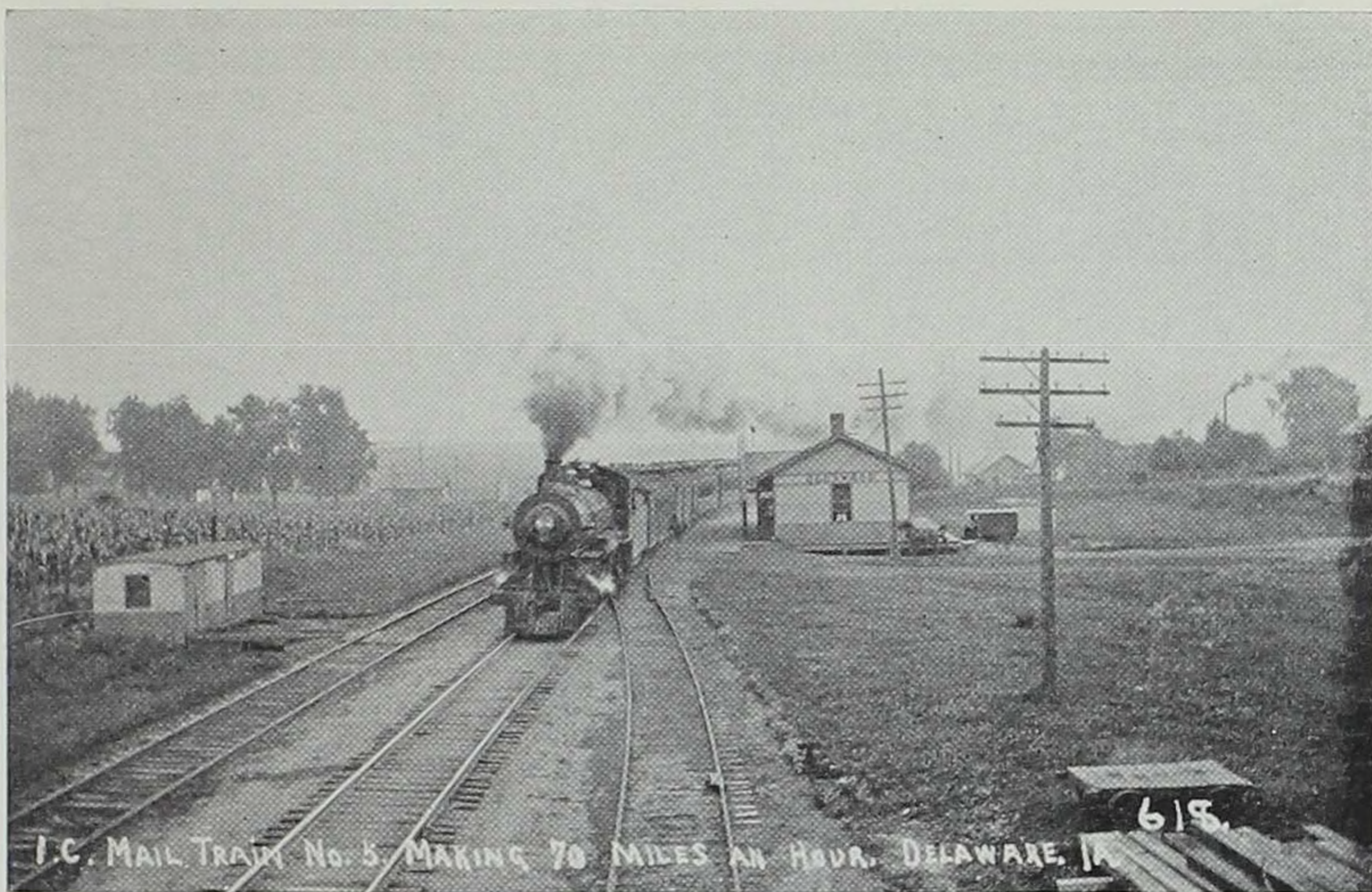
Returning to the Iowa Falls & Sioux City project, the two construction crews met on July 8, 1870, at a point known as the "Sag" (Milepost 431.5), about three miles west of the Storm Lake depot. A "golden spike" was driven to signify completion of the 184-mile Iowa Falls-Sioux City line. Blair and his crews had built more miles in two years than his predecessors had done in the entire previous history of the trans-Iowa undertaking.

Why, it may be asked, had Sioux City been selected as the terminus when Council Bluffs was the loadstone to so many railroads running out of Chicago? Part of the answer lies in the Act of

1862, which empowered the Union Pacific to build a road to Sioux City. It was to run from a point on the Union Pacific main line near Fort Kearney, 249 miles west of Omaha in Nebraska Territory. But a subsequent Act in 1864 amended the original provision and released the Union Pacific from its obligation to build the road.

That same year the Sioux City & Pacific Railroad was organized in Dubuque to link Sioux City with the Union Pacific. Among its directors were such Dubuque men as Platt Smith and William B. Allison. The dynamic John I. Blair was president. Early in 1868 a line was built along the east bank of the Missouri River from Sioux City to a point called Missouri Valley Junction, near Council Bluffs, on the main stem of the Chicago & North Western. The Sioux City and Pacific was subsequently taken over by North Western interests, and it is part of that system today.

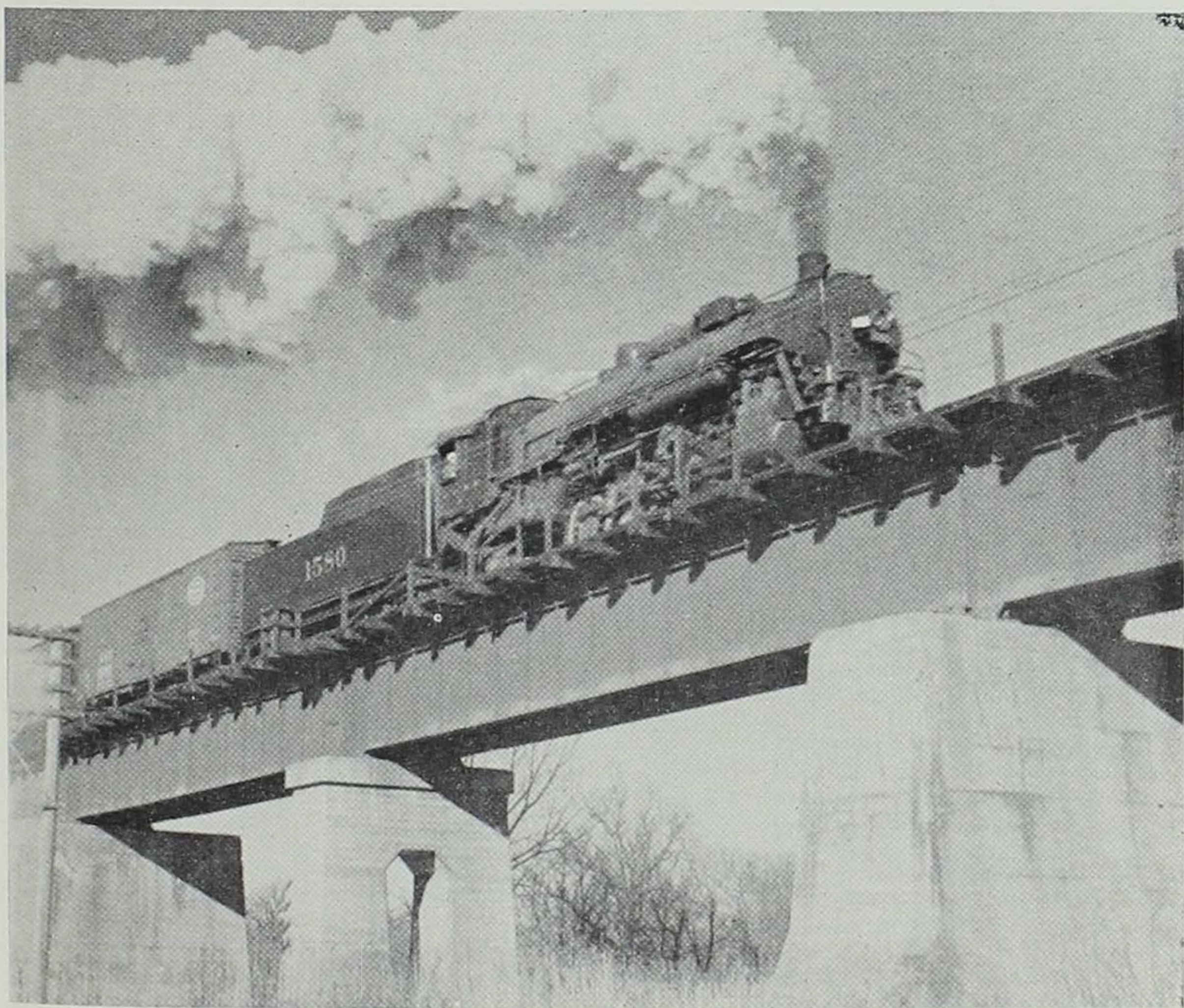
Many thought that Sioux City ultimately would rival Council Bluffs and Omaha as a transcontinental gateway. For this reason the Illinois Central aggressively fostered construction of its affiliated lines in Iowa. Naturally, too, Platt Smith, John I. Blair and others were also interested in promoting Sioux City as a gateway. While it was an important western town, Sioux City never seriously vied with Omaha as a significant transcontinental route. Thanks to the coming of the railroads, however, it grew from a frontier outfitting post for



I.C. MAIL TRAIN No. 5, MAKING 70 MILES AN HOUR, DELAWARE, IA.

J. B. Hughes: Vander Maas Collection

Illinois Central mail train at Delaware.



Basil Koob Collection

Mikado type locomotive crossing Boone River bridge east of Webster City.

FAC-SIMILE OF FIRST TIME CARD EVER ISSUED ON THIS BRANCH OF THE ILLINOIS CENTRAL RY.)

Dubuque & Pacific Railroad.

TIME TABLE NO. 1.

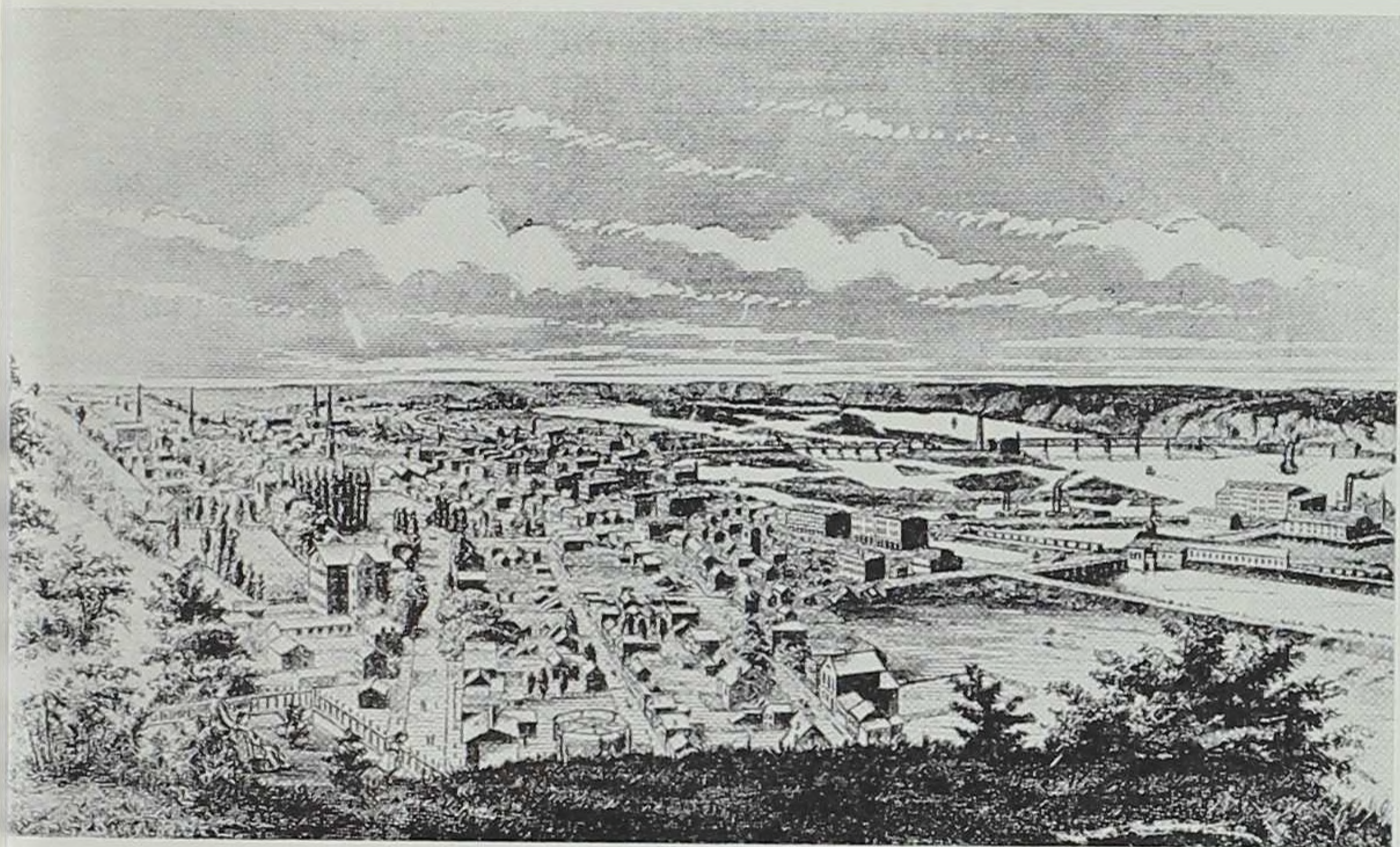
The Accommodation train will, where practicable, switch for the mail train.	Trains Moving West.		Names of Stations.	Trains Moving East.		The Full Faced Figures denote passing places. The Red Flag or Lantern denotes danger and must not be passed. Red and White Flag, or Green Lantern denotes caution—run slow.
	Mall Train	Accommodation Train		Mall Train.	Accommodation Train	
	7 A. M.	3 P. M.	Dubuque.	5 P. M.	11 A. M.	
	8 A. M.	4 P. M.	Julien.	4 P. M.	10 A. M.	
	9:20 A. M.	4:20 P. M.	Caledonia.	3:30 P. M.	9:25 A. M.	
	9 A. M.	5 P. M.	Epworth.	3:05 P. M.	9 A. M.	
	9:25 A. M.	5:25 P. M.	Farley.	2:35 P. M.	9:30 A. M.	
	10 A. M.	6 P. M.	Dyersville	2 P. M.	8 A. M.	

