

## 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

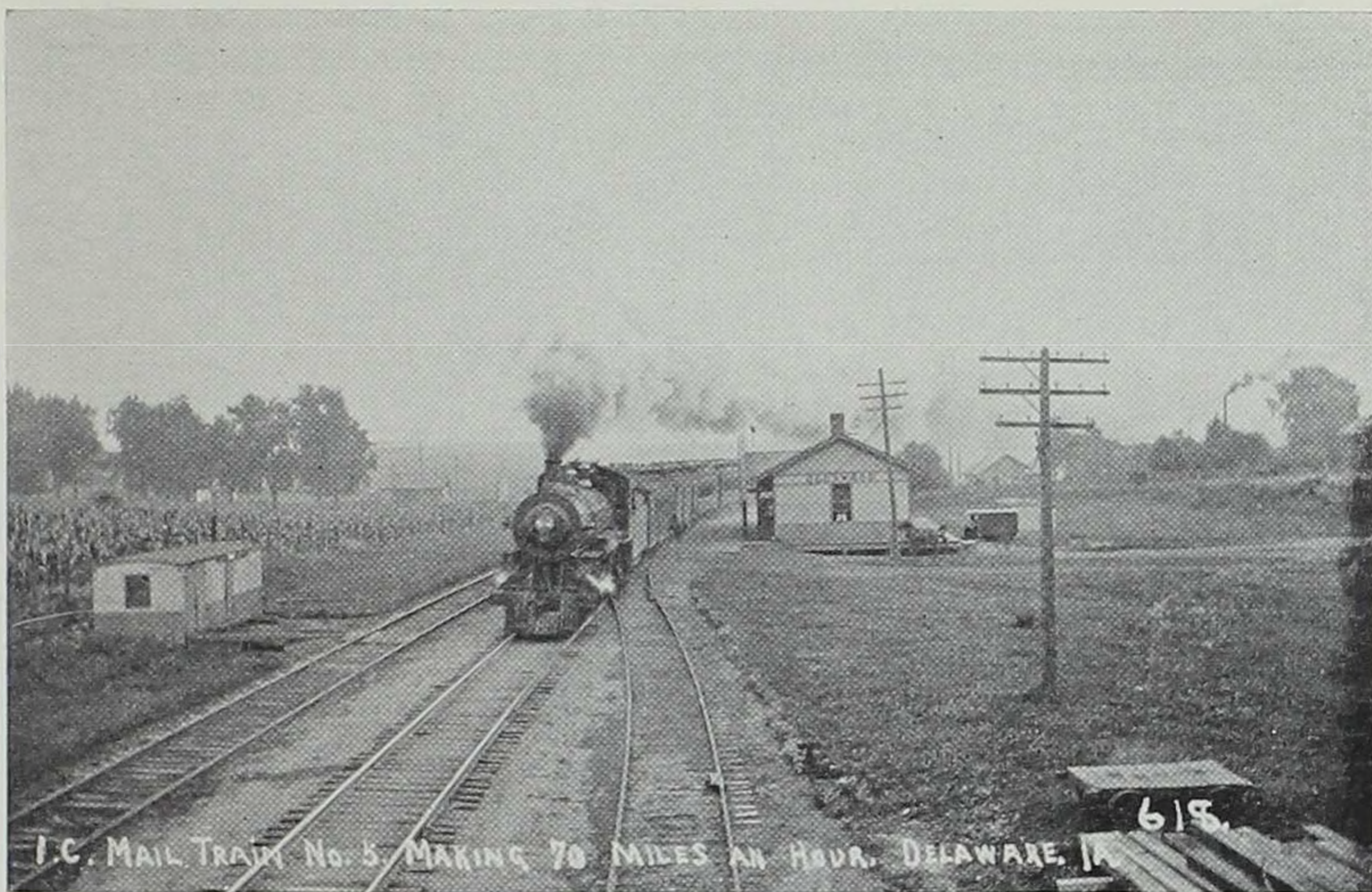


1862, which empowered the Union Pacific to build a road to Sioux City. It was to run from a point on the Union Pacific main line near Fort Kearney, 249 miles west of Omaha in Nebraska Territory. But a subsequent Act in 1864 amended the original provision and released the Union Pacific from its obligation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

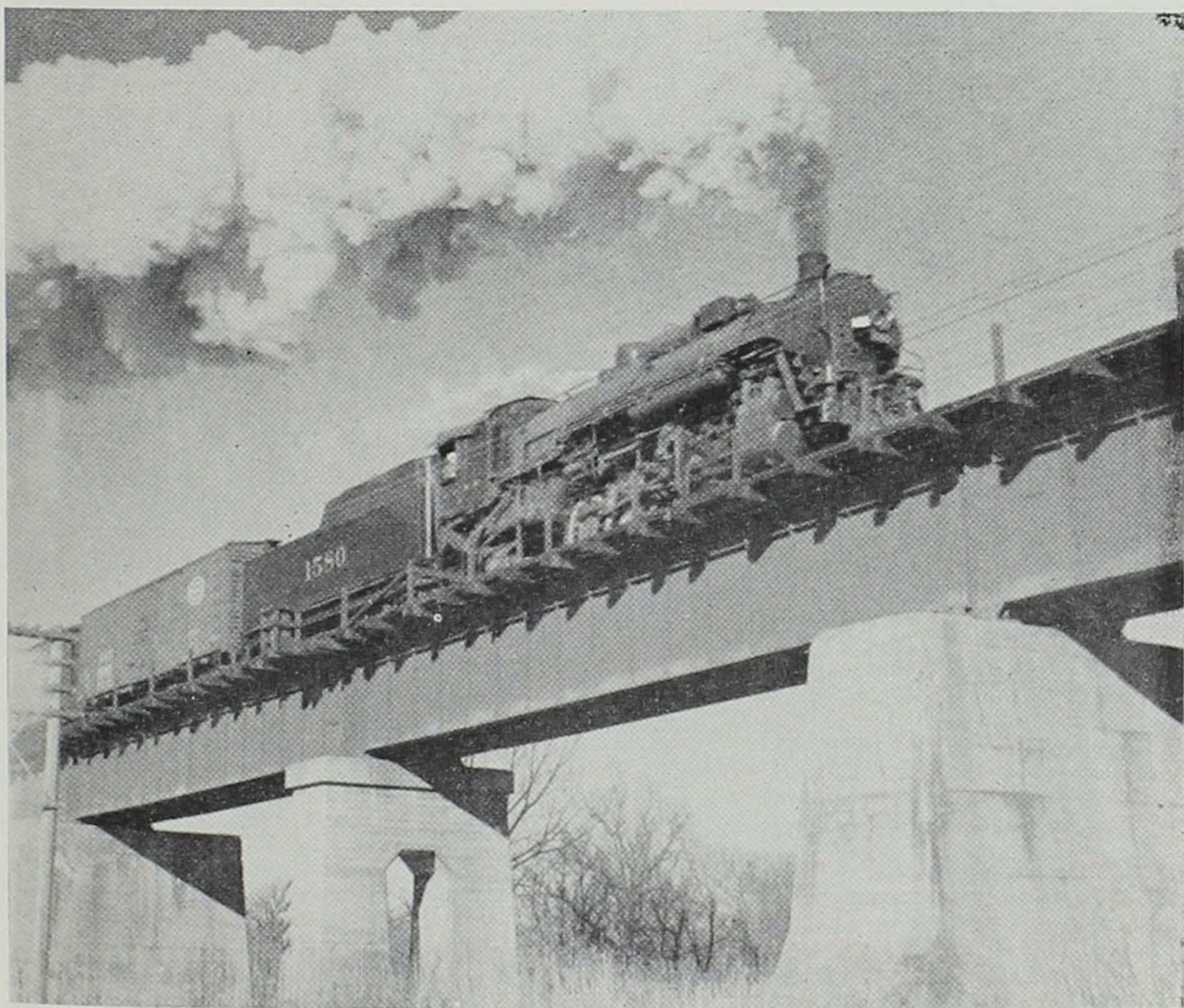
Many thought that Sioux City ultimately would rival Council Bluffs and Omaha as a transcontinental gateway. For this reason the Illinois Central aggressively fostered construction of its affiliated lines in Iowa. Naturally, too, Platt Smith, John I. Blair and others were also interested in promoting 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





*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.
	Mail Train.	Accommodation Train.		Mail 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 A. M.	4:20 P. M.	Caledonia.	3:30 P. M.	9:25 A. M.	
	9:25 A. M.	5 P. M.	Epworth.	3:05 P. M.	9 A. M.	
	10 A. M.	5:25 P. M.	Farley.	2:35 P. M.	9:30 A. M.	
		6 P. M.	Dyersville.	2 P. M.	8 A. M.	

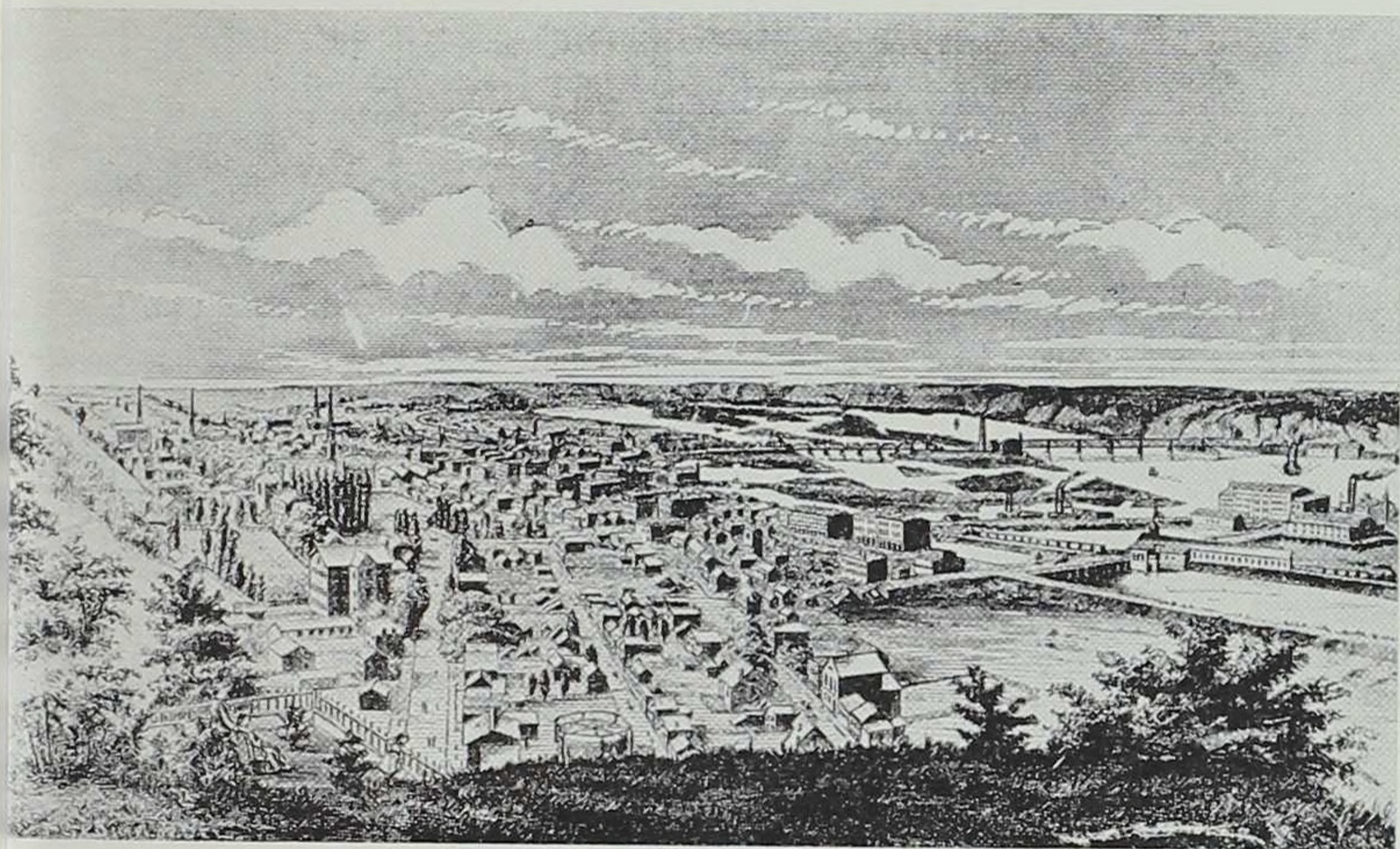
Any damage the Engine, Tender, or Train may sustain by neglect of instructions, or carelessness of the Engineer, the net cost of repairs of the same will be charged to him, and the amount deducted from his wages. The same will hold good against the Conductor for any damage the Train, Engine or Tender 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.