Any damage the Engine, Tender, or Train may sustain by neglect of instructions, or carelessness of the Engineer, the net cost of repairs of the same will be charged to him, and the amount deducted from his wages. The same will hold good against the Conductor for any damage the Train, Engine or Tender may sustain by his carelessness or neglect of duty. The whistle must not be used except in extreme cases of danger, in giving the necessary signals, and on approaching stations. Great care must be observed in approaching Public Crossings to reduce the speed and commence ringing the bell at least eighty rods from the crossings. Each train will wait on the other at regular passing places, thirty minutes after the arrival time, and then proceed, keeping the thirty minutes good until the expected time is passed. Conductors will attend personally with their men to making up their own trains, which must be done in the most careful manner, so as not to injure the cars. Being that the road is not fenced and no cow-catchers, Engineers must keep a sharp lookout for cattle, and in no case run so as to risk the safety of the Train, the making of time now being only a secondary object. Let your motto be: "Safe first and fast afterwards." Engineers with their firemen will be on hand in time to oil their machine, see that they are provided with all the Tools and Fixtures required by the Regulations, in good order and have their engine in position ready to take their train at least twenty minutes before their advertised time for starting. In the absence of the regular Switching Engine, the Through Engines shall make up their own trains. Conductors will make it their duty to provide themselves with a Switch Key, Time Table, and all the Rules and Instructions regulating the running of trains and the safety of the Road, all of which may be had by applying at the Superintendent's office. Conductors will be very particular to see that the Bell or Whistle Cord is always properly attached before leaving a station. Engineers will be responsible for any damage that may accrue from obstructions that may interfere with the free working of the Cord in passing over the Tender, &c. It shall also be their duty, in case the Cord should become detached while running to reattach it immediately. Foremen of Construction Trains will have at all times a trusty man placed with a Red Flag at least 1,000 feet from the extreme point of their working, in the direction of the approaching Train, and when the place of switching is in the direction that approaching Trains are moving, they must continue their work until the expected train is in sight, and then switch as soon as possible. When their switching place is in the direction of the approaching Train, they must continue their work until the expected Train is due at that point. Men in charge of the Track and Bridges will keep well-posted on the time of the arrival of the Trains at the place they are working, and be very careful to see that the Track is safe for the passage of Trains. If there is any doubt, a trusty man must be sent with a Red Flag at least 1,000 feet from the point of danger, in the direction of the approaching Train, and under no circumstances to leave his post until the arrival of the expected train, or until the Track is safe. If it is only required that the train shall run slow, send out a Red and White flag, which is a signal of Caution, and a Red flag a signal of Danger, stopping the train.

May 11, 1857.

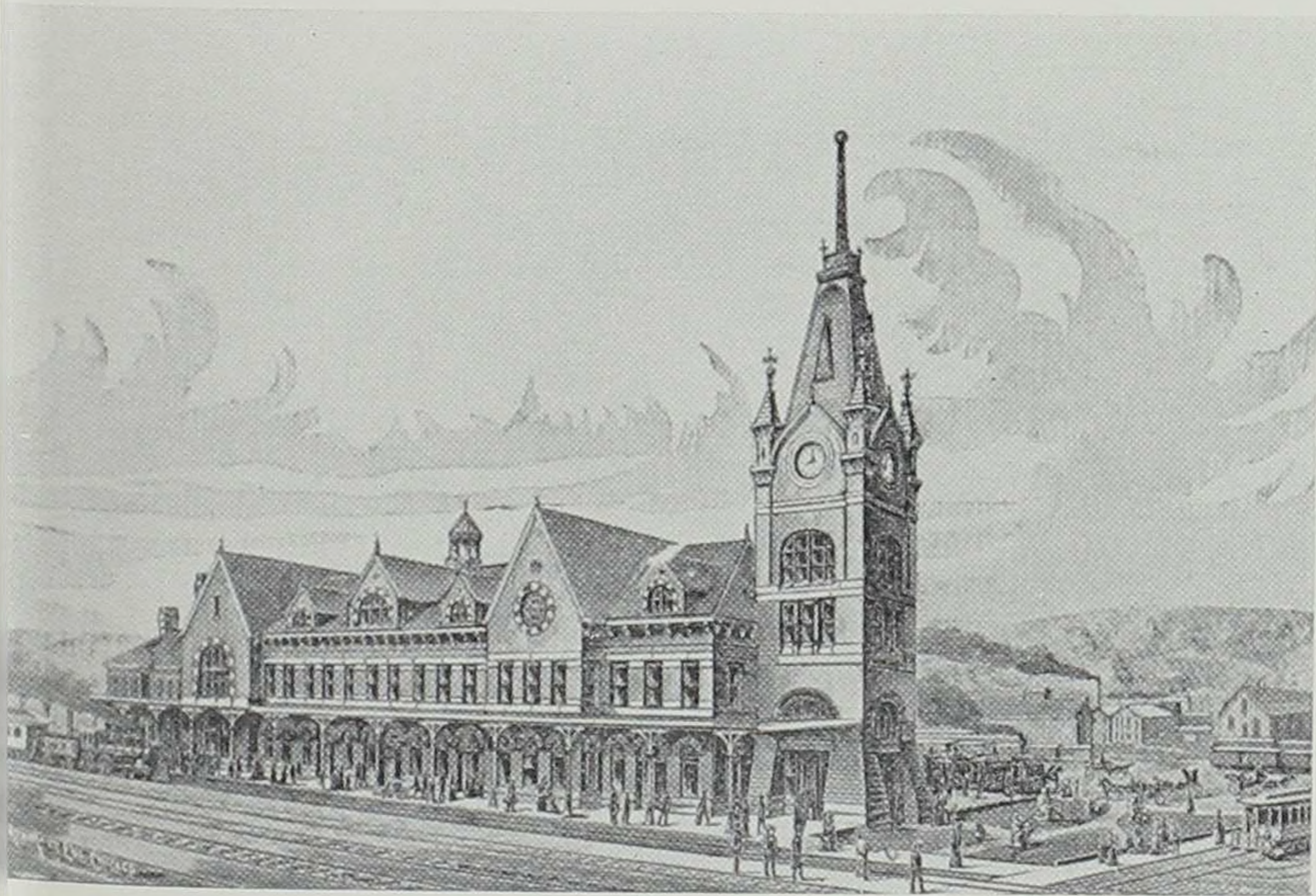
D. F. TTERER, Supt.

Courtesy Illinois Central



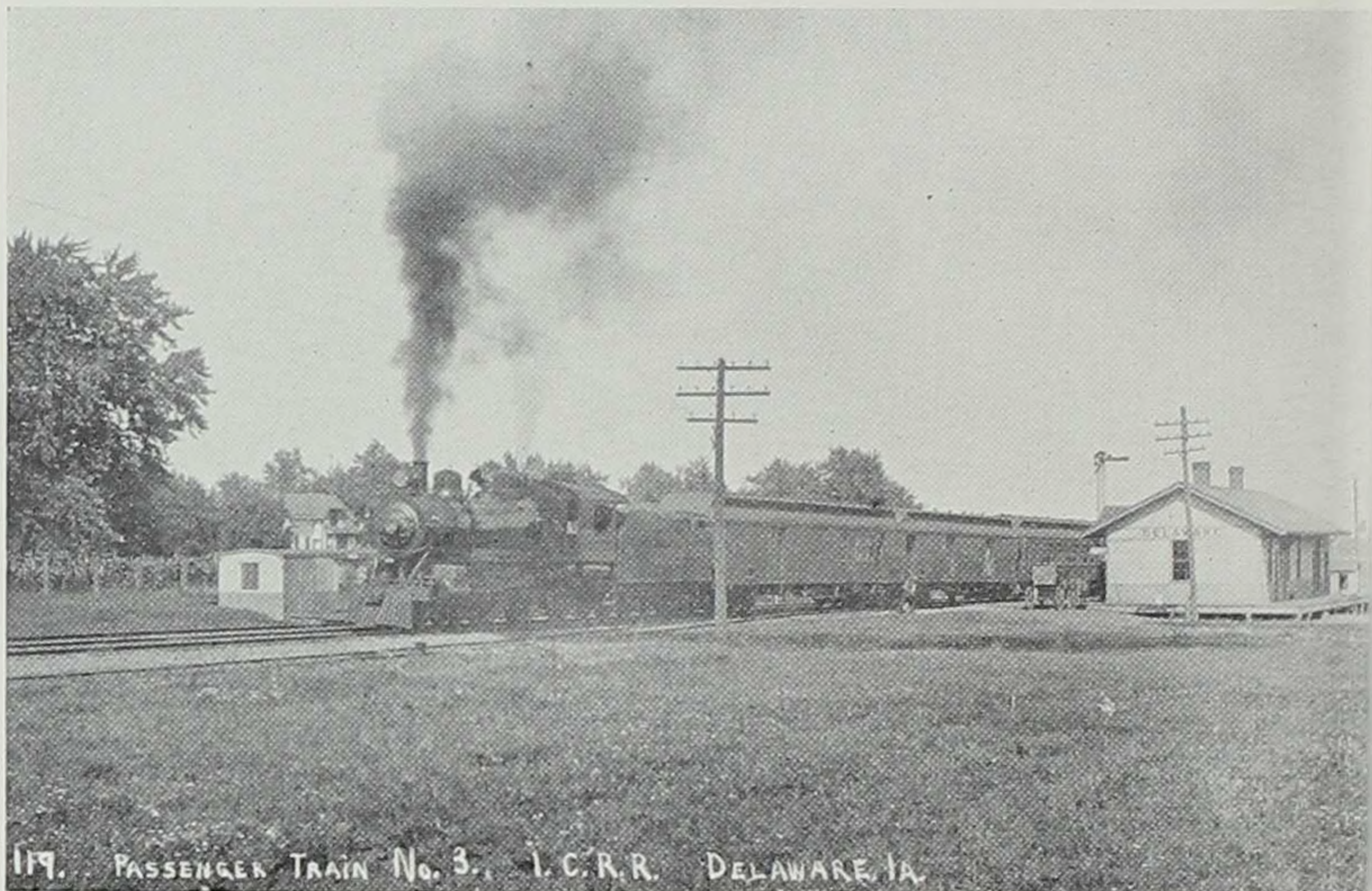
Alex Simplot, artist: Courtesy Illinois Central

Dubuque in 1872 showing Illinois Central bridge crossing the Mississippi River on the right.



Courtesy Illinois Central

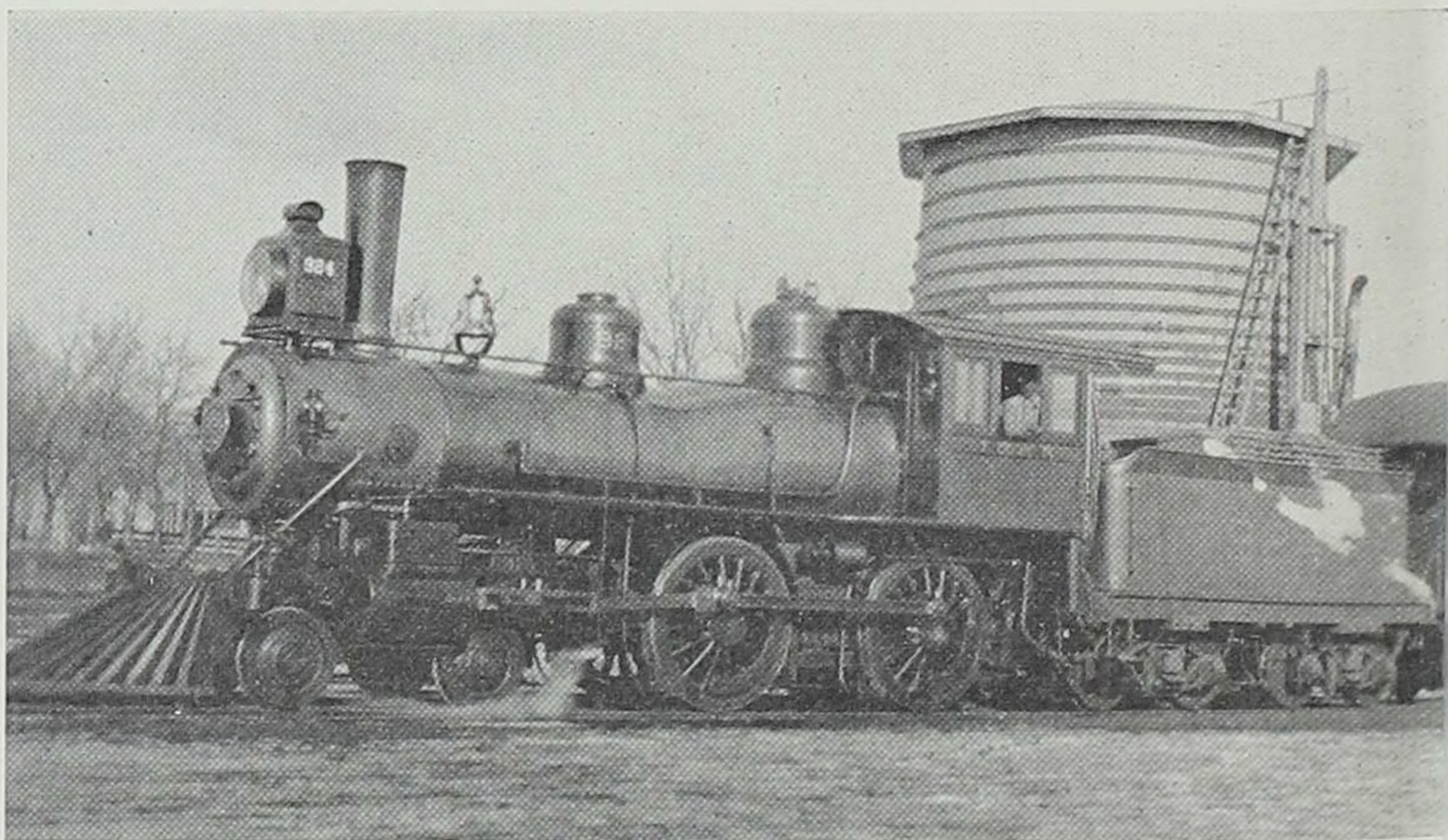
Old Illinois Central depot at Dubuque.



119. PASSENGER TRAIN No. 3. I. C. R. R. DELAWARE, IA.

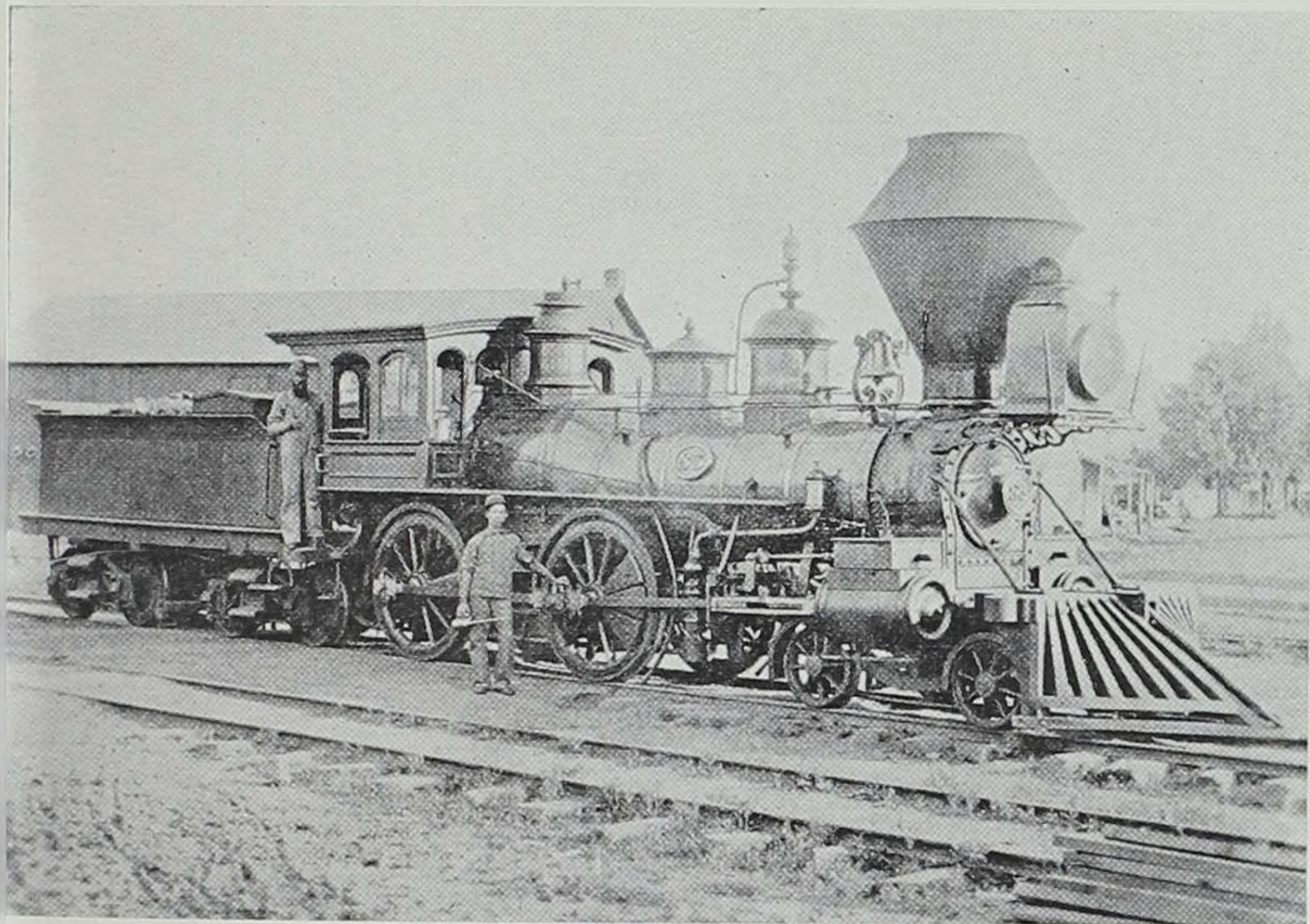
J. B. Hughes: Vander Maas Collection

Passenger train No. 3 at Delaware.



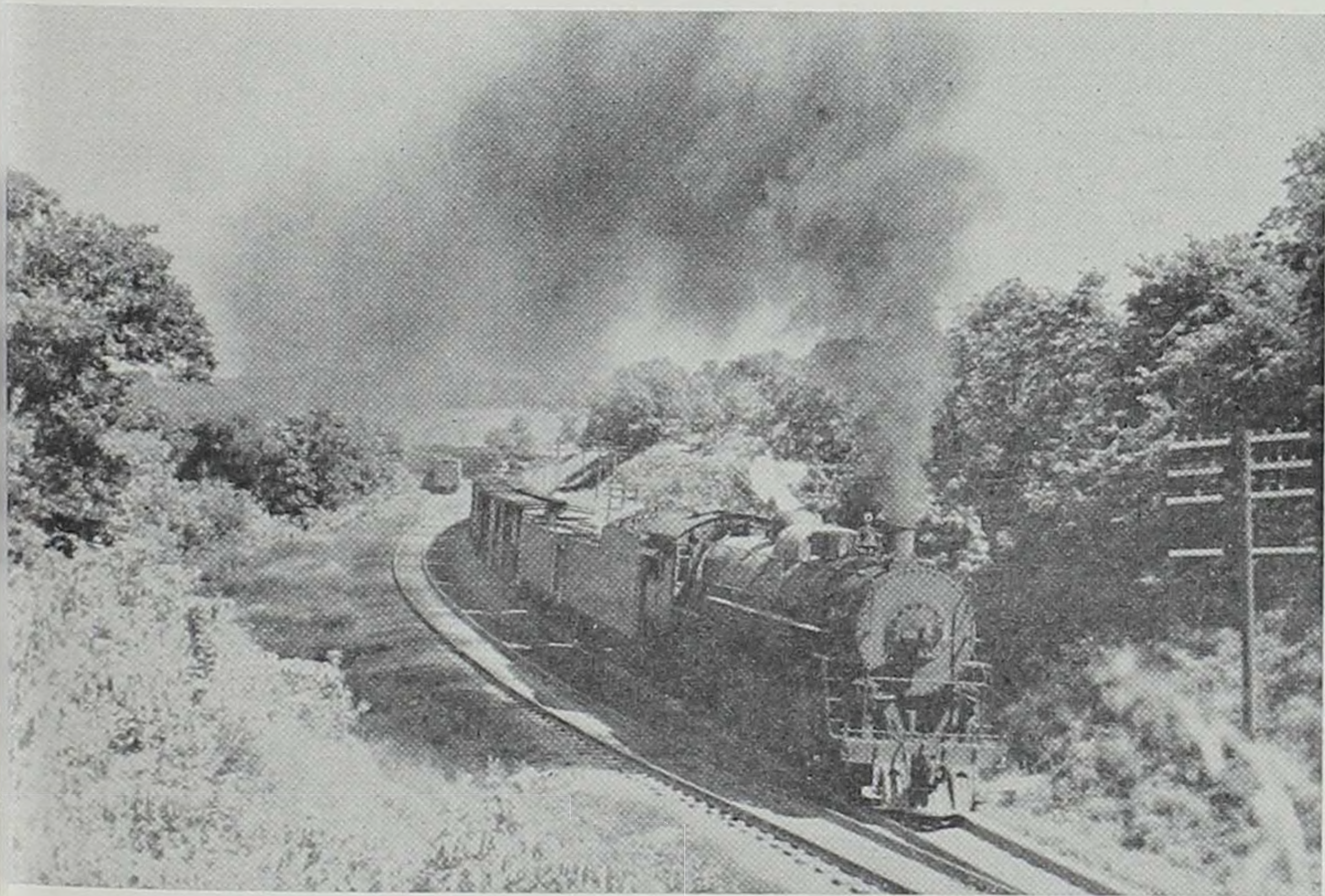
Edward H. Meyers Collection

American type passenger engine at Webster City in 1900.



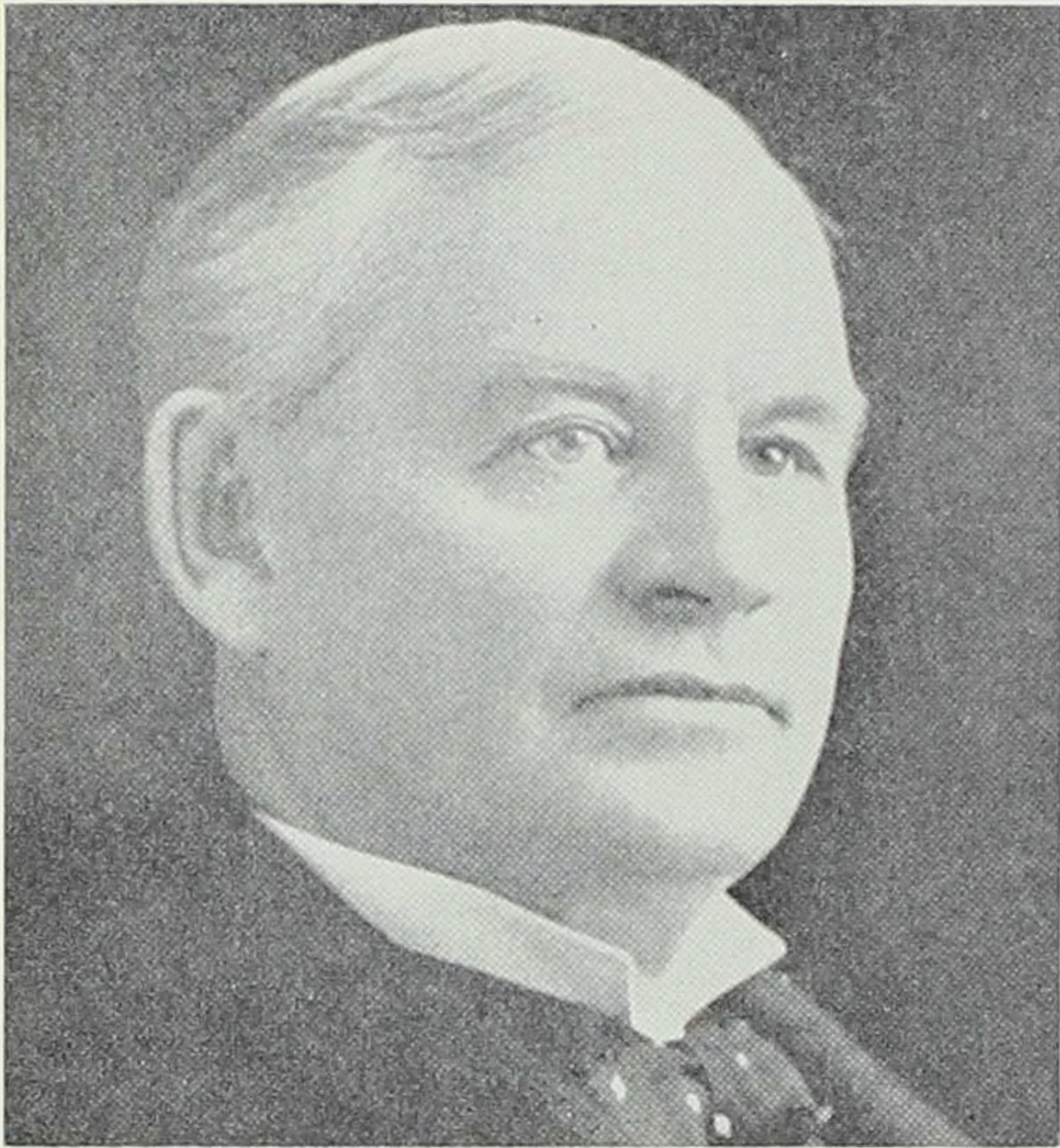
R. J. Levis Collection

Early locomotive at Fort Dodge in 1871.



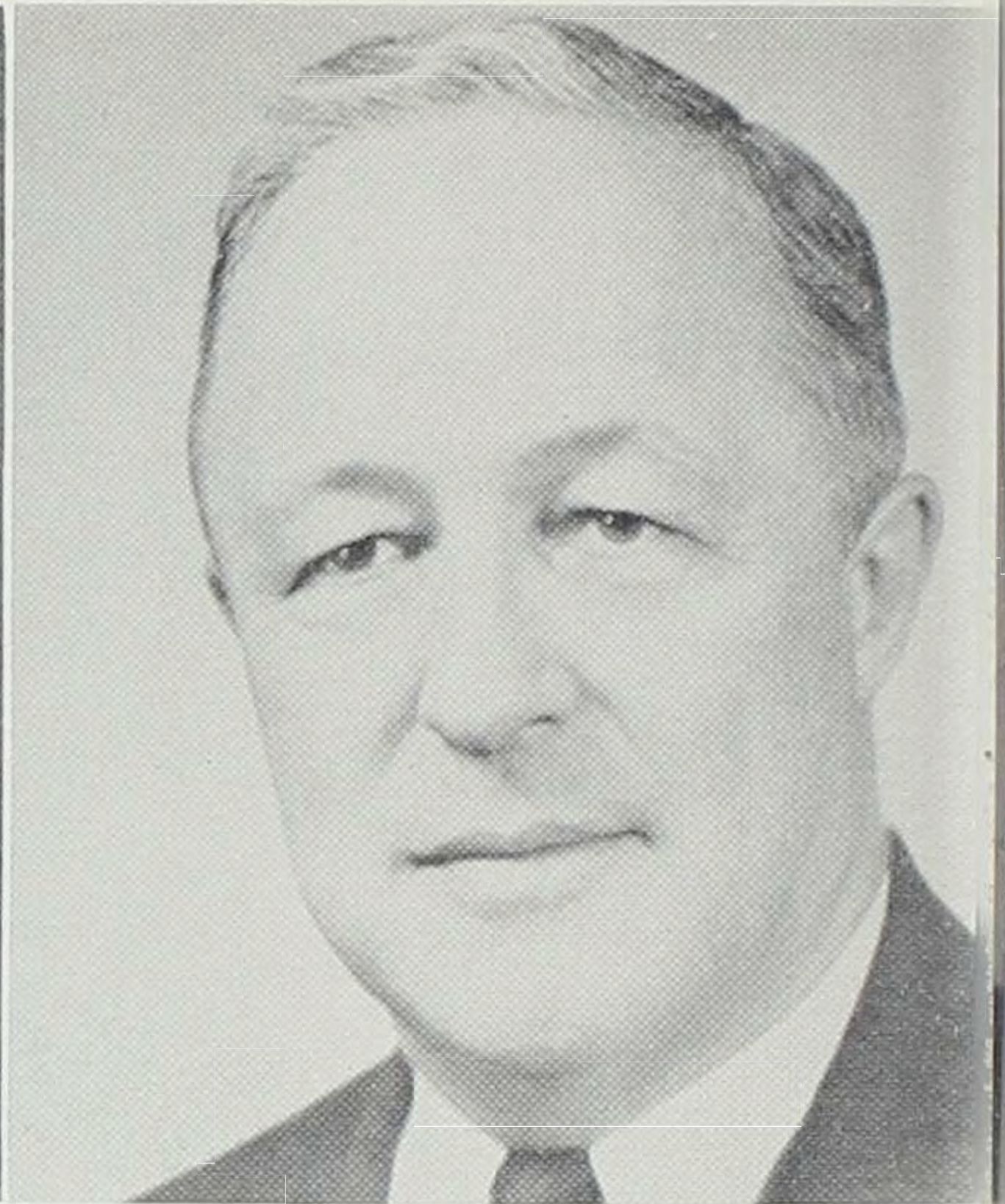
Basil Koob Collection

Eastbound meat and fruit train pulling up stiff grade out of Fort Dodge Yards.
Car behind tender is auxiliary water tank.