J. D. BUTTERER, Supt.

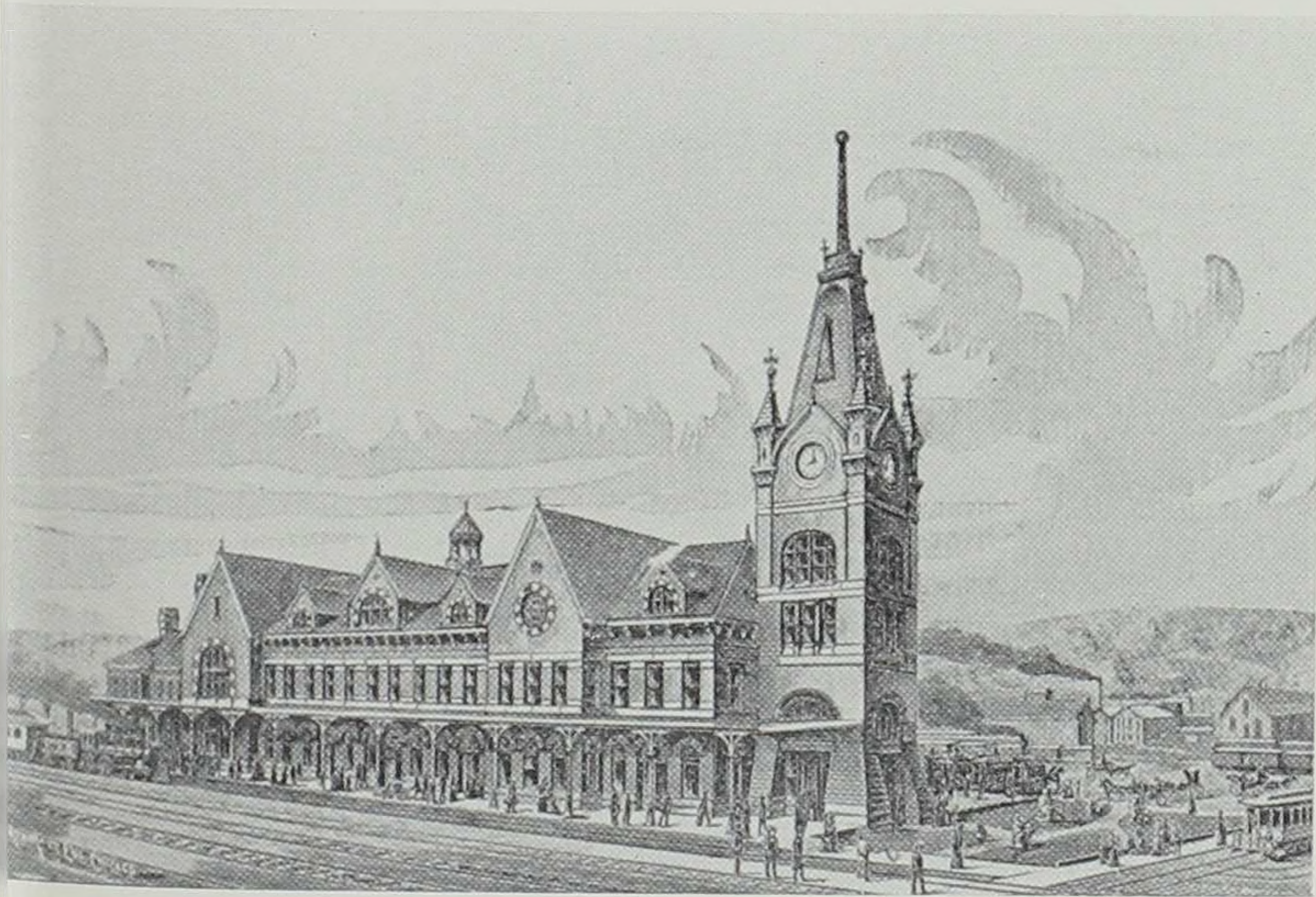
Courtesy Illinois Central





*Alex Simplot, artist: Courtesy Illinois Central*

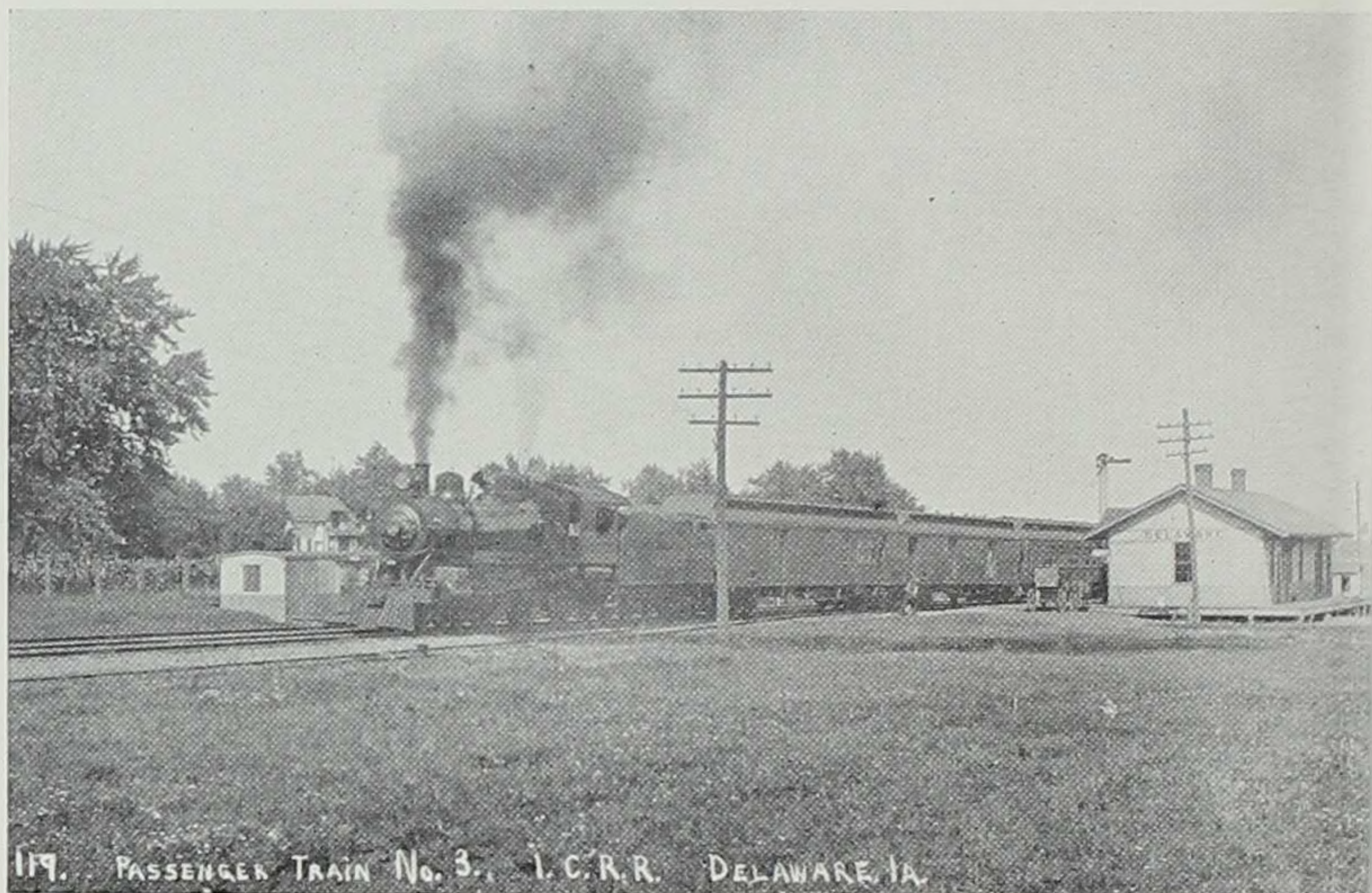
Dubuque in 1872 showing Illinois Central bridge crossing the Mississippi River on the right.



*Courtesy Illinois Central*

Old Illinois Central depot at Dubuque.