Courtesy Homer C. Platt

CAPT. JOHN F. MERRY
General Western Passenger Agent



Courtesy Illinois Centra

EMMIT L. HOLMES
Passenger Traffic Manager



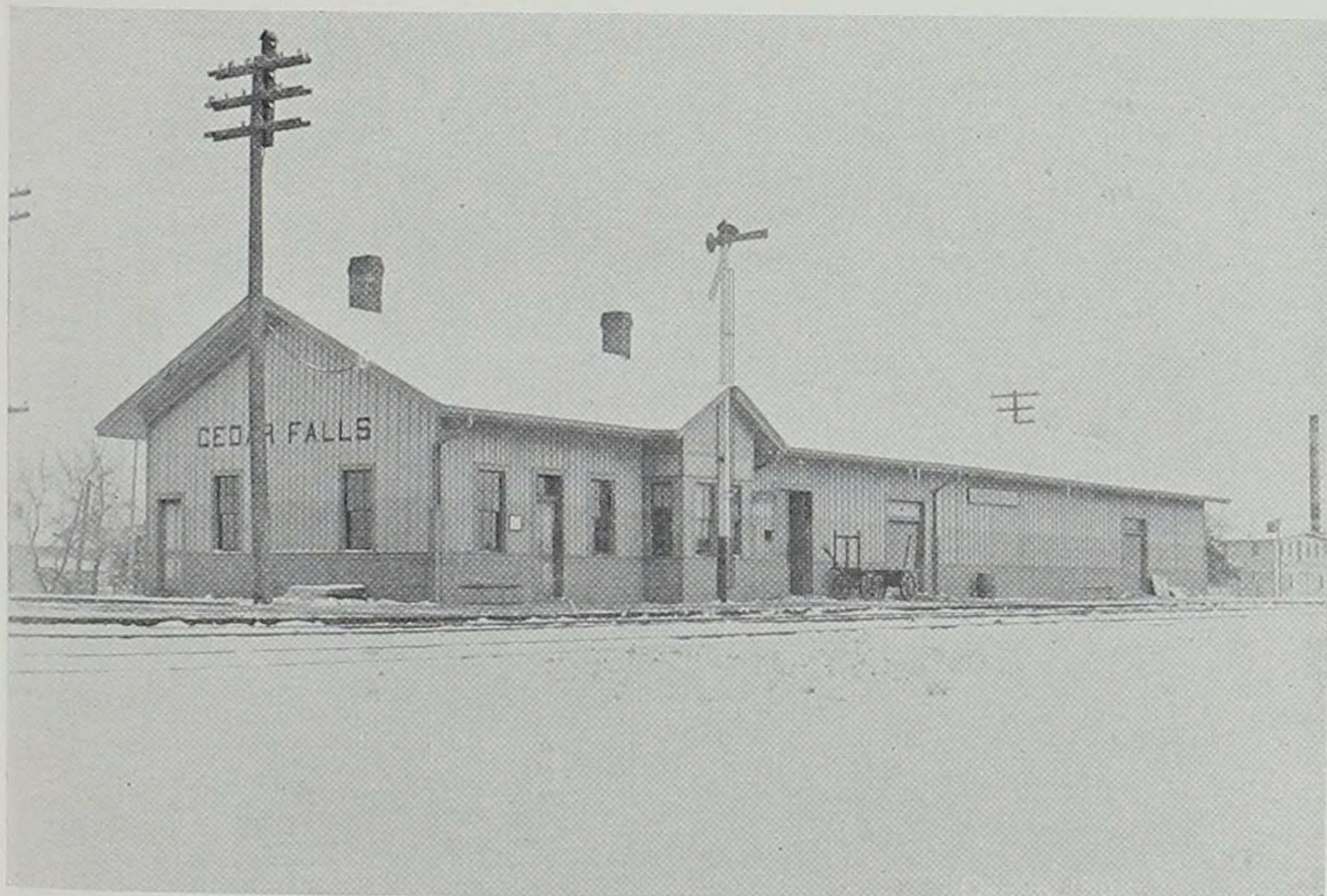
Courtesy Homer C. Platt

Reunion of 21st Regiment Iowa Volunteer Infantry shown in front of Illinois Central office where Captain Merry had his headquarters. Photo taken in Manchester, September, 1887.



Courtesy Illinois Central

Sturdy stone and brick station at Independence in 1894.



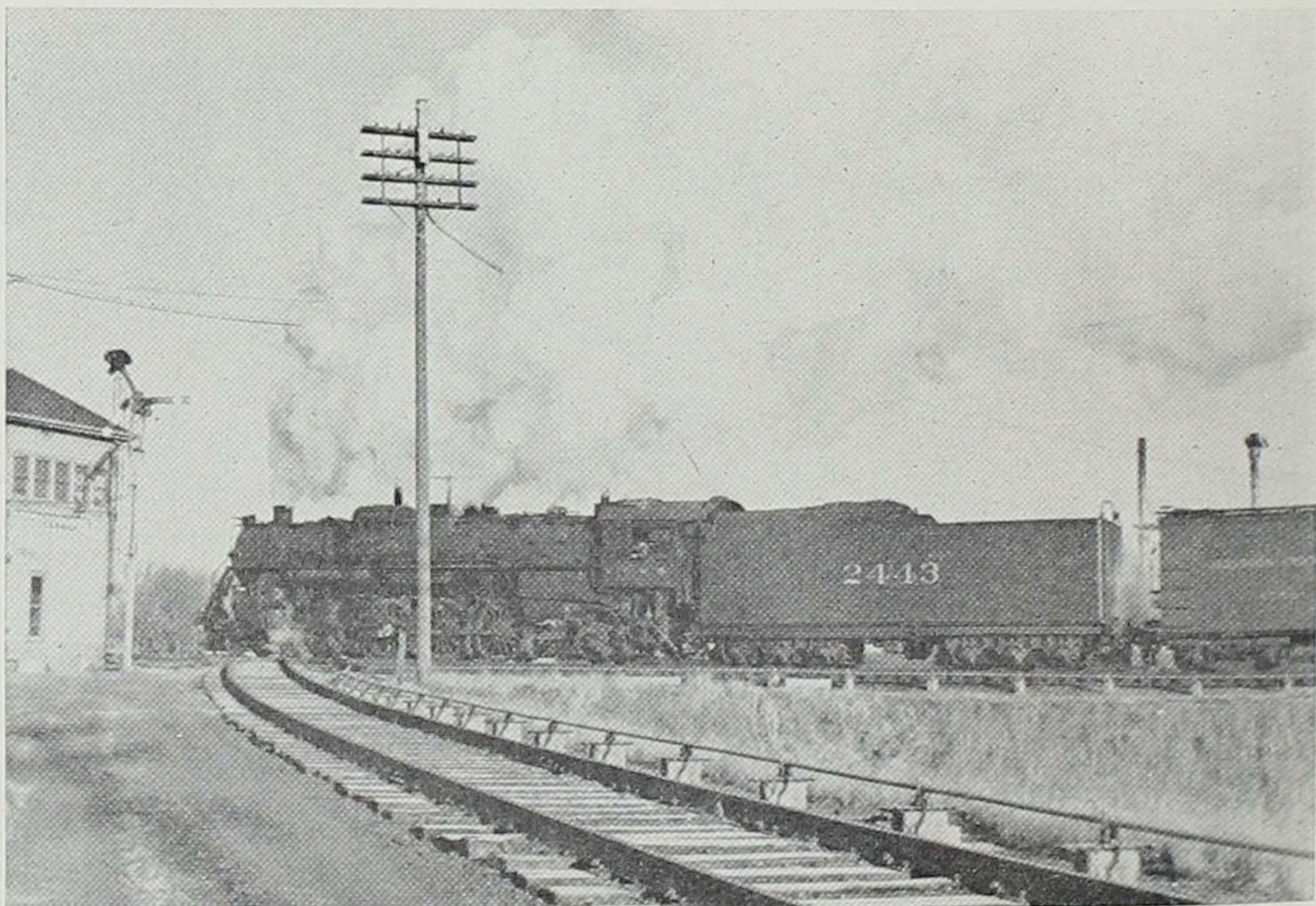
Courtesy Illinois Central

Illinois Central station at Cedar Falls in 1902.



C. V. Simon: William S. Kuba Collection

Mikado type engine tests track at Dubuque during flood in April, 1951.
An 0-8-0 switcher stands in front of passenger station at left.



Basil Koob Collection

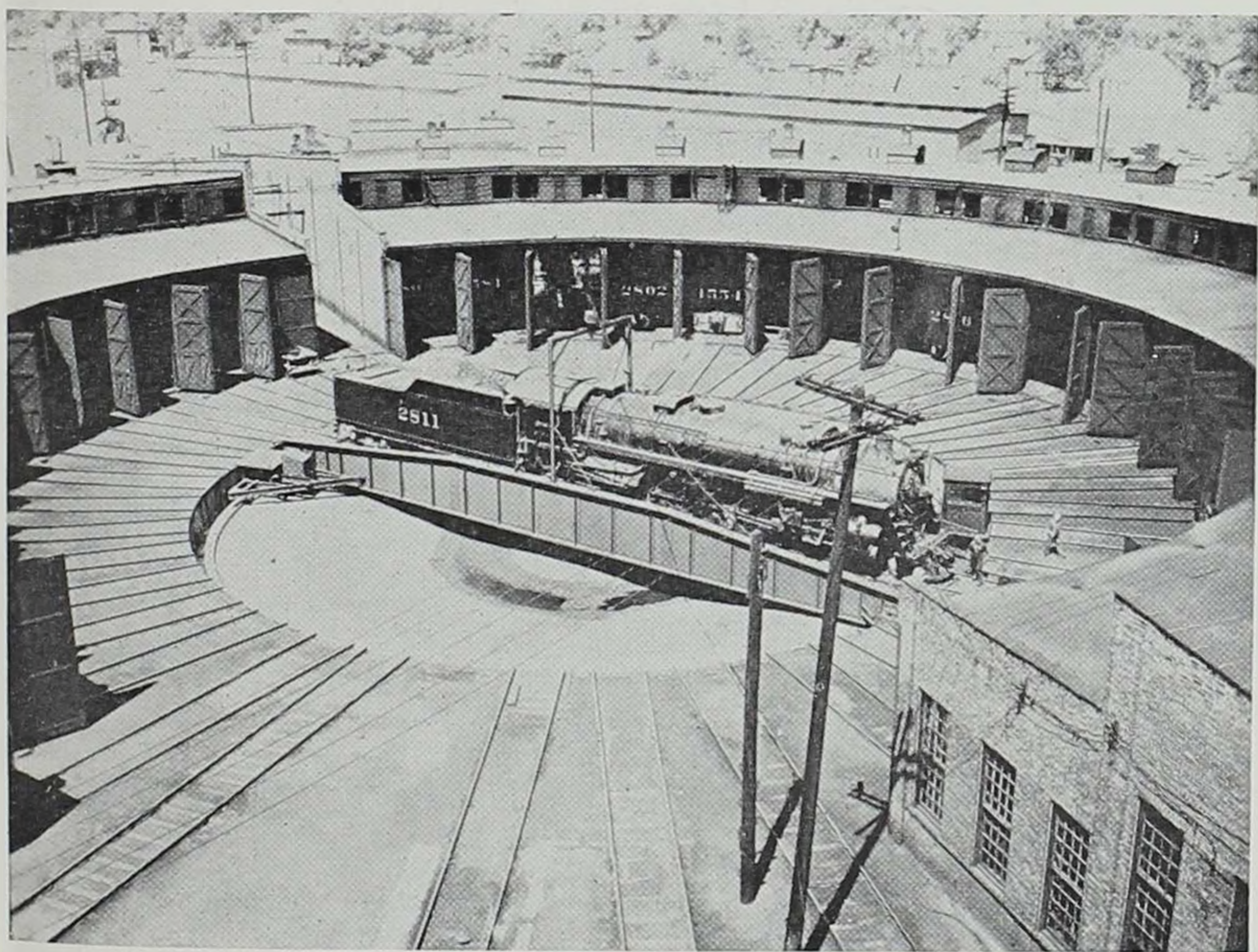
No. 11, "The Hawkeye," with powerful 4-8-2 type engine crossing Chicago & North Western track at Webster City. The interlocking tower has now been razed.

ILLINOIS CENTRAL ROUND HOUSE AND SHOPS, WATERLOO, IOWA



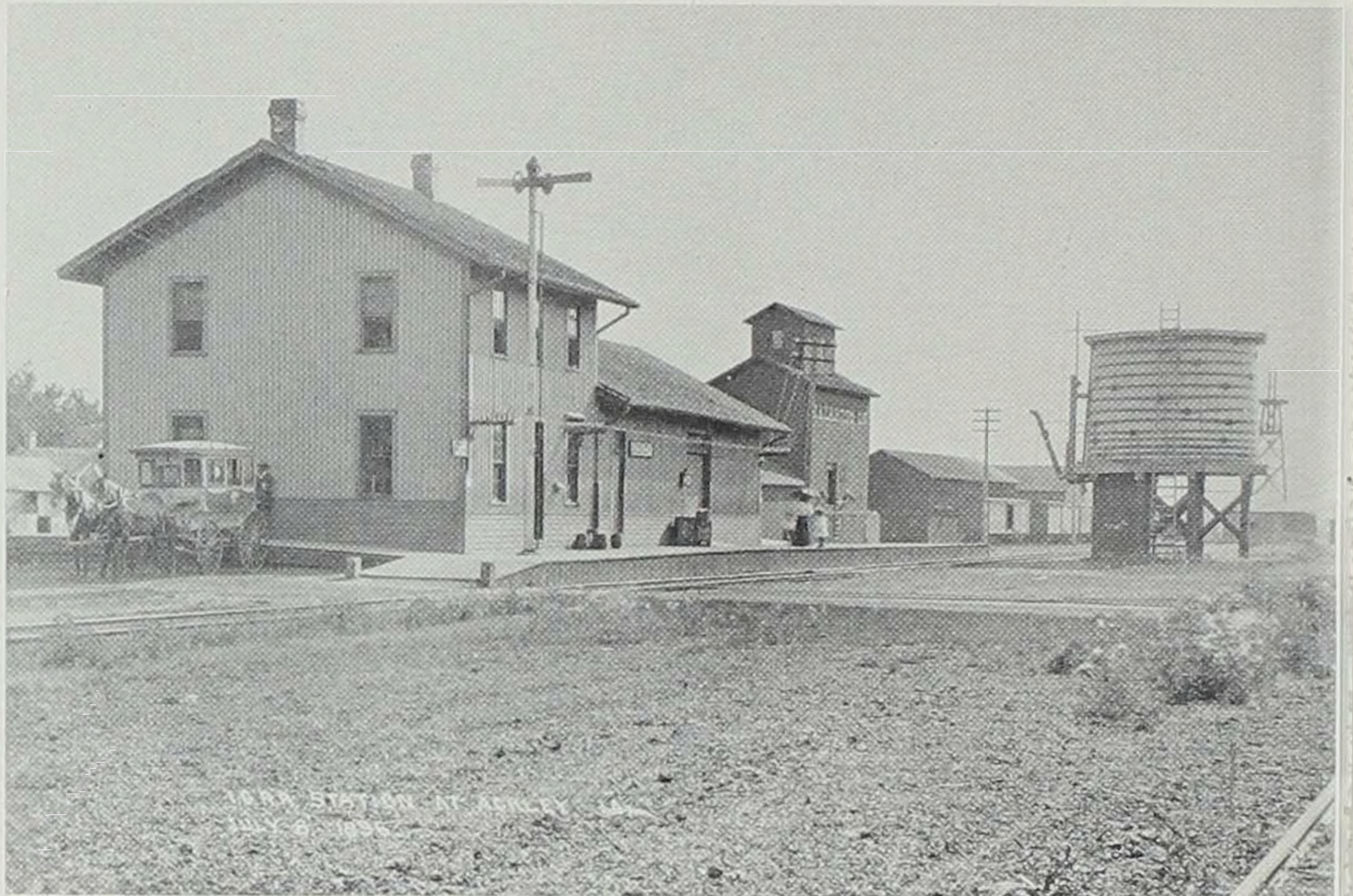
Mrs. Guy Mills Collection

Illinois Central roundhouse and shops at Waterloo.



R. J. Levis Collection

Interior of Waterloo roundhouse in days of steam, showing large turntable.



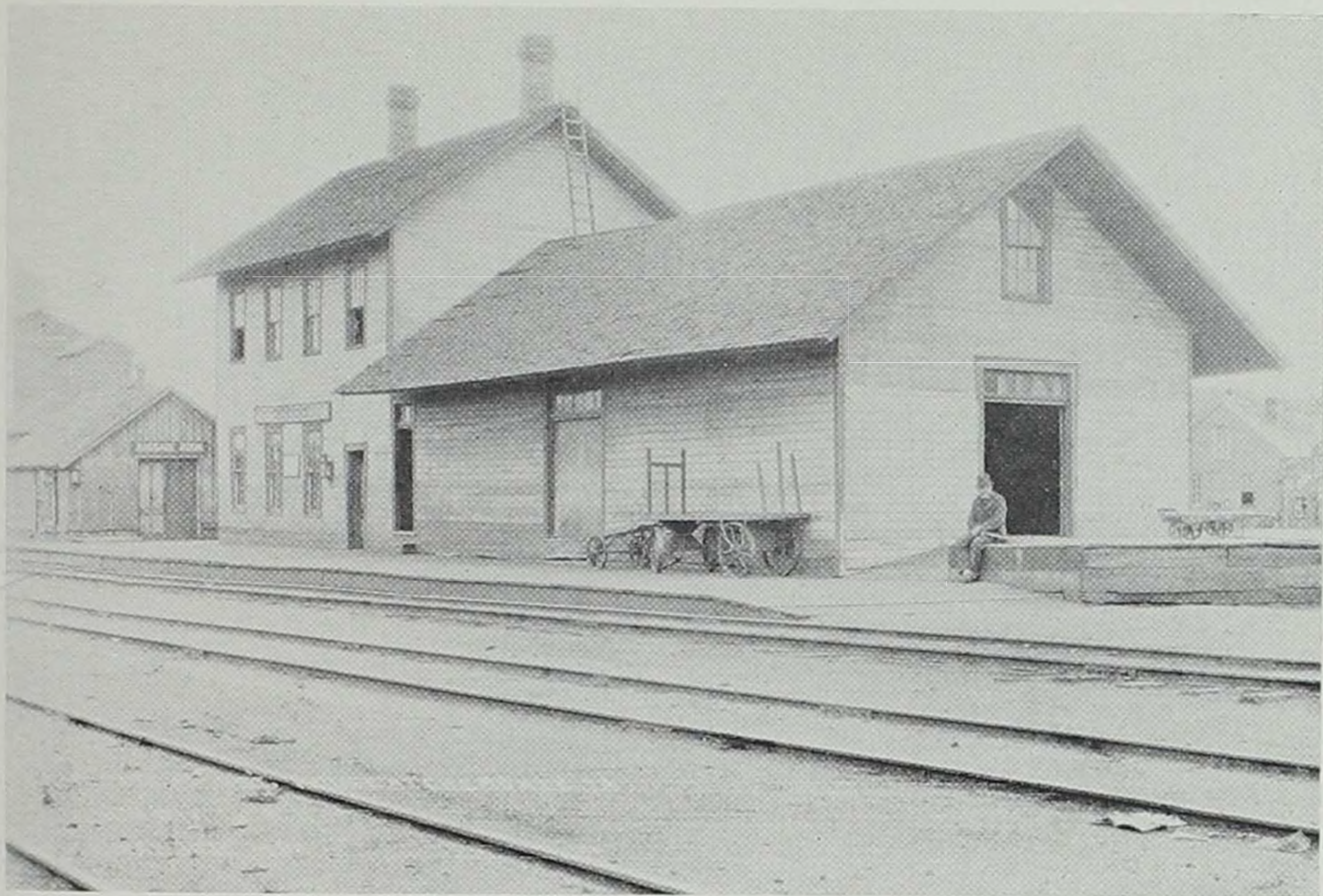
Courtesy Illinois Central

Illinois Central depot at Ackley showing station wagon and passengers waiting for train. Picture taken in 1896.



Courtesy Illinois Central

Webster City depot and freight house in 1894, showing order board at "stop" position.



Courtesy Illinois Central

Cherokee freight and passenger station on a quiet day in 1894.



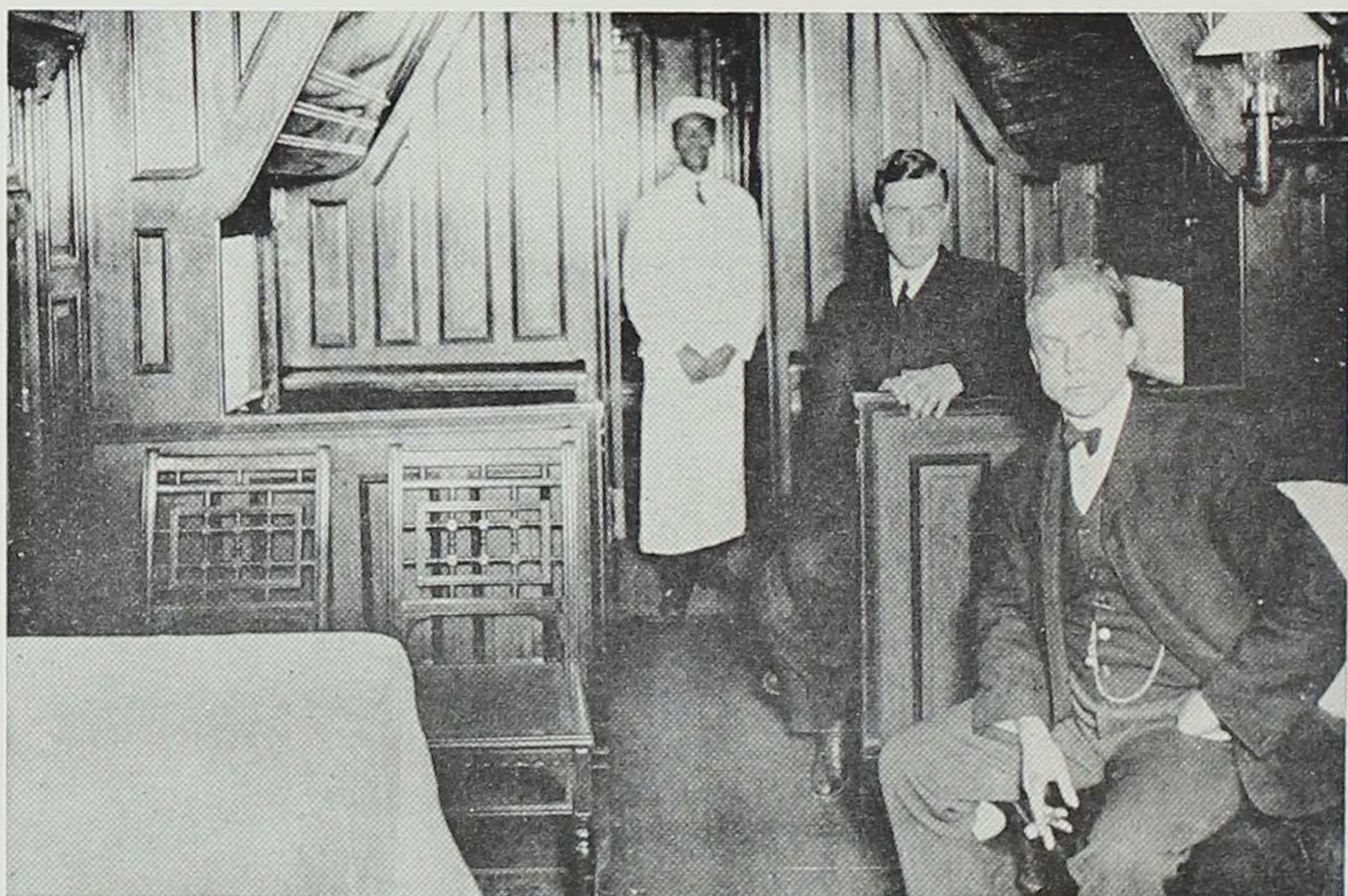
Courtesy Illinois Central

The old frame "passenger house" at Fort Dodge with its ornate weather vane as it appeared in 1894.



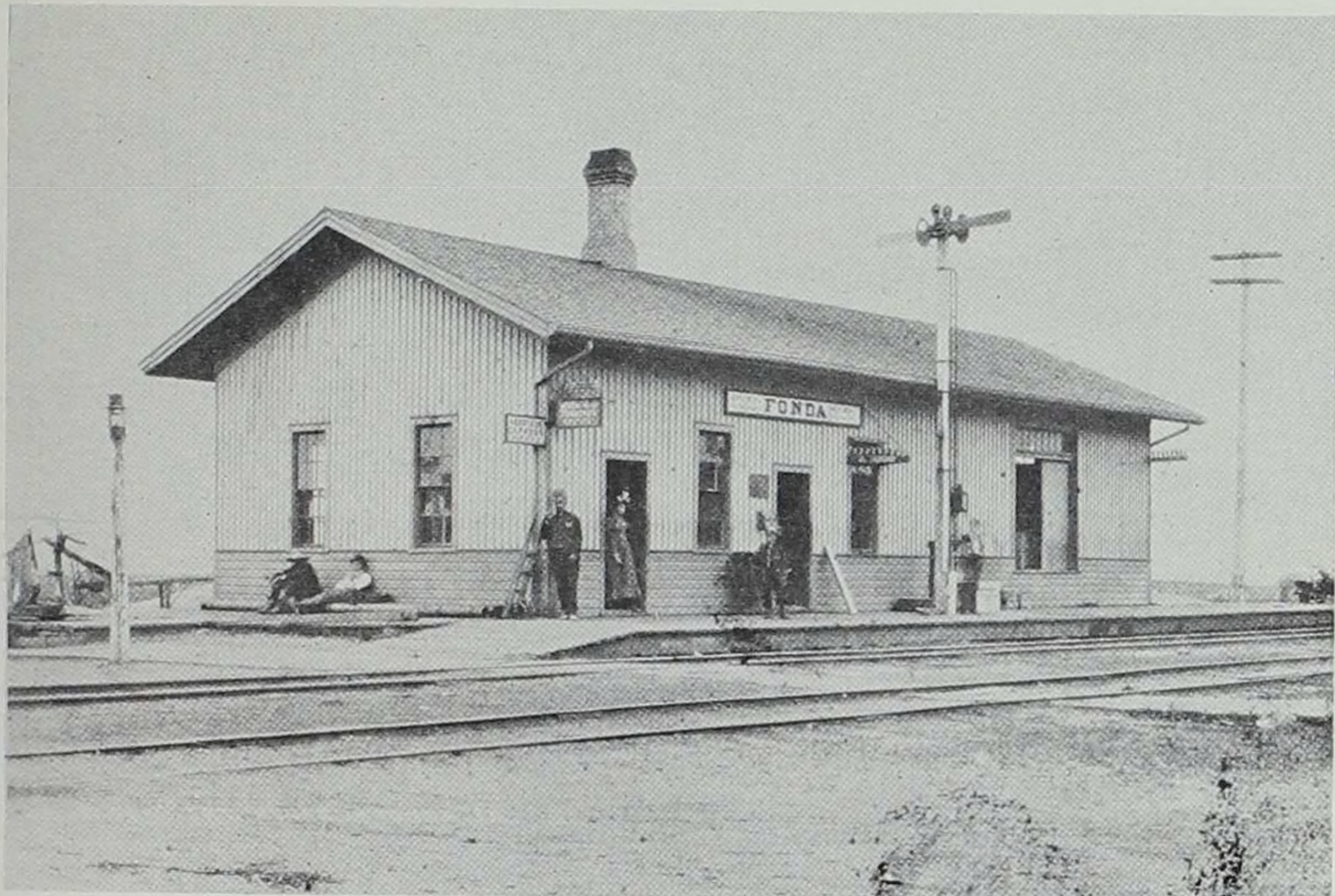
Courtesy Illinois Central

No woman's touch is evident in this scene of comfortable disorder in which Assistant Engineer L. W. Baldwin, working in 1899 on the line between Fort Dodge and Council Bluffs, takes a stitch in time on his trousers. Baldwin became vice-president of the Illinois Central's Operating Department in 1920, and later president of the Missouri Pacific Railroad.