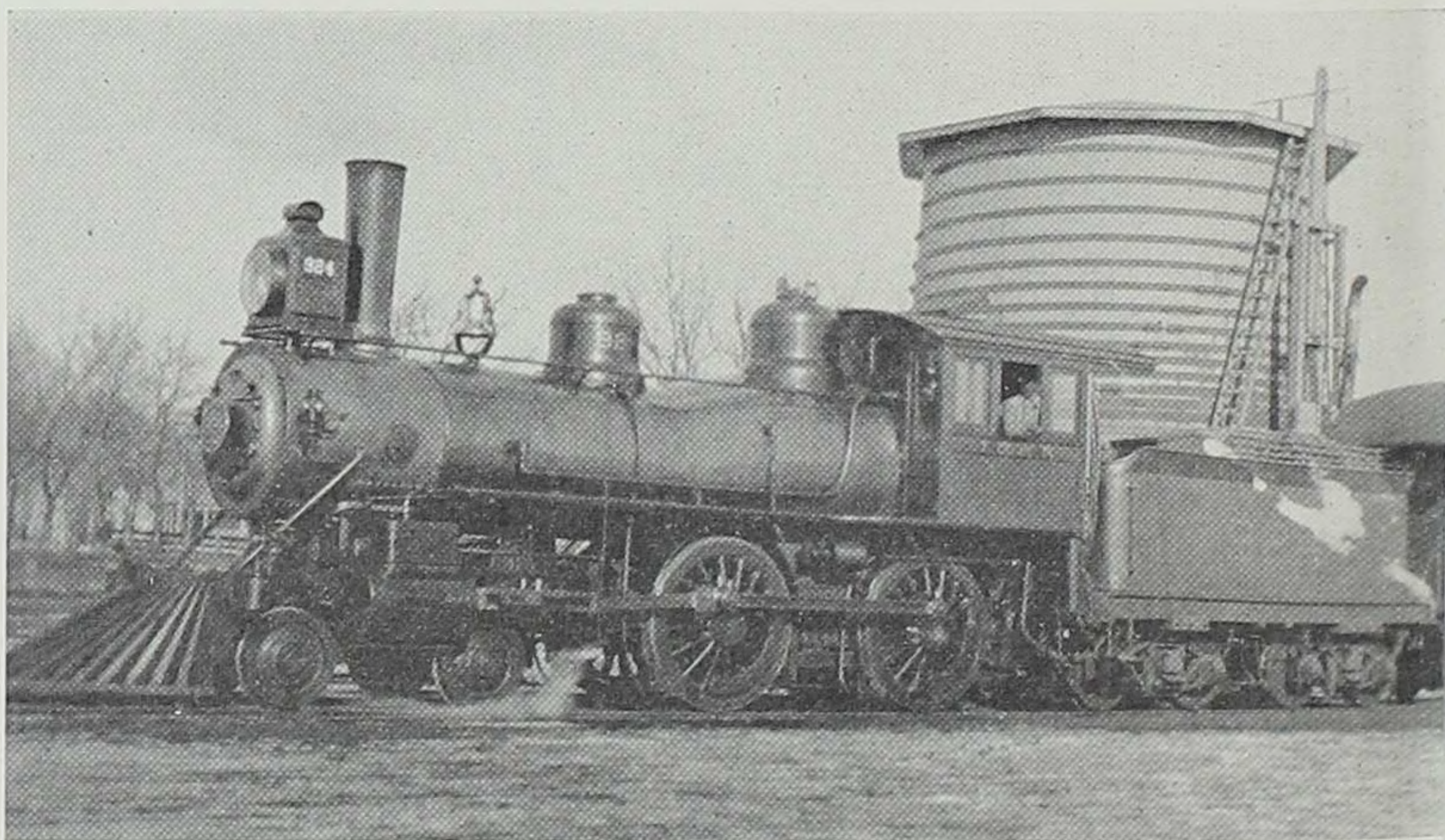




119. PASSENGER TRAIN No. 3. I. C. R. R. DELAWARE, IA.

*J. B. Hughes: Vander Maas Collection*

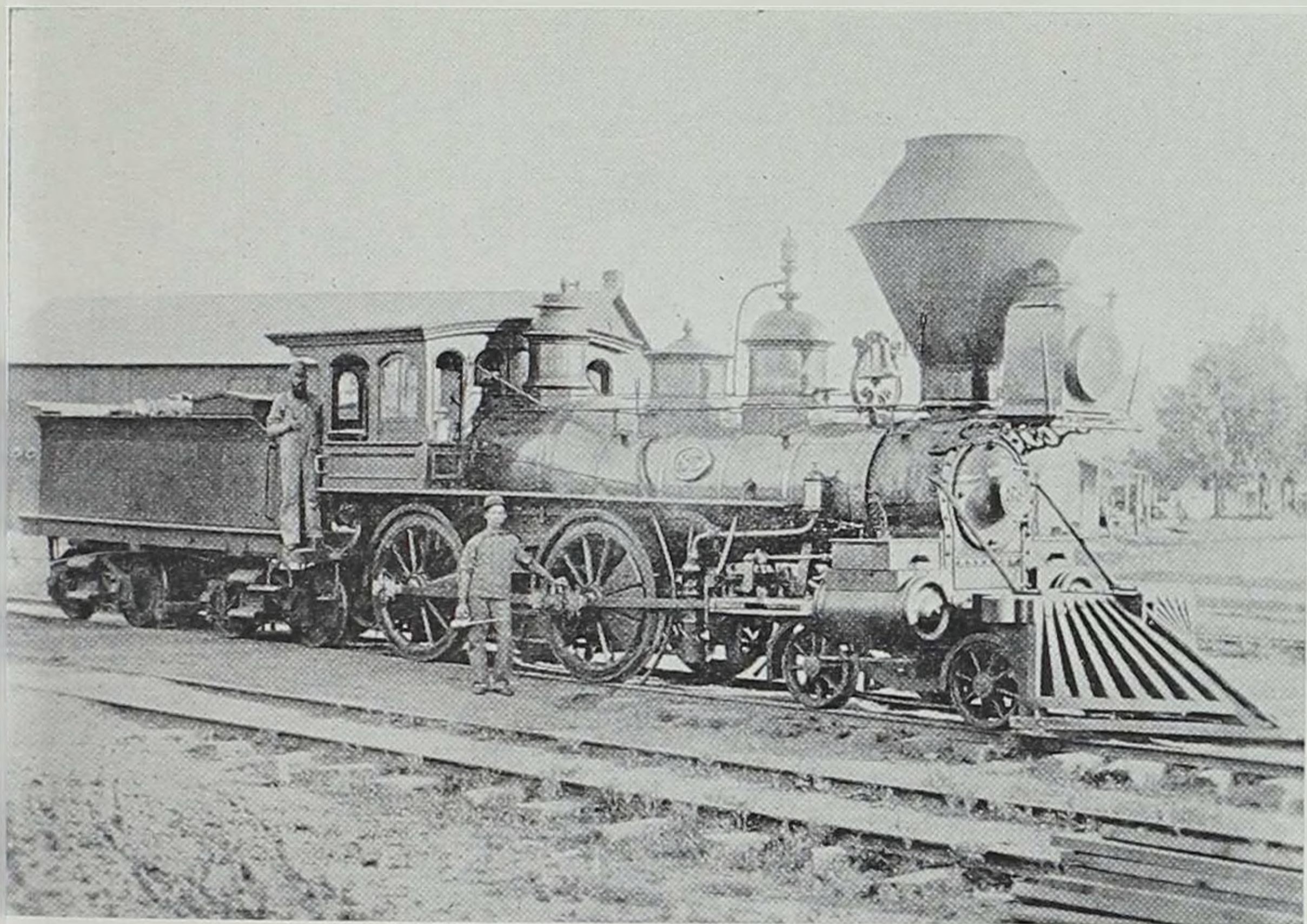
Passenger train No. 3 at Delaware.



*Edward H. Meyers Collection*

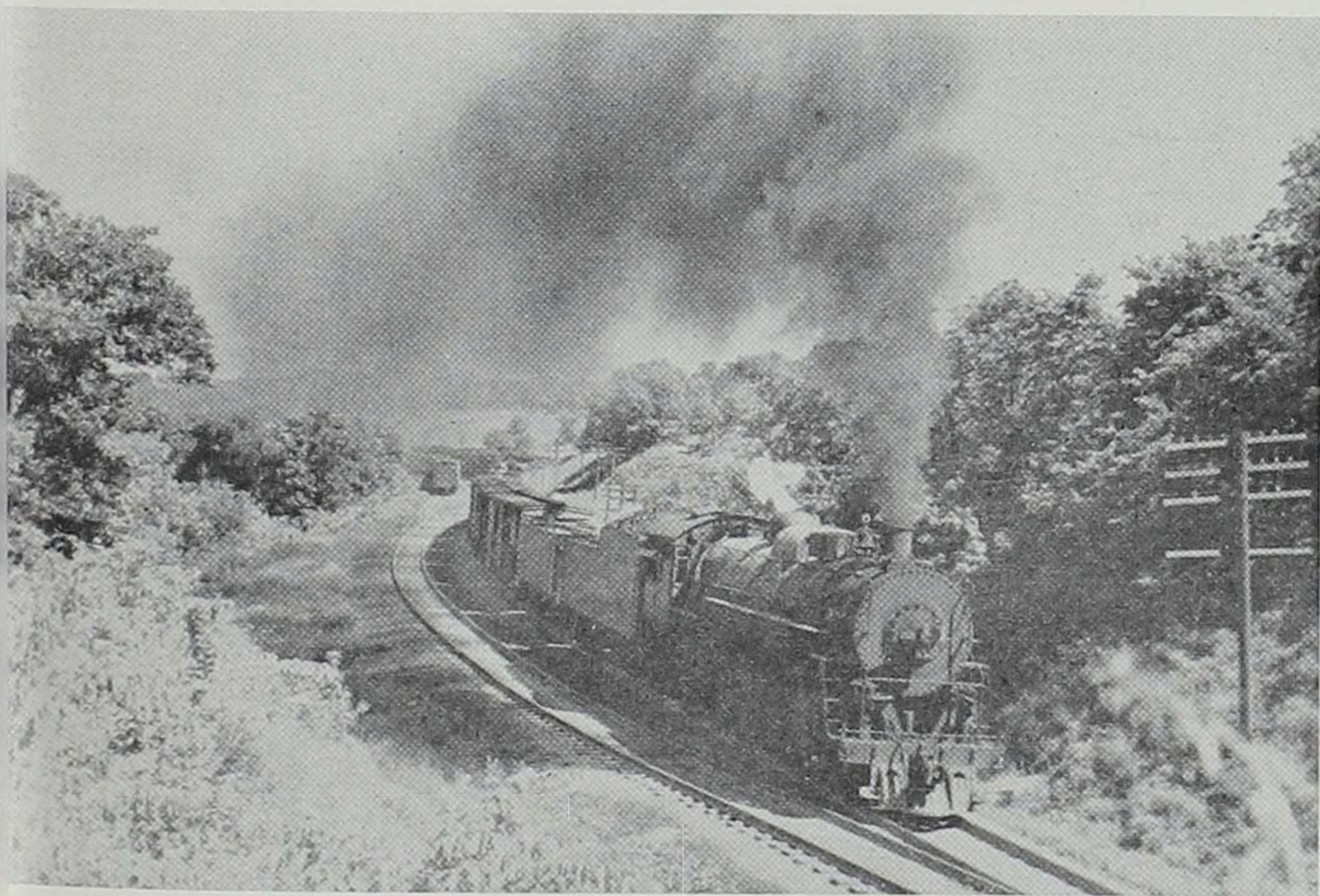
American type passenger engine at Webster City in 1900.