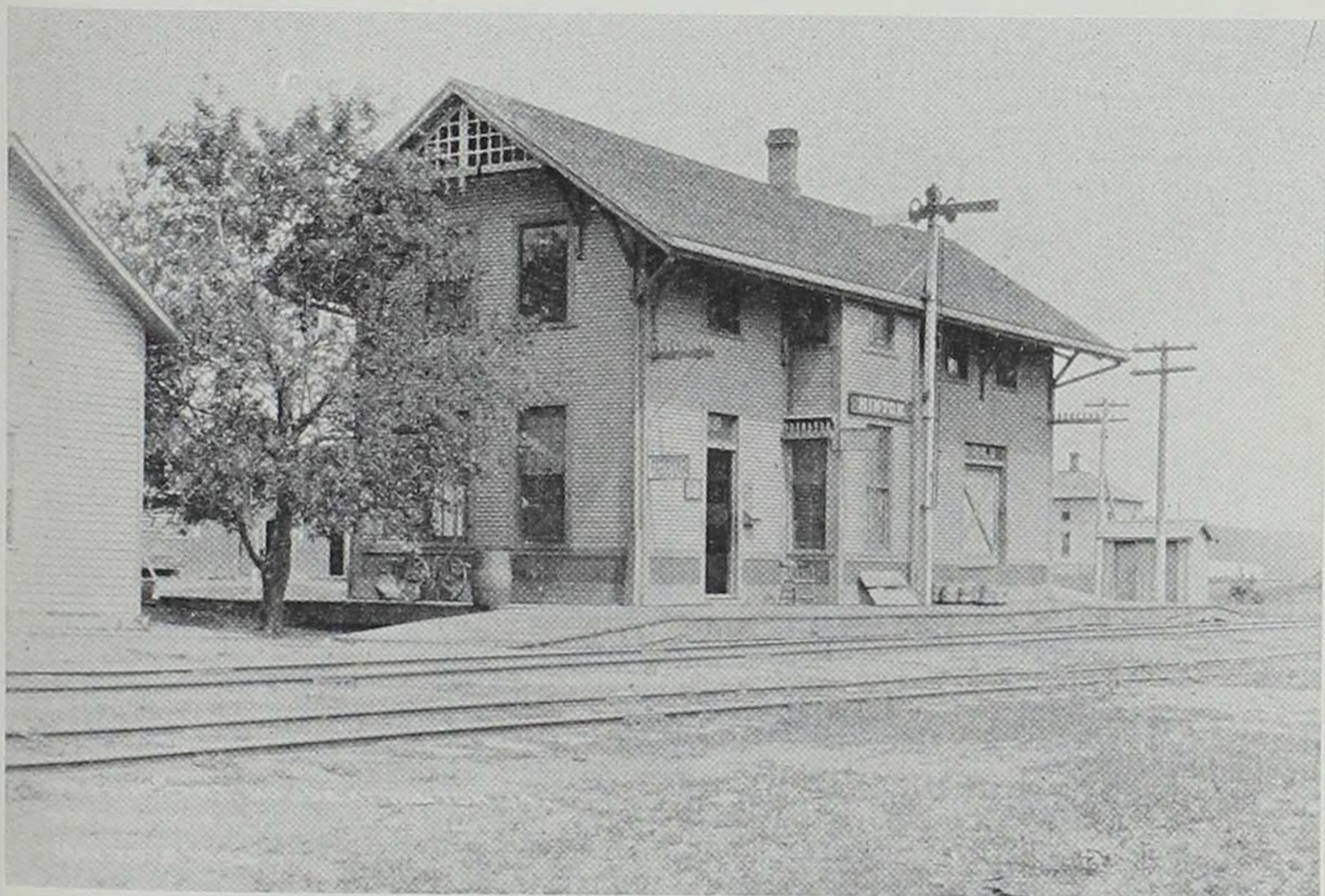
Courtesy Illinois Central

The Ghost Walks. Paymaster H. D. Warner (right) in 1905 in the Omaha-Chicago pay car. For almost sixty years employees received their pay from a window in such Illinois Central cars.



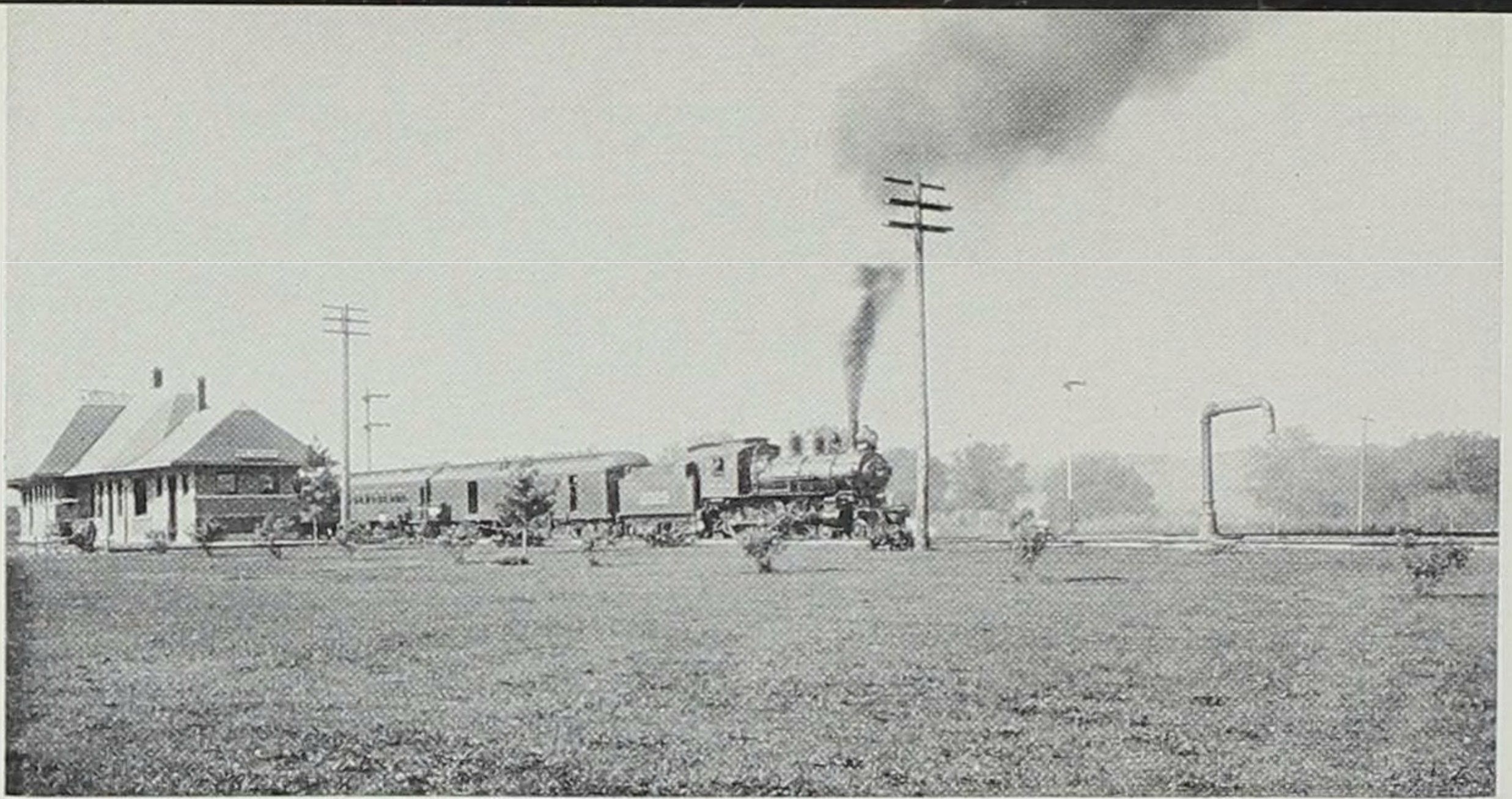
Courtesy Illinois Central

Fonda on the Fort Dodge-Sioux City line in the mid-1890's. The oil lamp at left was typical of the period. The station sign indicates it is 226.4 miles to Dubuque and 100.2 miles to Sioux City.

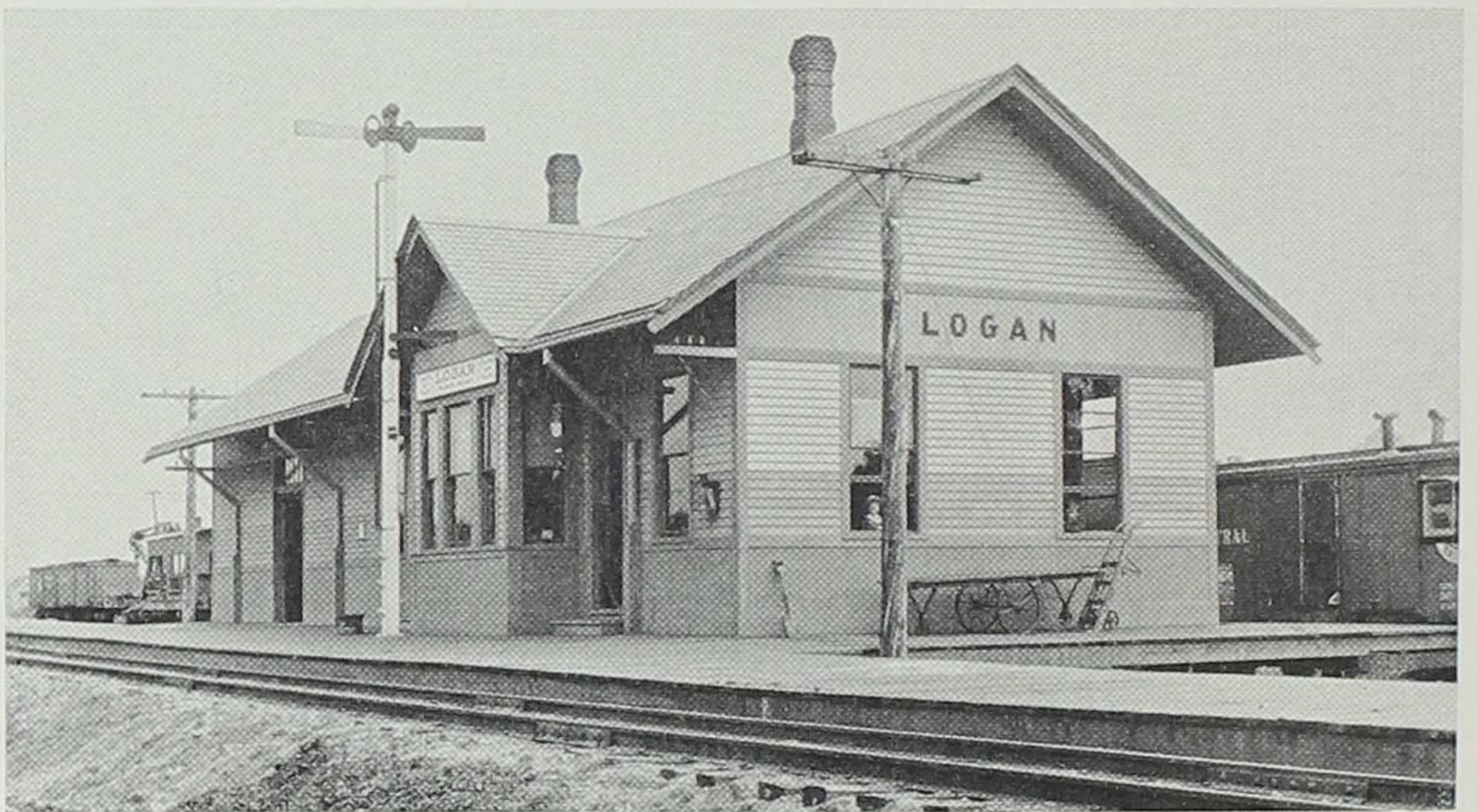


Courtesy Illinois Central

Hinton passenger and freight depot in 1894.



A trim Ten-Wheeler pauses at Denison around the turn of the century.

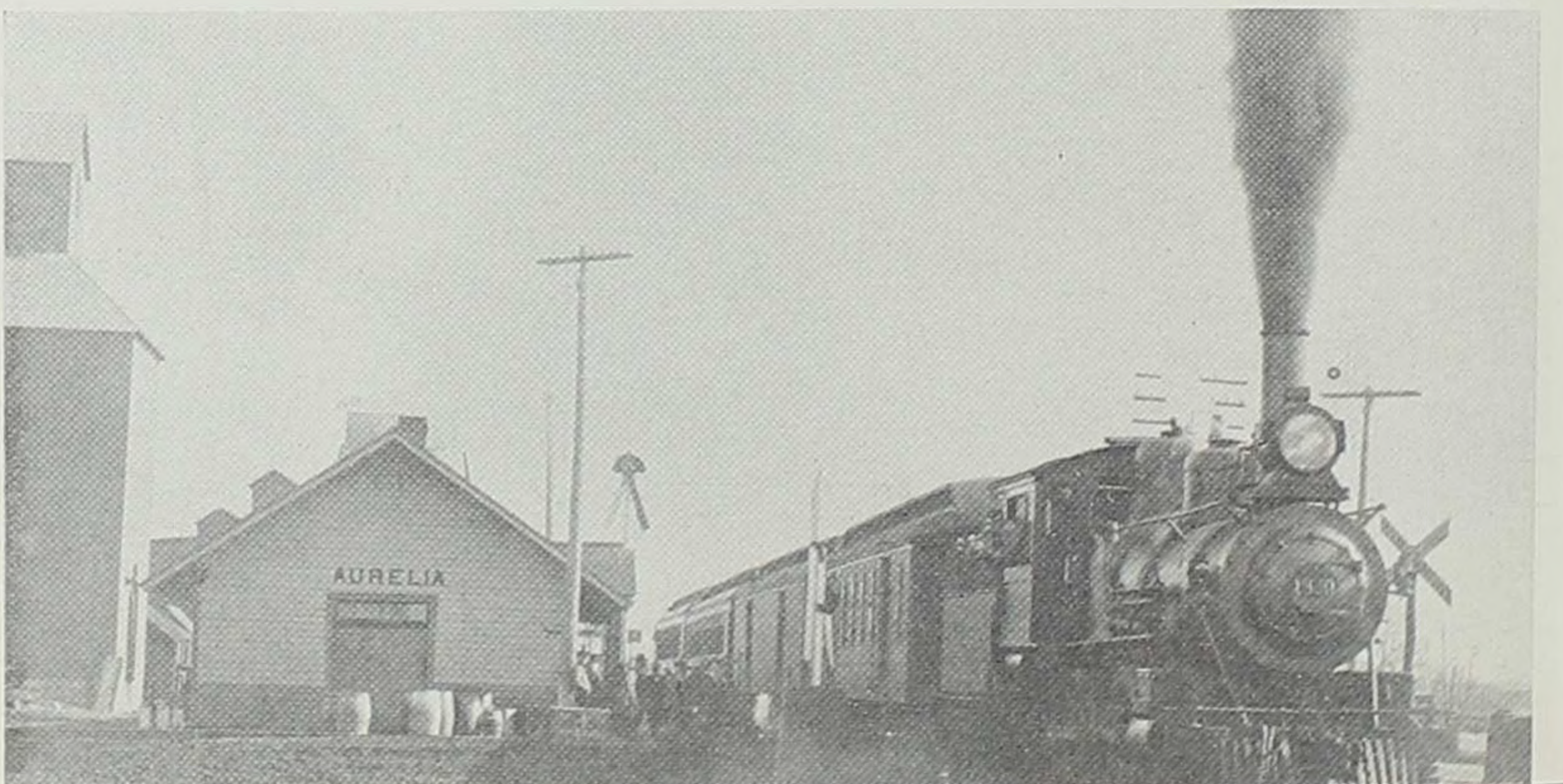


Courtesy Illinois Central

Logan depot shortly after Omaha branch of I.C. was built.

A busy time at the Aurelia station.