*R. J. Levis Collection*

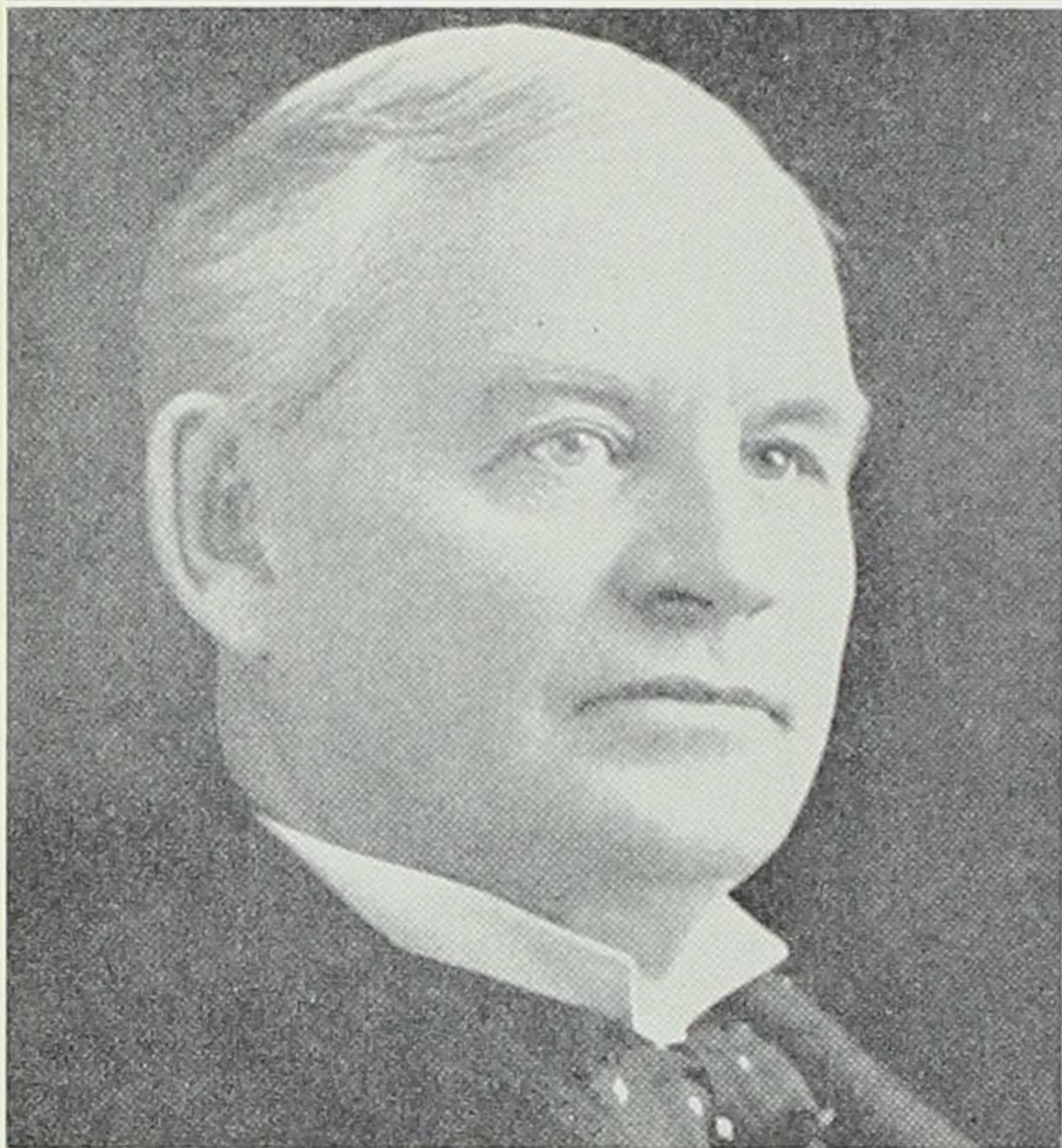
Early locomotive at Fort Dodge in 1871.



*Basil Koob Collection*

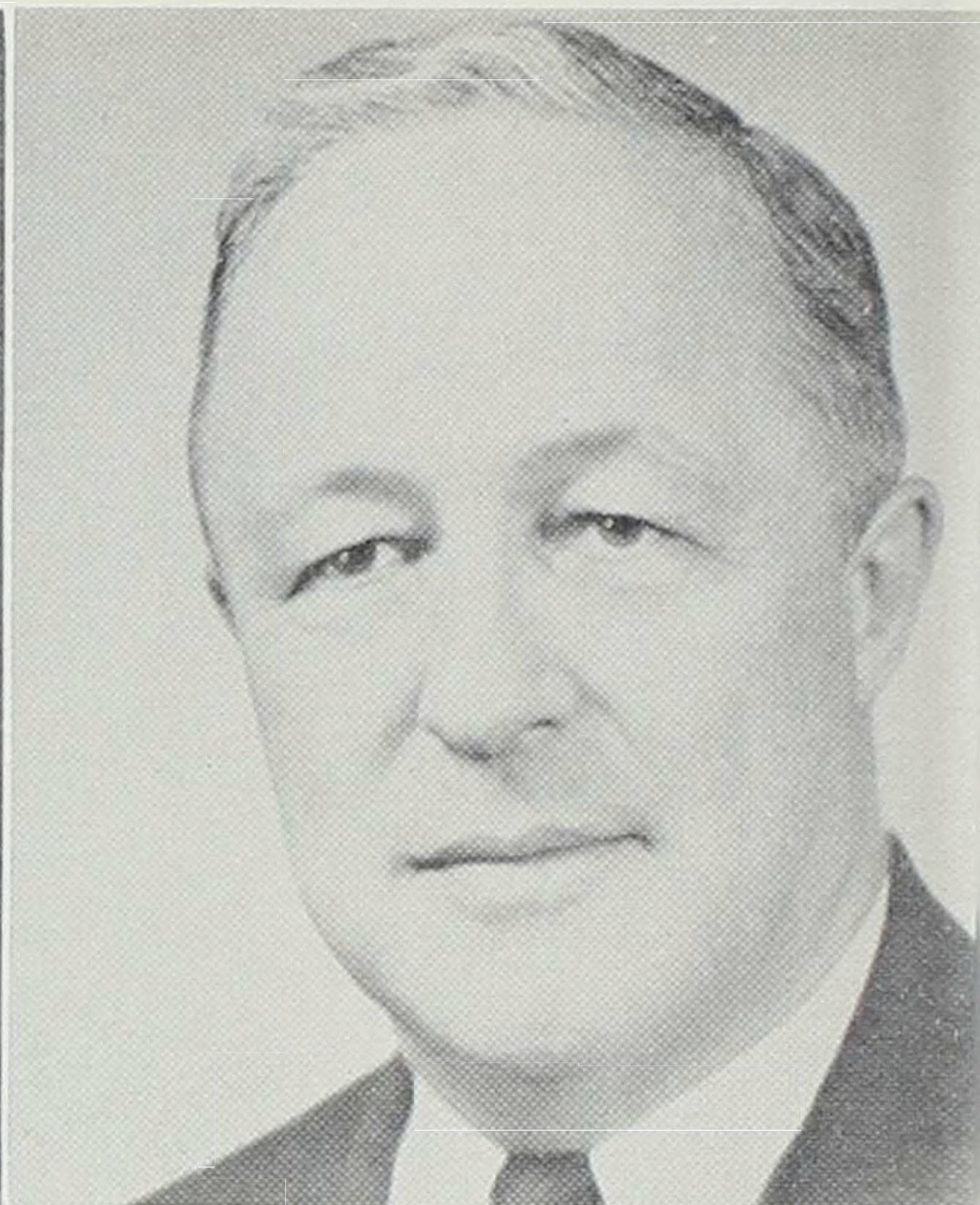
Eastbound meat and fruit train pulling up stiff grade out of Fort Dodge Yards.  
Car behind tender is auxiliary water tank.





*Courtesy Homer C. Platt*

CAPT. JOHN F. MERRY  
General Western Passenger Agent



*Courtesy Illinois Central*

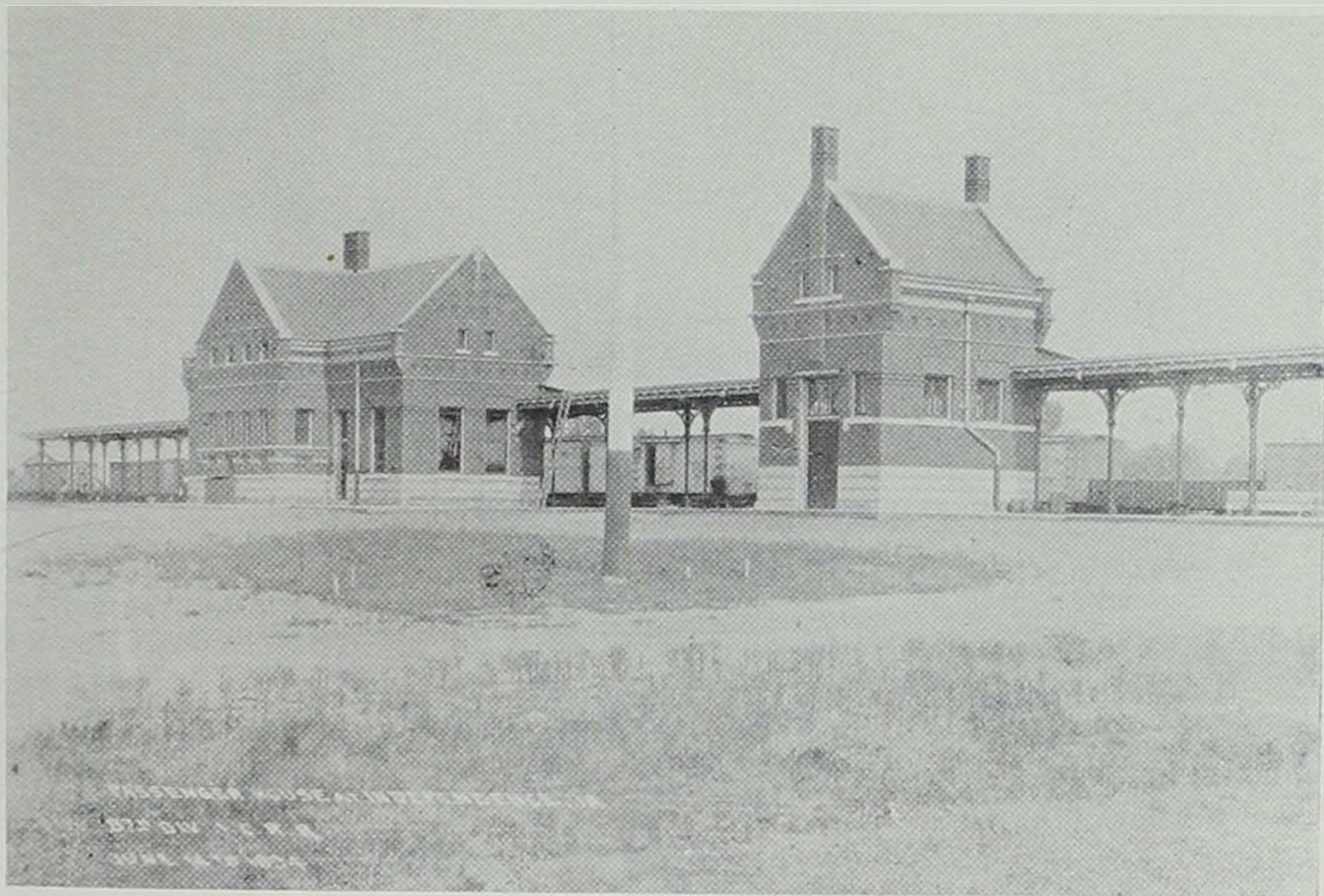
EMMET L. HOLMES  
Passenger Traffic Manager



*Courtesy Homer C. Platt*

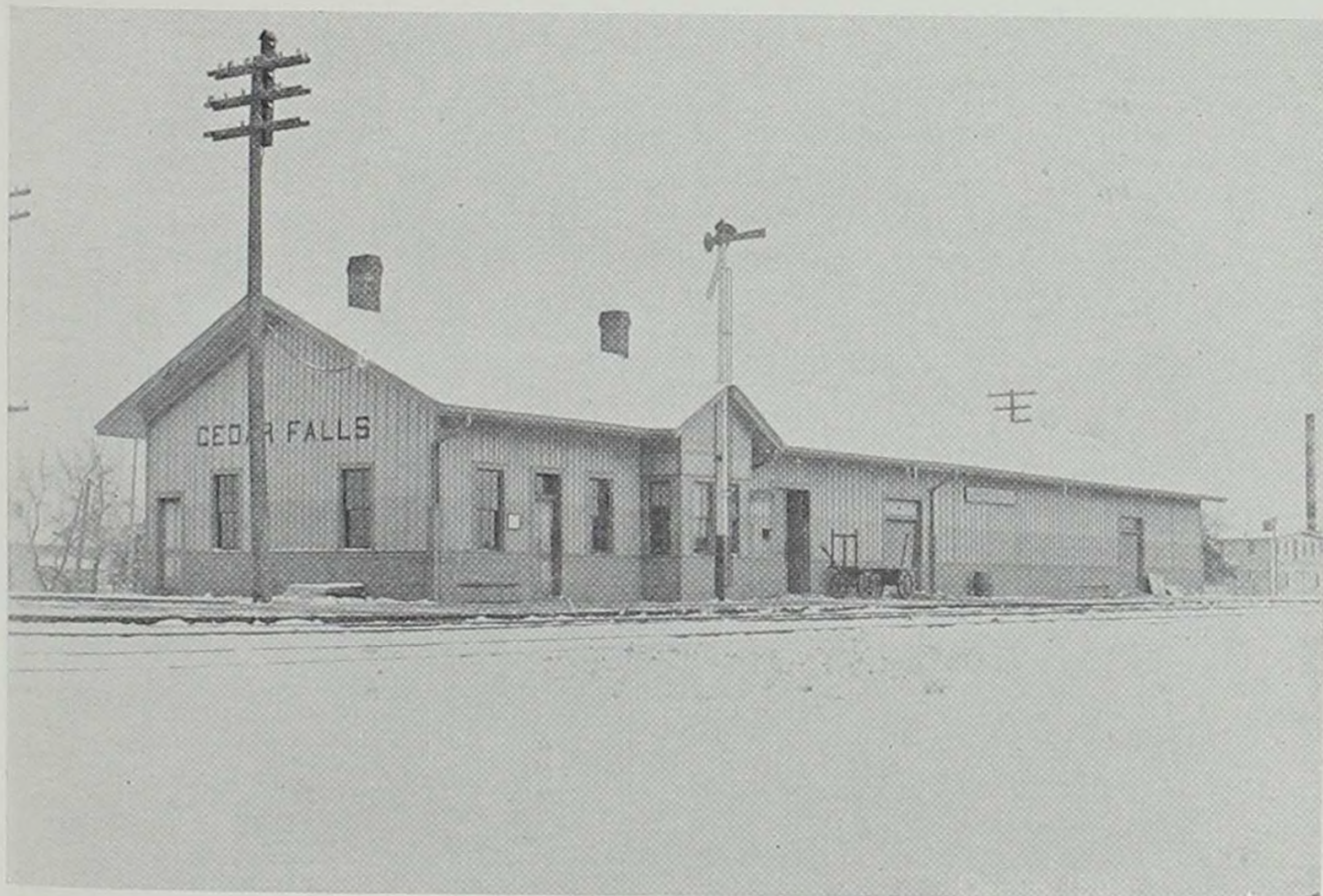
Reunion of 21st Regiment Iowa Volunteer Infantry shown in front of Illinois Central office where Captain Merry had his headquarters. Photo taken in Manchester, September, 1887.





*Courtesy Illinois Central*

Sturdy stone and brick station at Independence in 1894.



*Courtesy Illinois Central*

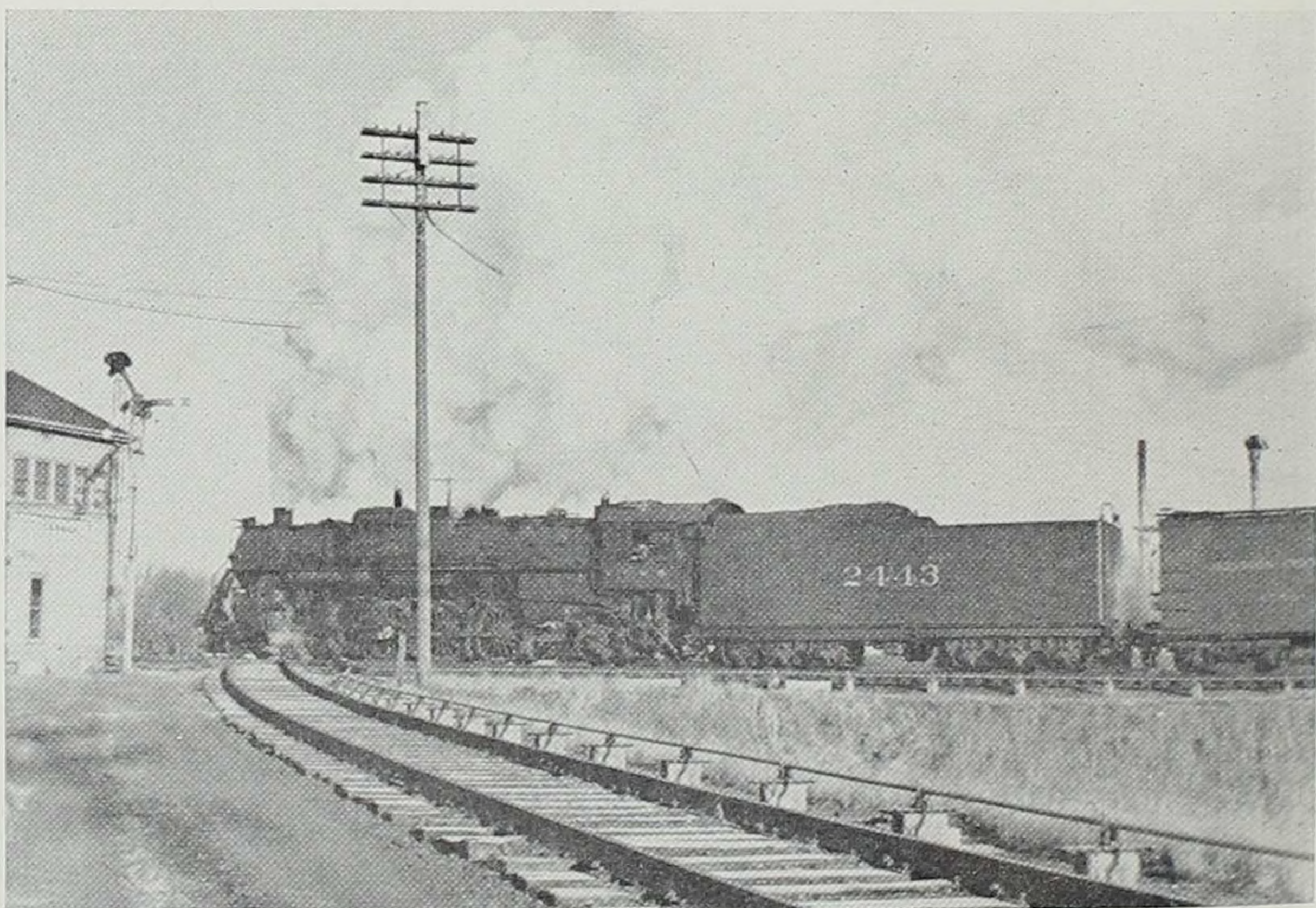
Illinois Central station at Cedar Falls in 1902.





*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.