Mrs. Guy Mills Collection





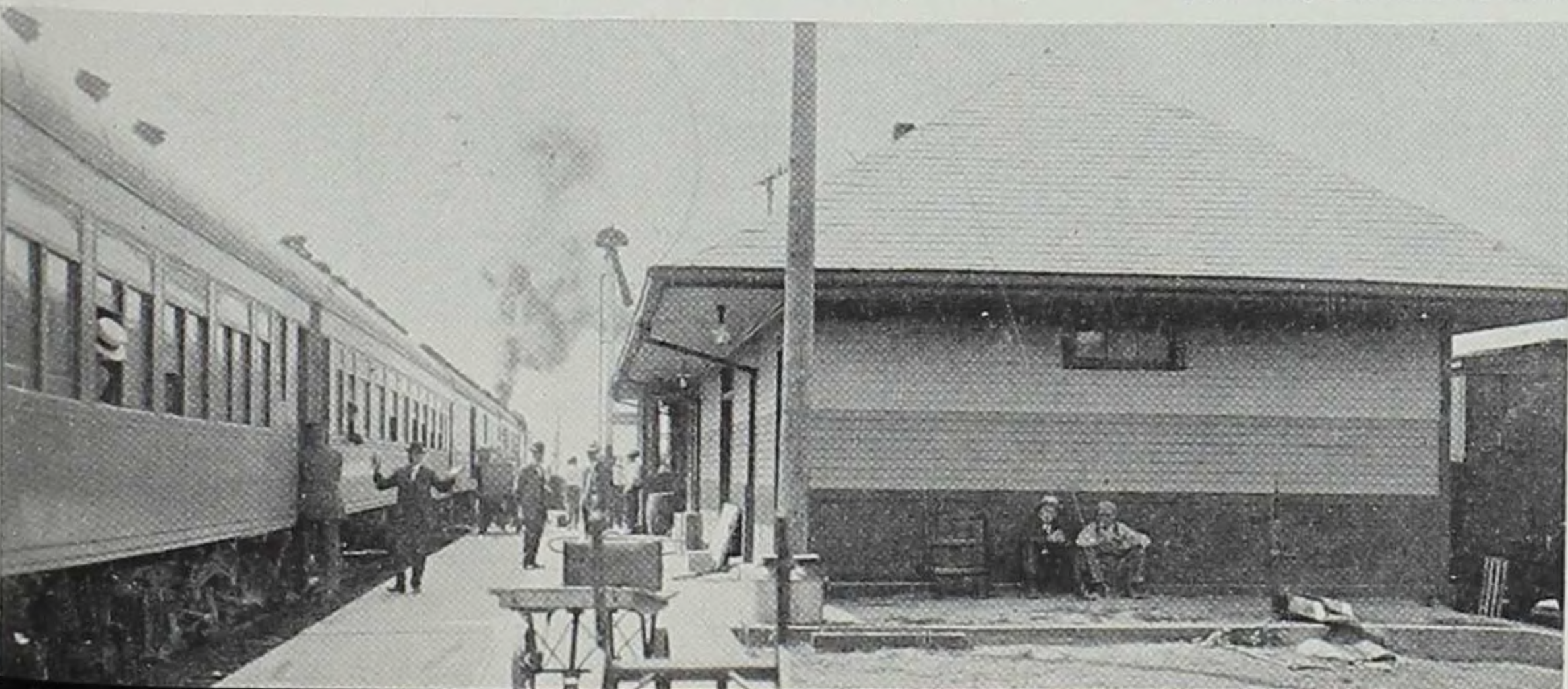
Train time at the Illinois Central depot at Storm Lake.

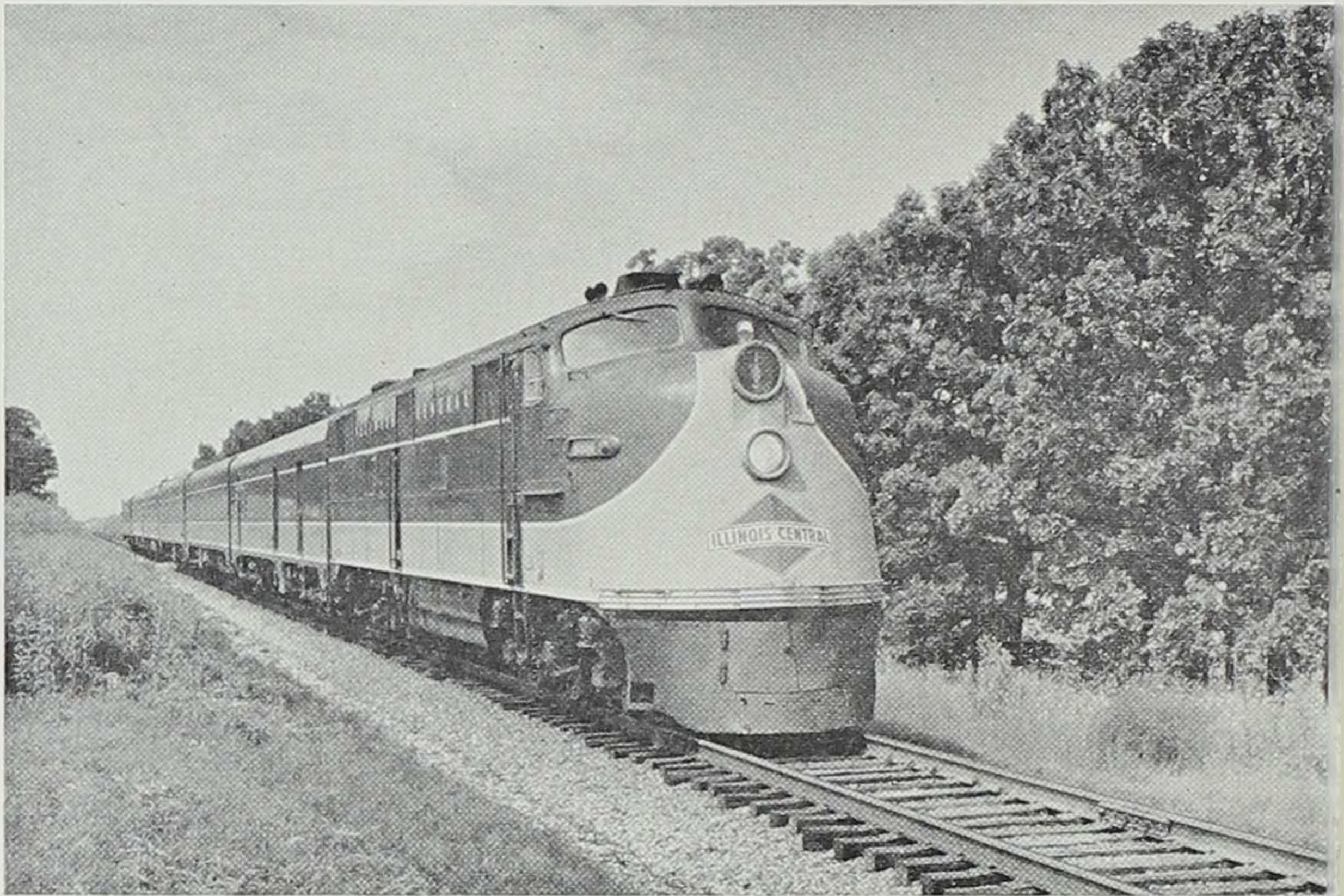


Trackmen digging out a marooned freight train during the winter of 1936. During this severe storm the Illinois Central sent snow-fighting equipment from all over its System to aid the hard-hit Iowa Division.

Train time at Alta (below)

Courtesy Illinois Central





Courtesy Illinois Central

The *Land O'Corn* — streamlined day train between Chicago and Waterloo.



Courtesy Illinois Central

A CC-6, pride of the Iowa Division's fleet of fast meat trains. This train originates in various sections at Sioux Falls, Sioux City, and South Omaha, all major livestock centers. The photograph shows a CC-6 with three "jeeps" rounding the bluffs of the Mississippi into Dubuque shortly after dawn.

Dakota and Montana to a busy industrial center.

During the same time its main line was being extended across Iowa, the Illinois Central had resumed construction on the Waverly branch. The Cedar Falls & Minnesota reached Charles City on October 18, 1868, and St. Ansgar on December 12, 1869. It reached the Minnesota state line at Mona on May 1, 1870.

By the end of 1870 the Illinois Central was operating 1,107 miles of railroad — 705 in Illinois and 402 in Iowa. No matter how one viewed it, Iowa was an important part of the two-state railroad. Furthermore, it was a little over 500 miles from Chicago to Sioux City, whereas the southernmost part of the system from Chicago to Cairo, Illinois, was only about 360 miles. Thus, the Illinois Central went farther west than it did south.

Meanwhile, the Illinois Central had not yet built its own line between Chicago and Freeport, Illinois. True, it had through service from Chicago to Iowa, but its trains ran over the track of what is now the Chicago and North Western to span the gap. If one had insisted on using only Illinois Central rails from Iowa points to Chicago, he would have been obliged to go south all the way to Centralia, thence north again to the metropolis on Lake Michigan. This would have involved a detour of 525 miles! It was not until 1888 that the Illinois Central had completed its own line between Chicago and Freeport.

For the next seventeen years there was no further expansion of Iowa lines under lease by the Illinois Central. One reason was the intense competition of rival lines rapidly building in the state. This in turn reduced the revenue of the Illinois Central, and in 1884 it is said to have actually lost money on its Iowa properties. Another reason was that if the IC wanted to extend its leased lines it would have to do so largely to the benefit of the lessors, who would get 36 per cent of the increased earnings without an outlay on their part.

The problem was finally resolved in the Illinois Central's front office. In 1883 a thirty-four year old broker by the name of Edward H. Harriman was elected a director of the railroad. That same year James C. Clarke, vice president of the Chicago, St. Louis & New Orleans, a subsidiary of the Illinois Central, became president of the latter road. Clarke soon embarked on a bold program of expansion and branch line extension. In this policy he was supported by Harriman, who became a potent force with the Illinois Central.

When it came to reviewing the Dubuque & Sioux City lease, Clarke, Harriman, and Stuyvesant Fish (a vice president, three years younger than Harriman) unanimously agreed the Iowa road must be purchased. But how? It was known that several of the large stockholders of the Hawkeye line would try to force the Illinois Central to buy them out at par — or, failing in this,

insist upon a new lease at terms onerous to the lessee. Inasmuch as shares were currently quoted at greatly below par, either alternative would be untenable to the Illinois Central. It fell to Harriman to acquire the Iowa road for the I.C.

Meanwhile Drexel, Morgan & Company, acting as trustees for the Dubuque & Sioux City stockholders, were garnering proxies for the annual meeting of the road to be held in Dubuque on February 14, 1887. Harriman likewise had bought all available stock he could get on the open market. But it was quite clear the Morgan-Jesup-Roosevelt interests held the majority.

When a showdown came at the spirited stockholders' meeting, however, the Illinois Central forces controlled a majority of *all those present*. They forthwith organized the meeting and nominated five directors (a majority of the board) friendly to the Illinois Central. Then they proceeded to disqualify the stock held in trust by Drexel, Morgan & Company. Quoting the *Commercial and Financial Chronicle* of February 19:

During the call of the roll of stockholders, a large number of proxies, representing about 5000 shares of stock, were presented and rejected by the parties in control of the meeting, on the ground that proxy voting in Iowa is not legal. The whole block of stock held by Drexel, Morgan & Co. as trustees was rejected also, on account of the vote having been signed by Drexel, Morgan & Co., personally, and not as trustees. The only shares which could be voted were those held by Harriman & Co.

who voted them personally. At the close of the meeting, the following were declared elected: Edward Harriman, Albert Wilcox, and William D. Guthrie, of New York; and Edward C. Woodruff, of New Jersey. To fill the unexpired term of George H. Warner, resigned, W. J. Knight, of Dubuque, was declared elected. During the noon recess, the persons interested with Drexel, Morgan & Co. held a meeting and elected the former directors: James A. Roosevelt, Abram S. Hewitt, J. Pierpont Morgan, and Lorenzo Blackstone for the full term, and William G. Hunt for the unexpired term. . . . the final adjudication of the matter will be made by the courts.

As the *Chronicle* predicted, litigation ensued for several months. The Morgan brokers held out for purchase of their shares at par. The Illinois Central declined to buy at that inflated figure. In the end Harriman made a final offer of \$80 a share, an offer that was reluctantly accepted.

This was Harriman's first battle with Morgan. Harriman had outgeneraled the powerful Morgan forces even when the latter clearly held the majority of stock in the struggle for control waged in the little river town of Dubuque. Few people, then or now, have heard of the fight. But at the turn of the century all the world was aware of the Homeric struggle between James J. Hill, backed by Morgan, and E. H. Harriman, financed by Kuhn, Loeb & Company, for control of the highly prosperous Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad. After the "battle of Dubuque" the Dubuque & Sioux City became Illinois Central property.

Rounding Out The System

With the Iowa leased lines now owned lock, stock, and barrel by the Illinois Central, the expansion program in the Hawkeye State was pushed with vigor. The railroad endeavored to strengthen its position by building feeder lines. In 1887 the Cherokee & Dakota Railroad Company was organized to build a 96-mile line from Cherokee to the rapidly growing city of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Included in the project was another branch running southwest from Cherokee to Onawa, 61 miles long.

Tracklaying on the Sioux Falls branch commenced in Cherokee, September 26, 1887, and by October 30 the rails had been spiked down at Primghar, twenty-five miles to the north. This was at the rate of better than a-mile-a-day, excluding Sundays. Carlton Corliss, in his well-researched history of the Illinois Central, describes the exuberance of the crowd in the county seat of O'Brien County as seen by J. L. Peck, an eyewitness.

The crowd waited patiently, and at last the whistle of the engine was heard below the town. . . . The crowd gave a mighty shout. The construction train, loaded with iron rails, came near. The inimitable F. M. (Pomp) Mc-

Cormack, founder of the *O'Brien County Bell*, had gone down to meet the train, two miles below. He had mounted the high top of the engine, and, waving the Stars and Stripes and hollering and yelling at the top of his voice . . . he came in . . . patriotically breaking the Sabbath . . . Primghar was on the map!

Spurred to even greater efforts, construction forces of five hundred men determined to reach Sioux Falls, 72 miles distant, by Christmas Day. That would mean laying more than one and one-half miles of track each working day. So great was the progress that the last rail was hammered down in Sioux Falls at 11:30 p.m., on December 18, a week before Christmas. Mayor John F. Norton drove the last spike by lantern-light. The "tarriers" had averaged one and two-thirds miles of track-laying a day from Primghar. So grateful were the citizens, they refused to let the construction men sleep in their East Sioux Falls camp that frigid night. They hastily corralled a fleet of sleighs and took the tired men to comfortable beds in the Cataract House in Sioux Falls.

Regular train service between Sioux Falls and Chicago was inaugurated early in February, 1888, thereby linking the Windy City with the westernmost point reached by the Illinois Central. The Onawa branch was also put in operation in June of that year. At Onawa it connected with what is now the North Western's line running south to Council Bluffs.

The year 1888 likewise saw entry of the Illinois

Central to the thriving city of Cedar Rapids with the completion of the 42-mile branch from Manchester. Organized in 1886 as the Cedar Rapids & Chicago Railroad Company, the firm was sold to the Illinois Central shortly after it was completed.

John F. Merry

At this point it is appropriate to mention one of the best-liked Iowans ever to hold an important office on the Illinois Central. He was Captain John F. Merry of Manchester. Born in Ohio, brought up on a farm north of Manchester, Merry served in the Civil War and later turned to railroading, working for the Illinois Central from 1880 to 1911. Starting as an excursion agent, he rose to be assistant general passenger agent of the system. To Iowans and many people elsewhere he was "Mr. Illinois Central."