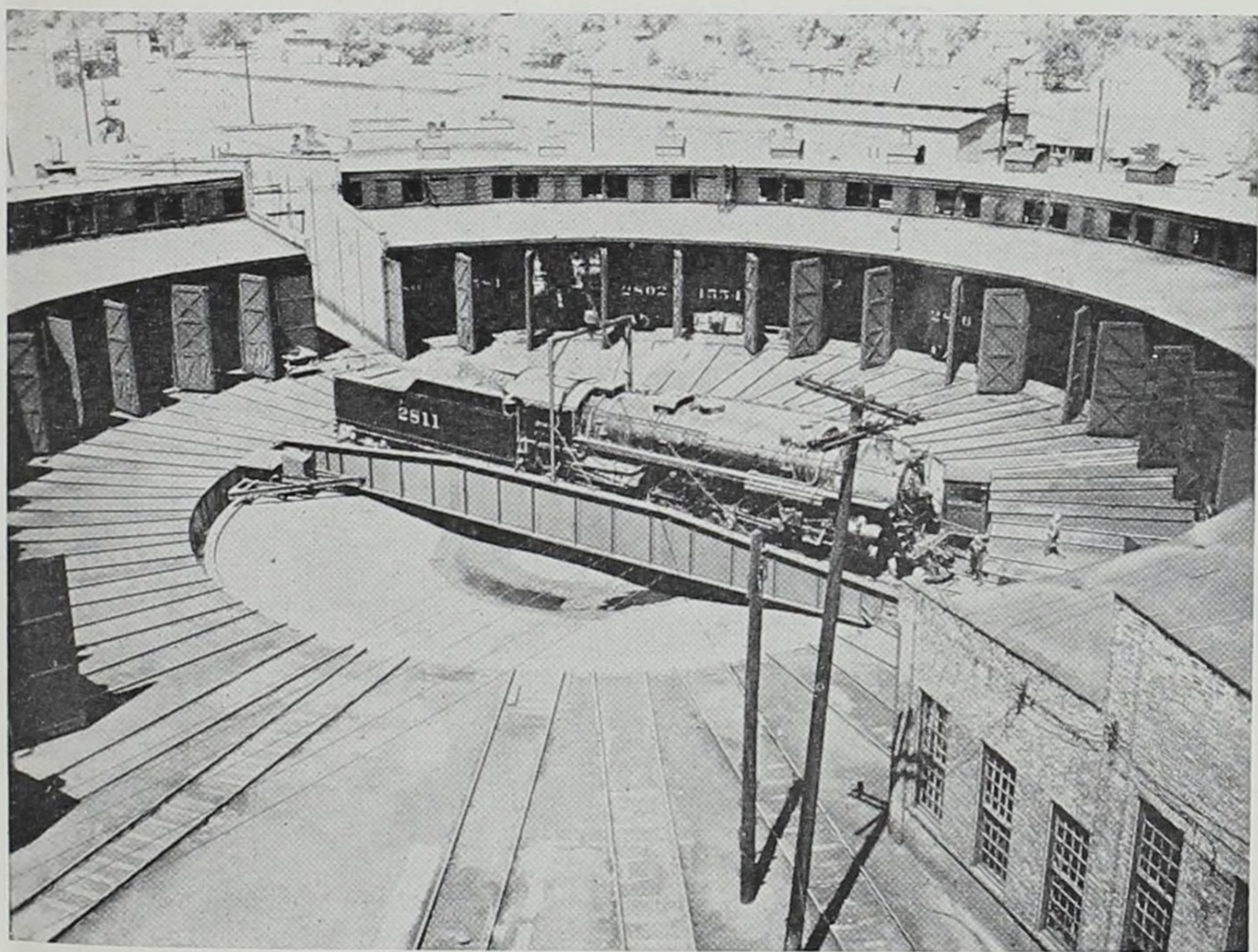


ILLINOIS CENTRAL ROUND HOUSE AND SHOPS, WATERLOO, IOWA



*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*

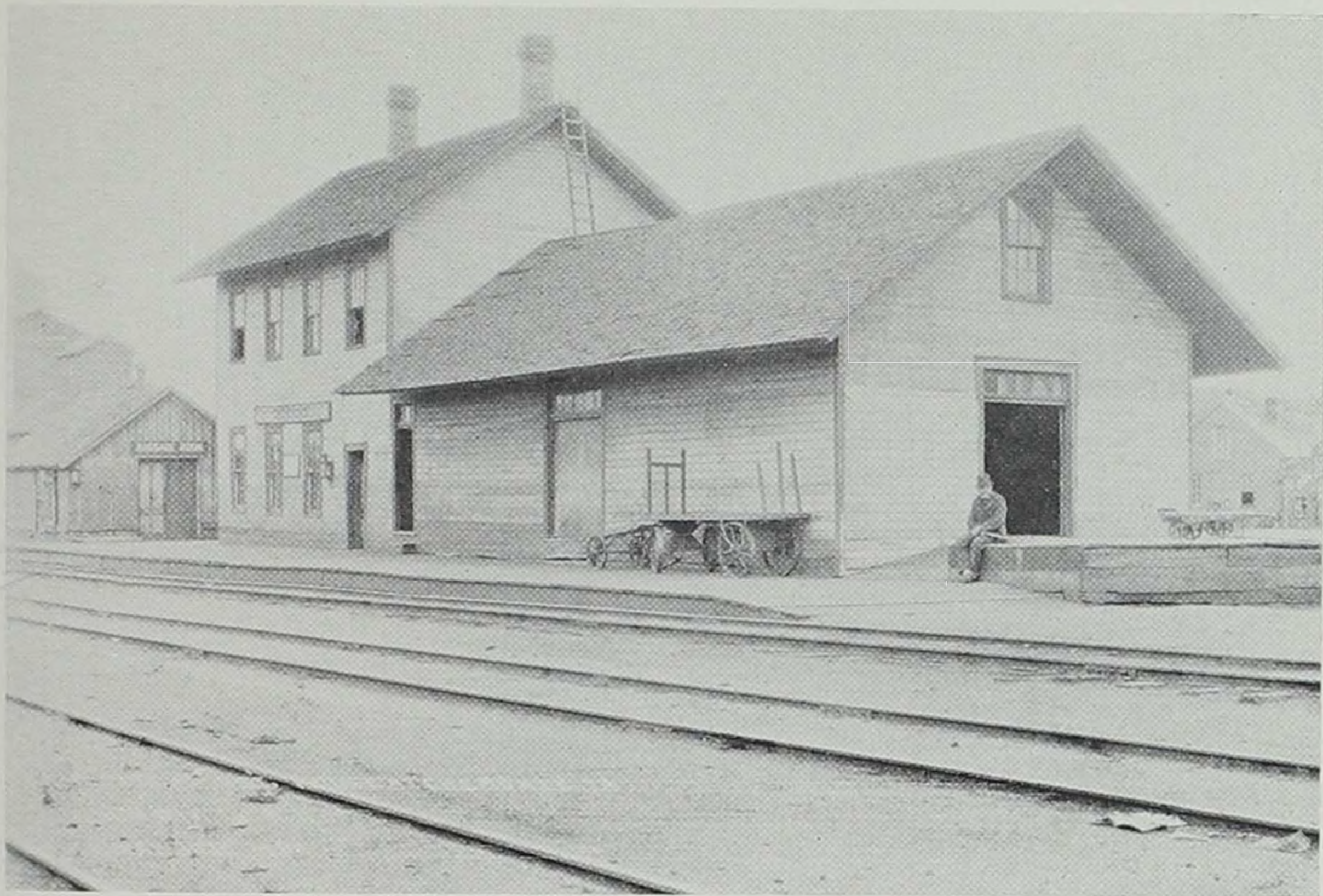
Illinois Central depot at Ackley showing station wagon and passengers waiting for train. Picture taken in 1896.



*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*

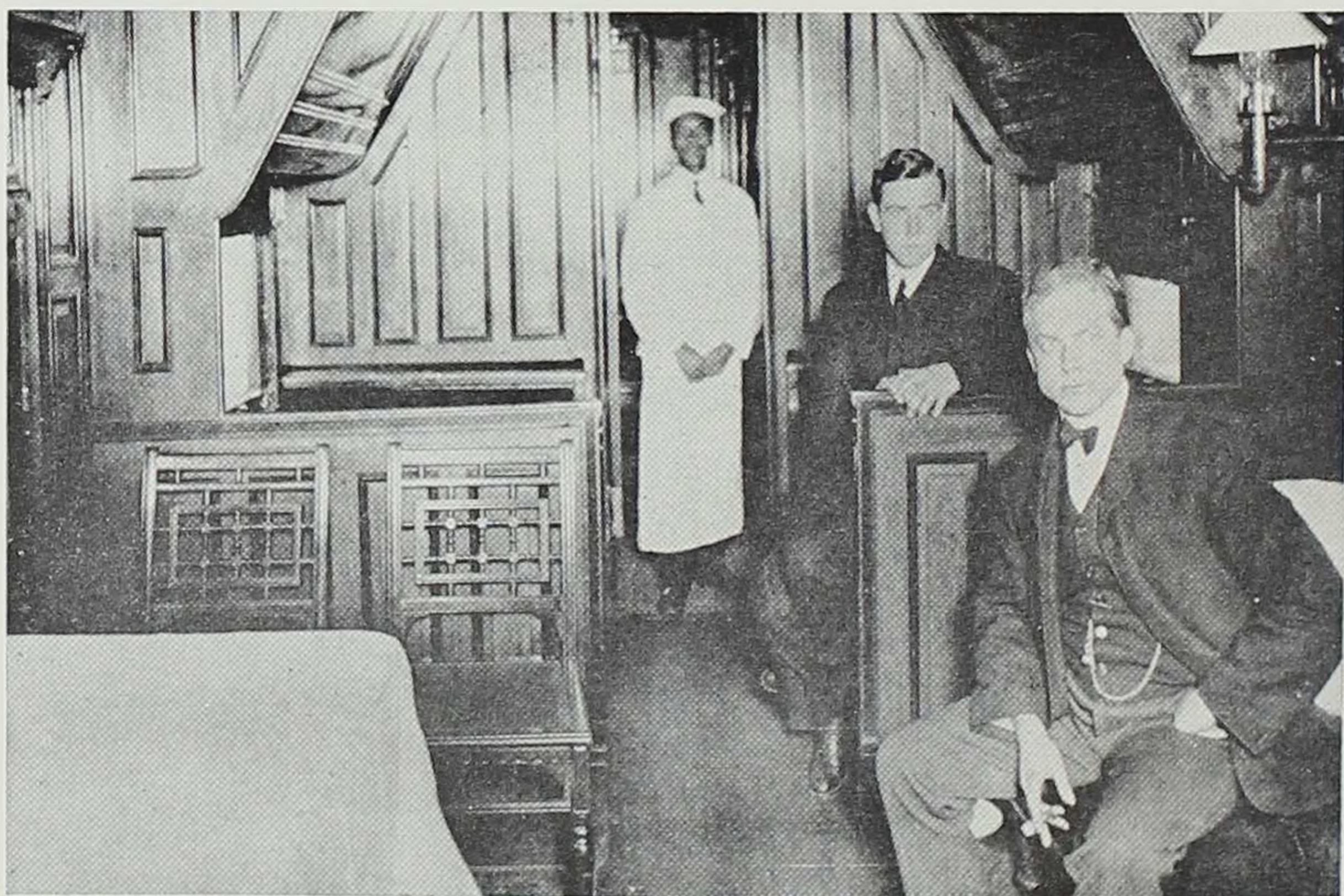
The old frame "passenger house" at Fort Dodge with its ornate weather vane as it appeared in 1894.





*Courtesy Illinois Central*

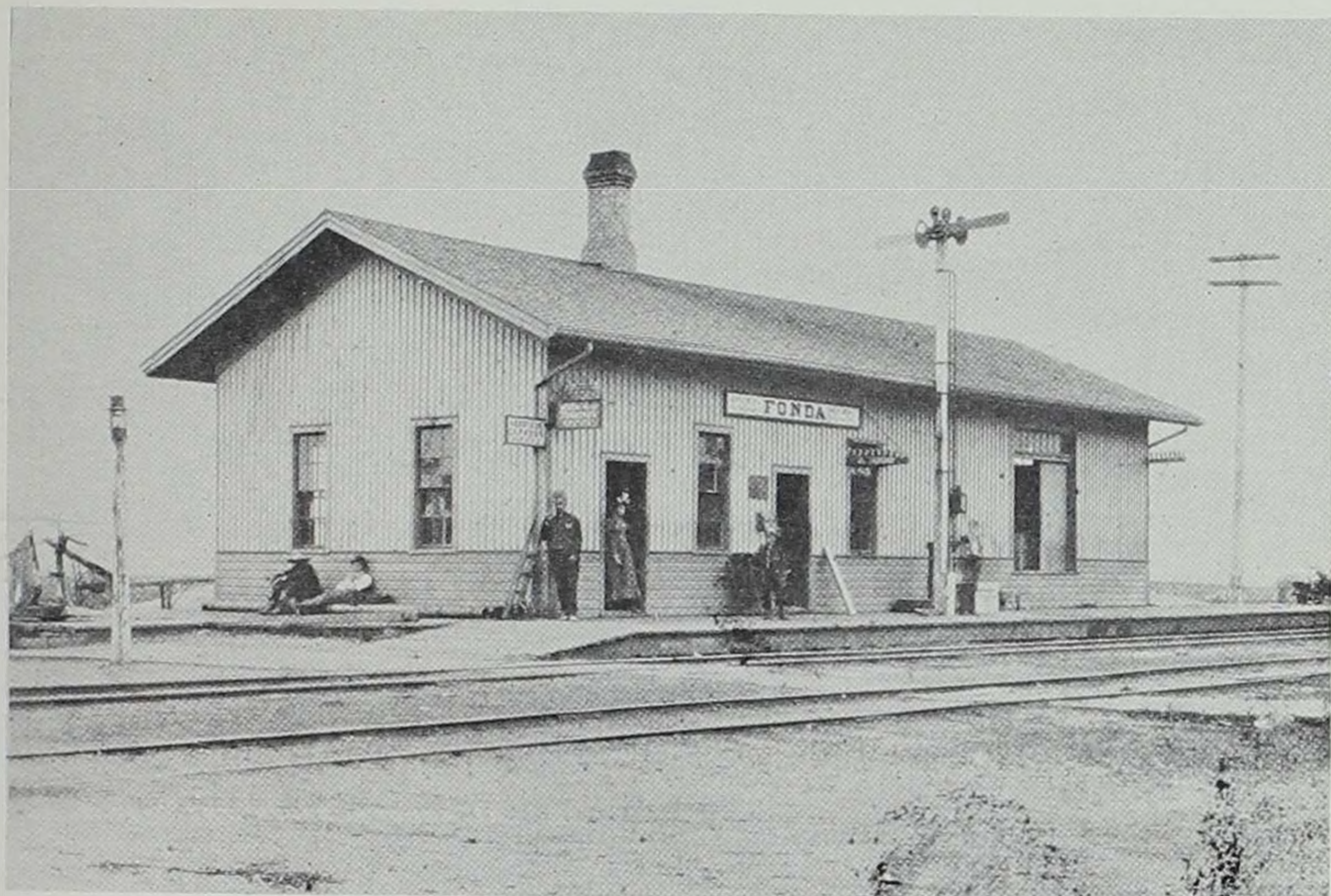
No woman's touch is evident in this scene of comfortable disorder in which Assistant Engineer L. W. Baldwin, working in 1899 on the line between Fort Dodge and Council Bluffs, takes a stitch in time on his trousers. Baldwin became vice-president of the Illinois Central's Operating Department in 1920,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



*Courtesy Illinois Central*

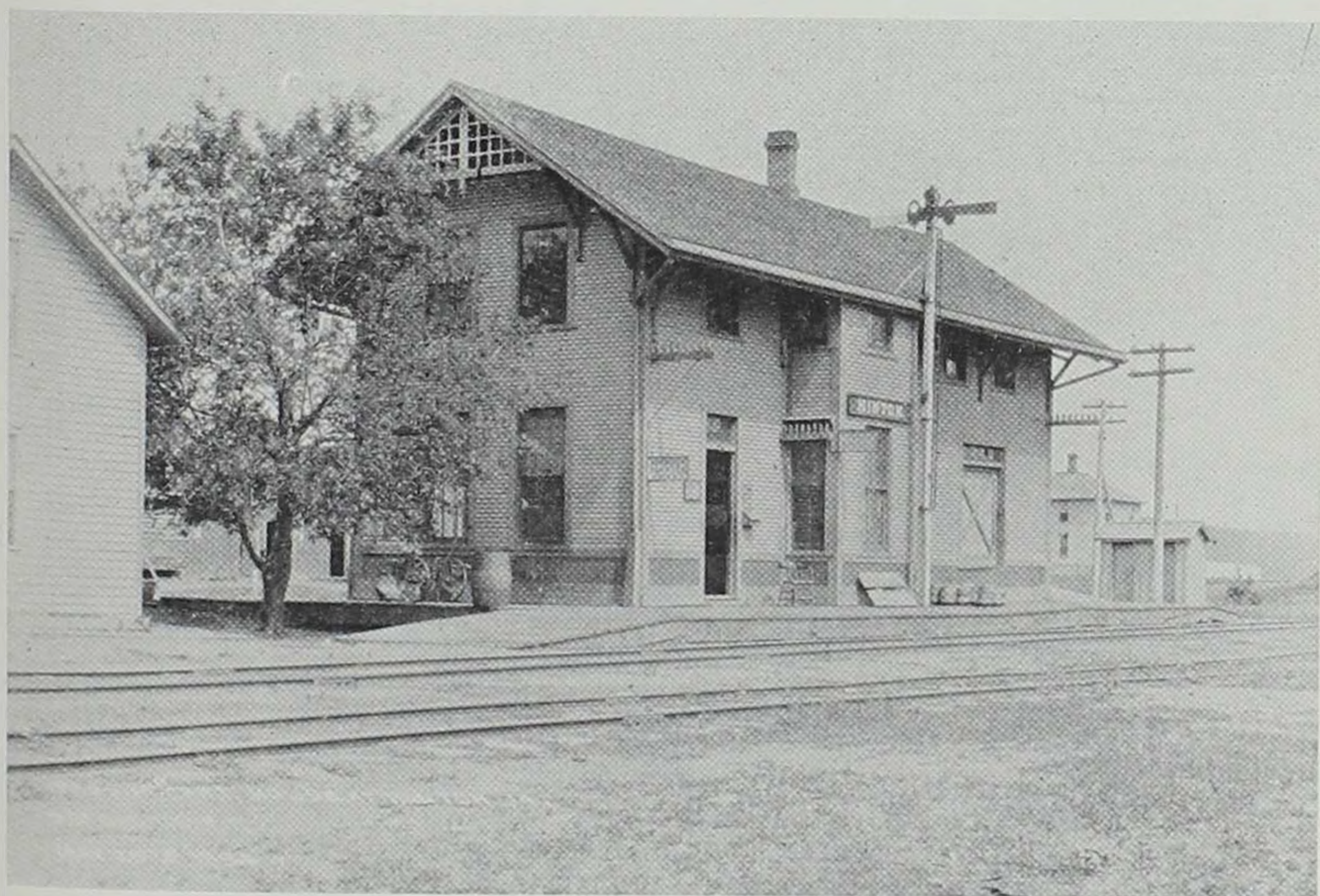
The Ghost Walks. Paymaster H. D. Warner (right) in 1905 in the Omaha-Chicago pay car. For almost sixty years employees received their pay from a window in such Illinois Central cars.





*Courtesy Illinois Central*

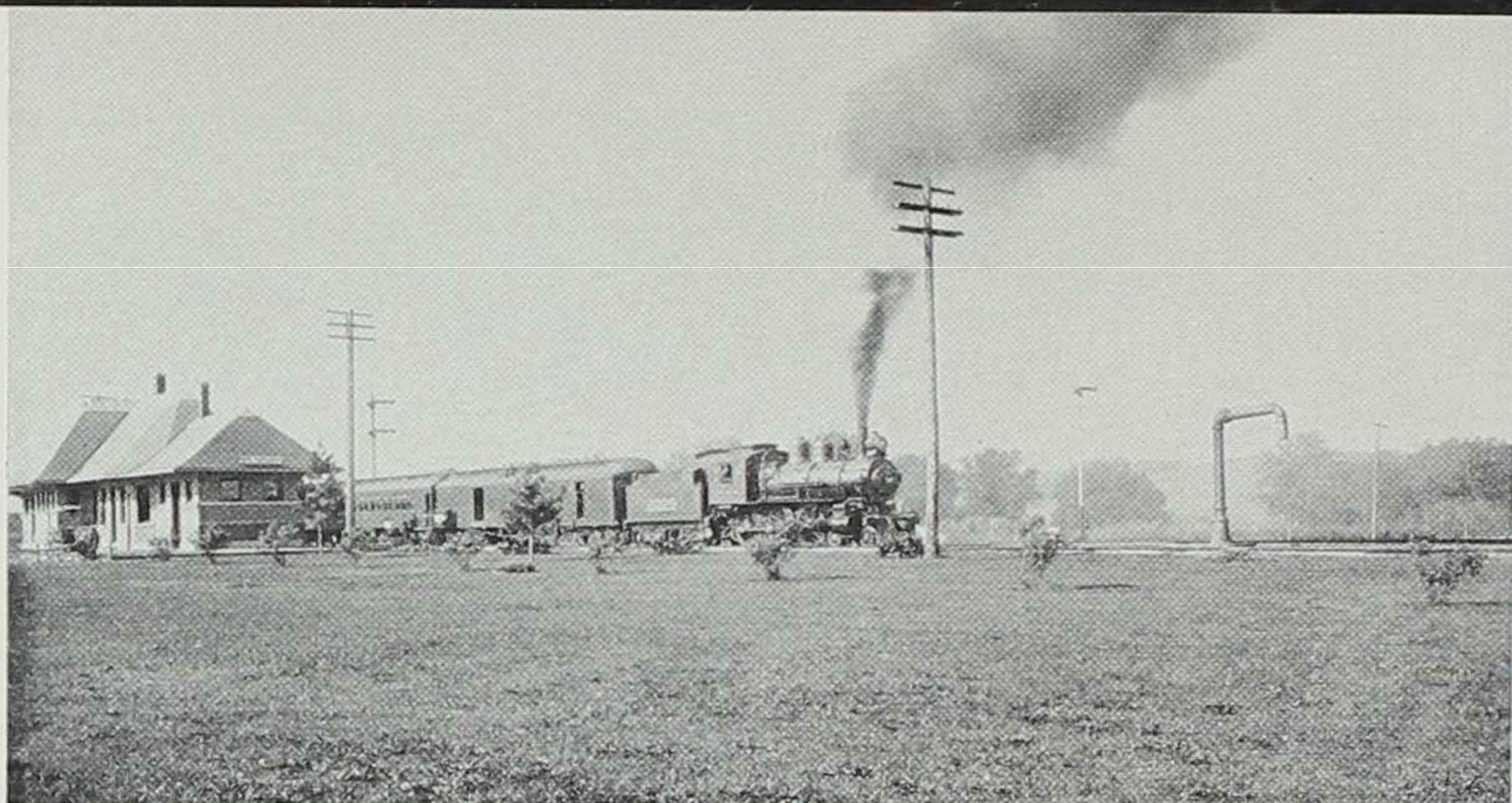
Fonda on the Fort Dodge-Sioux City line in the mid-1890's. The oil lamp at left was typical of the period. The station sign indicates it is 226.4 miles to Dubuque and 100.2 miles to Sioux City.