Of a warm, jolly disposition, John F. Merry was gregarious, popular, and above all, friendly. If ever a railroad had a goodwill ambassador, it was Captain Merry. Nor was his work limited by his title. Actually, he was an agricultural agent, industrial agent, immigration agent, publicity representative, frequently writing promotional booklets and homeseekers' guides. In reviewing his *Where to Locate New Factories* (1892) the *Ottumwa Daily Courier* said:

Captain J. F. Merry . . . is a versatile man. He can sing like a Sankey in a Methodist camp meeting or at a

Loyal Legion love feast. He can plead like a lawyer! He used to sell more goods than any man who ever called himself a competitor. He can recite an anecdote like an actor. . . . Captain Merry . . . now a railroad official . . . has found time to write a 160-page book, "Where to Locate New Factories." . . . Two years ago he issued a pamphlet on the Northwest, dwelling especially upon agricultural resources of the new counties in northern Iowa, along the Illinois Central Railroad. . . . He gathered the data for his book by driving all over the new counties, interviewing the farmers and reproducing much of their conversations. . . . Everything he argued therefore was backed by voluminous proof from the farmers themselves.

Up to the time of his retirement Captain Merry had compiled, with one exception, every pamphlet, leaflet, and circular concerning immigration issued by the Illinois Central since he started working for the road. His literature concerning the South had been so conservative and his facts so accurate that bankers, trust companies and lawyers, as well as homeseekers, constantly relied on his pamphlets.

Returning to the expansion program, there was the linking of Albert Lea, Minnesota, with the main stem in Iowa by way of the Cedar Falls branch at Mona on the Iowa-Minnesota state line. The road was extended to Glenville, Minnesota, in 1900. A right of way was purchased from that town to Albert Lea, but this section of the line was never built. Instead, trackage rights were acquired over the Rock Island between Glenville and Albert Lea. Now the Illinois Central had a direct

connection via the Albert Lea gateway to the Twin Cities over the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway. To round out the Albert Lea district trackage, mention should be made of the eight-mile Stacyville branch, opened late in 1897.

During this period by far and away the most significant undertaking was building to Council Bluffs. Heretofore the Illinois Central had trackage rights over the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha (Chicago & North Western) to Council Bluffs. But this agreement did not prove satisfactory, and it was later terminated.

Omaha, key city of the Missouri Valley and one of the fastest growing cattle markets in the Midwest, was still a long way from Illinois Central rails. Such a situation became intolerable. All the other railroads crossing the length of Iowa had made Omaha their goal — the North Western, the Rock Island, the Burlington, and the Milwaukee. Even the Wabash had built up to Omaha from Missouri, cutting across southwestern Iowa to reach its coveted goal. And it was a known fact that the Great Western, under the energetic leadership of A. B. Stickney, was coming south to Omaha. What was the trouble with the Illinois Central?

Stuyvesant Fish, at that time president of the Illinois Central, determined to see his far-flung railroad tap the Omaha gateway. Under his authority preliminary surveys were made to ascertain

the best route. The proposed line would diverge at Tara, west of Fort Dodge, the engineers agreed, and run in a general southwestern course to Council Bluffs, a distance of 131 miles. A new company called the Fort Dodge & Omaha Railroad was chartered September 14, 1898, to build the last and longest branch of the Illinois Central in Iowa.

Chief Engineer John F. Wallace was in general charge of the project. Wallace later gained worldwide fame as chief engineer of the construction of the Panama Canal. A novel feature of the undertaking was that the "golden spike" would be driven first instead of last. As it turned out, the initial spike was driven by a woman, although Superintendent Charles K. Dixon had been slated to do the honors. When the time for the ceremony came, Dixon, finding it impossible to keep the engagement, sent his wife in his stead. So it was that Kitty Dixon performed what heretofore had always been considered a man's prerogative. With more zeal than skill she finally drove the gold-plated spike home. The unorthodox event occurred May 25, 1899. Just 208 days later the last spike, without any fanfare, was driven by a man. The Illinois Central had at long last fulfilled its western destiny.

Main Line—West

The Illinois Central is generally thought of as a north-and-south railroad, with its main stem running from Chicago to New Orleans. However, with the completion of the branch to Omaha (it has trackage rights from Council Bluffs to Omaha) the Iowa Division earned the distinction of being a vital east-and-west main line. Through passenger service was provided between Chicago and Omaha. More important still was the increasing role the road played in funneling transcontinental freight through the Omaha gateway.

The Illinois Central competes on substantially equal terms with most of the six other Chicago-Council Bluffs-Omaha roads. True, it has the longest route, except for the circuitous Wabash, although it is only a scant five miles longer than the Chicago Great Western, which reached Council Bluffs in 1904. On the other hand, the "Omaha Branch" was built to the highest standards of its time, and it has been constantly modernized up to this day.

Having sketched the growth of the Illinois Central in Iowa, it is fitting that we discuss the part it played in social history and economic advancement. In other years there was no phase of rail-

roading so intimately associated with the region it served as its passenger service. And the Illinois Central had passenger trains on all its lines in Iowa. It provided a cheap, convenient way to travel from village and town to the metropolitan centers, particularly Chicago.

A glance at the 1913 timetable gives a representative picture of the golden age of passenger service in the state. There were five daily round trips from Chicago to Waterloo, two daily trains each way Chicago to Omaha, and three daily round trips between Fort Dodge and Sioux City. Sleepers were standard equipment on trains running from the Windy City to Omaha, Sioux City and Sioux Falls. The remaining branch lines had daily-except-Sunday coach service.

Being a later comer to Omaha, the road did not feature passenger service through that gateway without change to connecting lines. But in conjunction with the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway it exploited the Albert Lea gateway. Its *Chicago and Minneapolis and St. Paul Limited* boasted of an "Electric-Lighted Steel Sleeping Car, Buffet-Club Car, Free Reclining Chair Car and Coach, Chicago to Minneapolis and St. Paul; Dining Car Chicago to Freeport." On the return trip a diner was coupled on at Dubuque for Chicago.

Up to about the time of World War I the Albert Lea Route was an important, although secondary, line between Chicago and the Twin Cities.

It had to compete with the Burlington, the Milwaukee (then known as the St. Paul Road), the North Western, the Great Western, the Rock Island and the Soo . . . all having limited through trains between these destinations. The traveler in the early part of the twentieth century had an incredible amount of diverse routings available to him!

Mr. E. L. Holmes, passenger traffic manager of the Illinois Central, remembers the colorful pre-World War I days, when local ticket agents frequently had a supply of choice cigars. The stogies were left by traveling passenger agents from other lines trying to solicit business for their respective roads. Traffic, like kissing, often went by favor.

Holmes, who was born in Alta, Iowa, also recalls the resourcefulness of Illinois Central men in "getting" the business, capturing a major share of the Omaha-Chicago excursion traffic. The road featured \$8 weekend fares, leaving Omaha, Sioux City, and Sioux Falls Saturday afternoon and returning the following day. In almost every instance the excursions were crowded. Why? It happened that the Illinois Central passenger agent in Omaha, A. J. Lightfoot, had his own orchestra. The road obligingly provided a baggage car for his band with sufficient room for dancing. It is said some of the excursionists danced all the way to Chicago. That was competition hard to beat.

This was an era when "drummers," as commercial travelers were called, covered their territory

almost exclusively by rail. The Illinois Central sold 2000-mile mileage tickets at \$50 — “refund of \$10 if used within one year.” A smaller “book” of 1000 miles sold for only \$20. They were very popular with traveling salesmen, lecturers, and business men.

All along the road were station restaurants, most of which were operated by the Van Noy news concession. Dubuque, Fort Dodge, Albert Lea, Cherokee, Sioux City, and Omaha had (and some still have) lunch counters or restaurants to “feed the trains.” Indeed, employees were given the option of taking part of their wages in lunch tickets, or “pie cards,” as they were dubbed.

Mr. Holmes, who started working for the Illinois Central as a station helper at Alta for \$25 a month, remembers how his pie card “practically saved” him from slow starvation. He used his pass to go east, traveling on the proverbial shoestring. Like other young men in quest of adventure the Iowa railroader ran short of funds. Too proud to wire home for money, he faced the prospect of riding all day without eating. Then he remembered his pie card. It was good all along the Illinois Central.

Understandably, too, the pleasantest sound in his early days of railroading was the whistle of the little engine pulling the pay car. The pay train “made” the division once a month. In those days men were paid in hard money, often silver and

gold. Checks were unknown. Holmes considered Paymaster H. D. Warner "the most important man on the railroad."

The morale of the Iowa Division has always been high. Come flood or blizzard, when duty calls, the Iowa railroader is first to respond. A story is told by Otto H. Zimmerman, vice president of operations, who at the time of the incident was superintendent at Waterloo. It concerned an unexpected blizzard which struck Fort Dodge, filling the cuts with drifting snow and stalling trains. The wind blew so fiercely across the prairie it blinded the eyes of trainmen and made life miserable for anyone out on the line.

On that particular day there were twenty-seven men on the roster who were due to get their day off. But did they take it? No, not they. As the storm increased in violence the phone began to ring in the division office. One after another of the trainmen and engine men announced they were coming in to fight the storm. Several had bad colds, but they came anyway. Two were in bed sick, one with pneumonia. Their spouses called in, very apologetic that the men were not able to help out in the emergency.

Another railroader, chairman of the local Order of Railroad Conductors, phoned to say that his wife was in the hospital awaiting a serious operation. "I can't go out on a run, because they are going to operate on her soon," he explained, "but

I'll come down to the roundhouse and help any way I can." And he did. He was in the roundhouse from midnight to five in the morning, helping to get engines in shape to keep the line open. Indeed the conductor worked right up until the time the hospital phoned him.

Not a single man of the twenty-seven had to be called. They knew when they were needed and they came.

The Illinois Central prided itself on up-to-date equipment and on-time operation of its principal trains. Often the humble local was an institution to the communities it served. Ruth Suckow, in her homespun Iowa novel, *Country People*, brings out this fact in describing her fictitious town of "Richland."

"For one thing," she writes, "there was a railroad, the main line of the Illinois Central which connected Richland directly with Chicago." And the institution? It was "... the morning 'Clippers,' the Chicago train, by which clocks were set and risings timed. . ."

The "Clipper" was No. 28 eastbound and No. 27 westbound. In 1913 it left Waterloo at 7:10 a.m., arriving in Dubuque at 10:30 a.m. Returning, the through train departed from Dubuque at 3:45 in the afternoon and rolled into Waterloo at 7:15.

The day of the branch line local has long since gone, but the Illinois Central's handsome brown

and gold main line passenger trains still speed across Iowa. The *Hawkeye*, an overnight express, runs the entire length of the state on its way from Chicago to Sioux City. It has coaches and sleepers with a "set-out" Pullman for Waterloo.

In addition, the *Land O'Corn* provides fast daytime service between Chicago and Waterloo. It carries an attractive diner, featuring tasty Southern-style meals. A novel item in the "consist" are specially designed flat cars, on which ride Flexivans, or truck trailers. These containers, carrying United States mail, are quickly transferred from flat car to truck at several major points on the line. By this method distant off-line communities receive the benefit of fast rail shipment to the nearest station where, without breaking bulk, mail is taken by truck to its ultimate highway destination.

In the more leisurely era before World War I nearly every station boasted of cattle pens, and freight trains picked up stock along the line. Cattlemen rode drovers' cabooses, furnished with mattresses for sleeping, to market and returned in comfort on regular passenger trains. Stock pickups were often scheduled to move trainloads of cattle from the west in the spring for fattening, and out to market in the fall.

Cattle on the hoof is still a significant item in today's tonnage, but dressed meat predominates. The Illinois Central claims to move more meat and meat products in Iowa than all other railroads in

the state combined. This is not to say the road neglects wheat and corn, manufactured goods, lumber and millwork, coal and gypsum. Tractors made in Iowa and clay products from the Fort Dodge area are standard items found on many through freights. But more than anything else the Iowa Division is the "Main Line of Meat."

To expedite meat and other perishables and general freight, the Illinois Central operates a fleet of "symbol" trains. There is the "CC-6" for example, a manifest freight operating at near-passenger-train-speed between Omaha and Chicago. (One "C" in the name stands for Council Bluffs, the other "C" for Chicago.)

An Illinois Central switch crew picks up meat and livestock cars in the transfer yard of the South Omaha Terminal Railroad and transfers them to Council Bluffs. At the latter point the CC-6, or "hotshot" as railroaders call it, is made up for Chicago. The manifest runs non-stop the 135 miles to Fort Dodge. Here another crew takes over for the 100-mile trip to Waterloo. This is along beautiful high-speed track, equipped with automatic train stops. CC-6 fights the grade out of Des Moines River Valley and is soon wheeling along at 60 M.P.H. At Waterloo, headquarters of the Iowa Division, cars are set out while others are added. A fresh crew takes the train the rest of the way across the state. Nearing the Mississippi, the long freight weaves between limestone bluffs in

the hilly country on the way to Dubuque. At Dubuque the CC-6 parallels the Mississippi, then veers to the right through silvery lattice steel girders to cross the Father of Waters. Ahead in Illinois is a tunnel, some sharp curves, and then more or less straight track all the way to the great city of Chicago.

Today the Illinois Central has substantially the same mileage in Iowa that it had at the beginning of the twentieth century. With the exception of the retirement of a 30-mile segment of the Cherokee-Onawa branch between Onawa and Anthon, there have been no abandonments. As a matter of fact, in 1955 the Illinois Central purchased jointly, with the Rock Island, the Waterloo Railroad connecting Waterloo and Cedar Rapids. Formerly an electric interurban line, the 64-mile Dieselized property gives the Illinois Central an additional freight route to Cedar Rapids together with a valuable belt railway in Waterloo.

From a two-state railroad with a third of its mileage in Iowa, the Illinois Central later built south and to a limited extent east. It now serves fourteen states, going east to Indianapolis and Louisville and south to the Gulf of Mexico. It also goes to Birmingham and nearly reaches Texas on the branch to Shreveport. It has 6,500 miles of line in all three districts — Eastern, Southern, and Western — by which the Interstate Commerce Commission classifies the carriers geographically.

Once a crude prairie railroad with 60-pound rail on unballasted roadway, the main line of the Illinois Central in Iowa now is basically in 112- and 115-pound rail on crushed rock ballast with the remaining "old standard" 90-pound rail steadily being replaced. It is largely protected by block signals and automatic train control. In the days of steam, well-kept Pacific, Mikado, and Mountain type locomotives characterized its fast passenger and time freights. The more economical Diesels have since taken over. Like all the Illinois Central's rolling stock, they are kept up to a high state of efficiency.

In the future as in the past, the modern Iowa Division (the second biggest of all the Illinois Central's nine divisions) and its terminals, will continue to be the strong east-and-west line of the strategic Chicago-to-Gulf railroad. Time will only increase its importance to Iowa and to the nation.