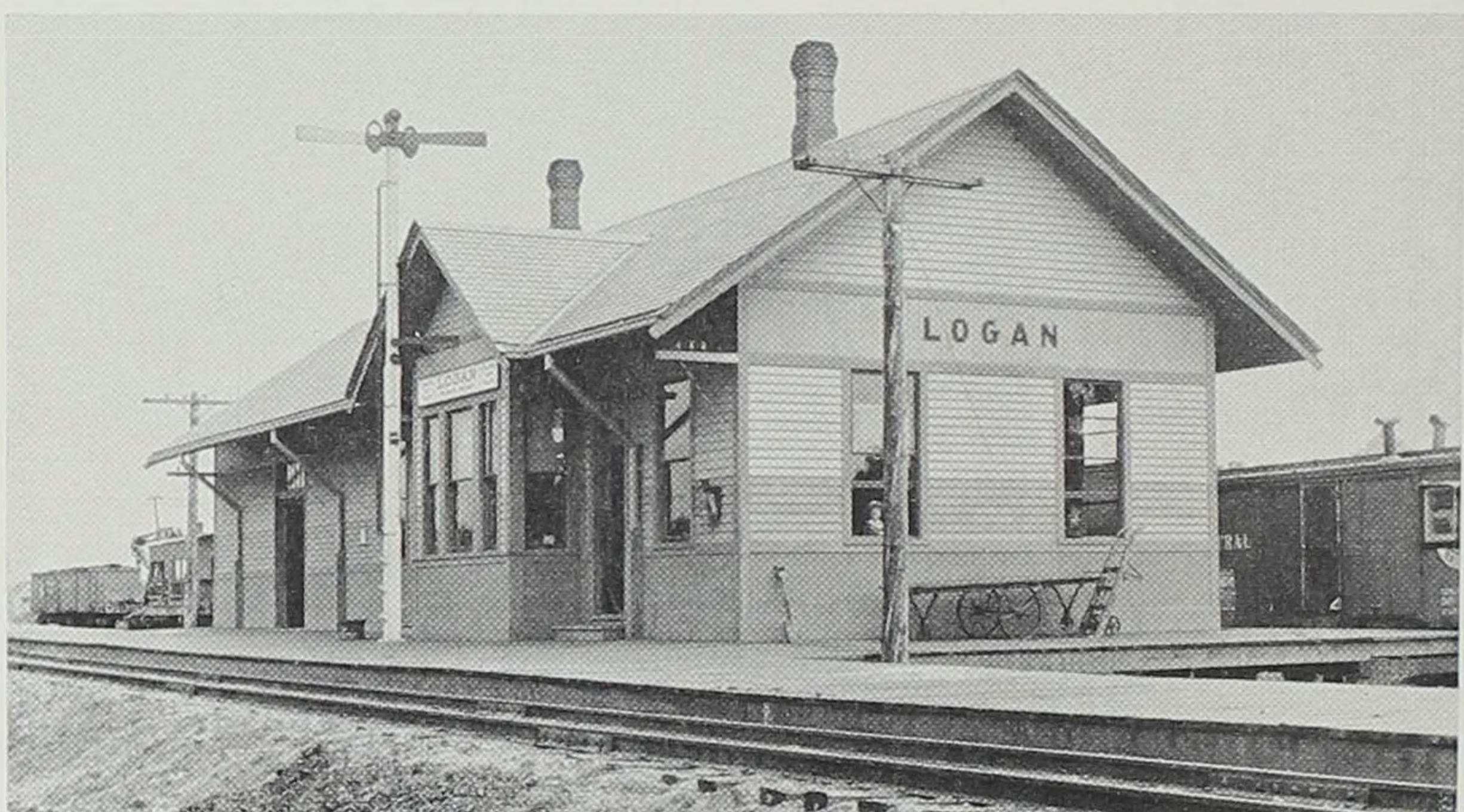
*Courtesy Illinois Central*

Hinton passenger and freight depot in 1894.





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

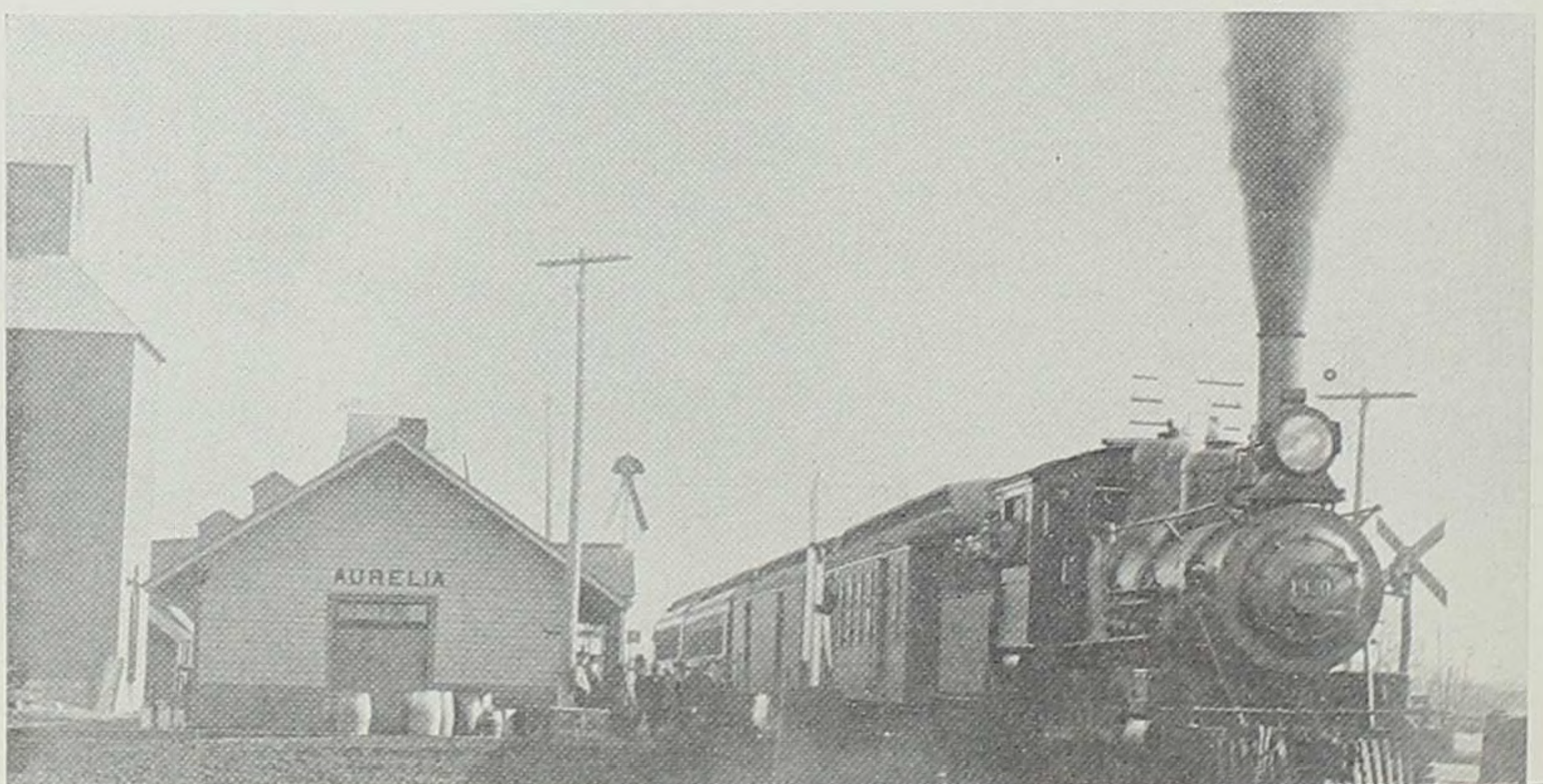


*Courtesy Illinois Central*

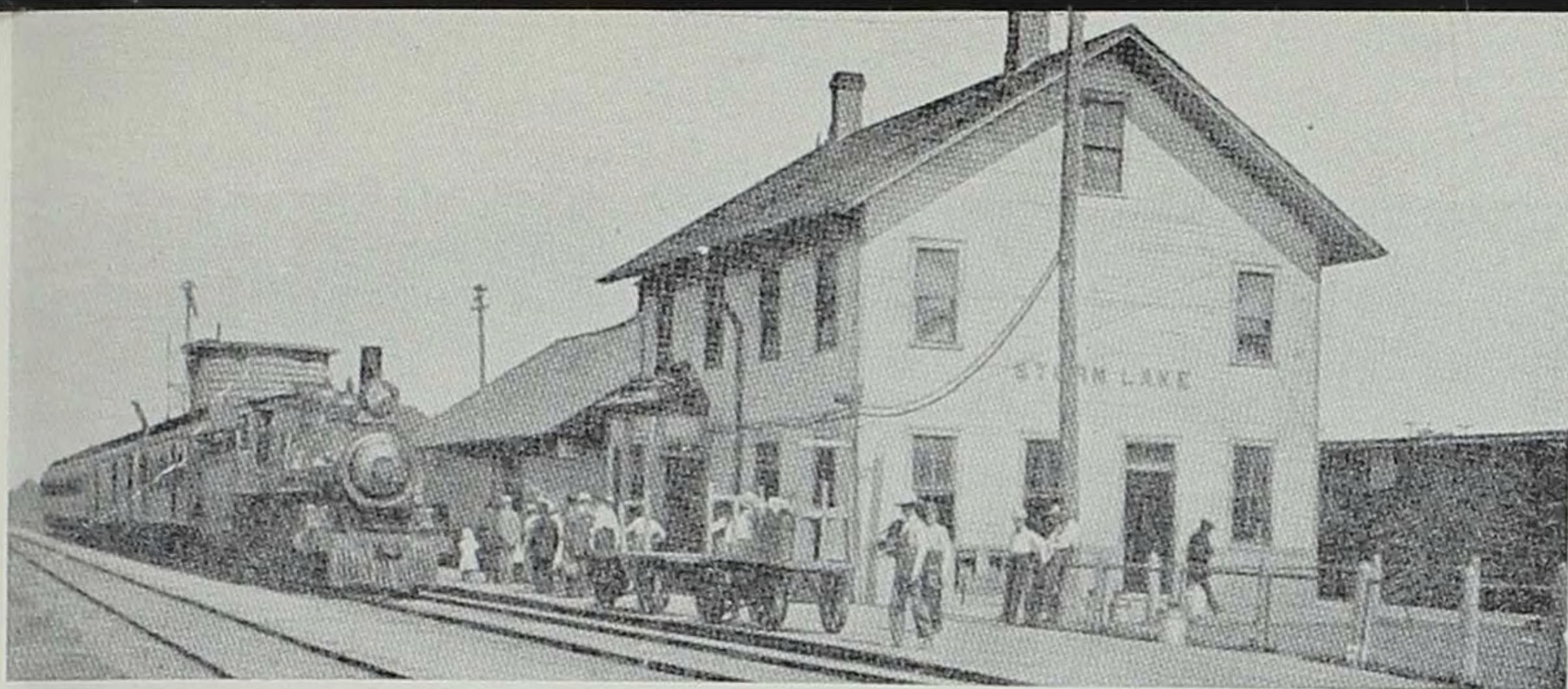
Logan depot shortly after Omaha branch of I.C. was built.

A busy time at the Aurelia station.

*Mrs. Guy Mills Collection*







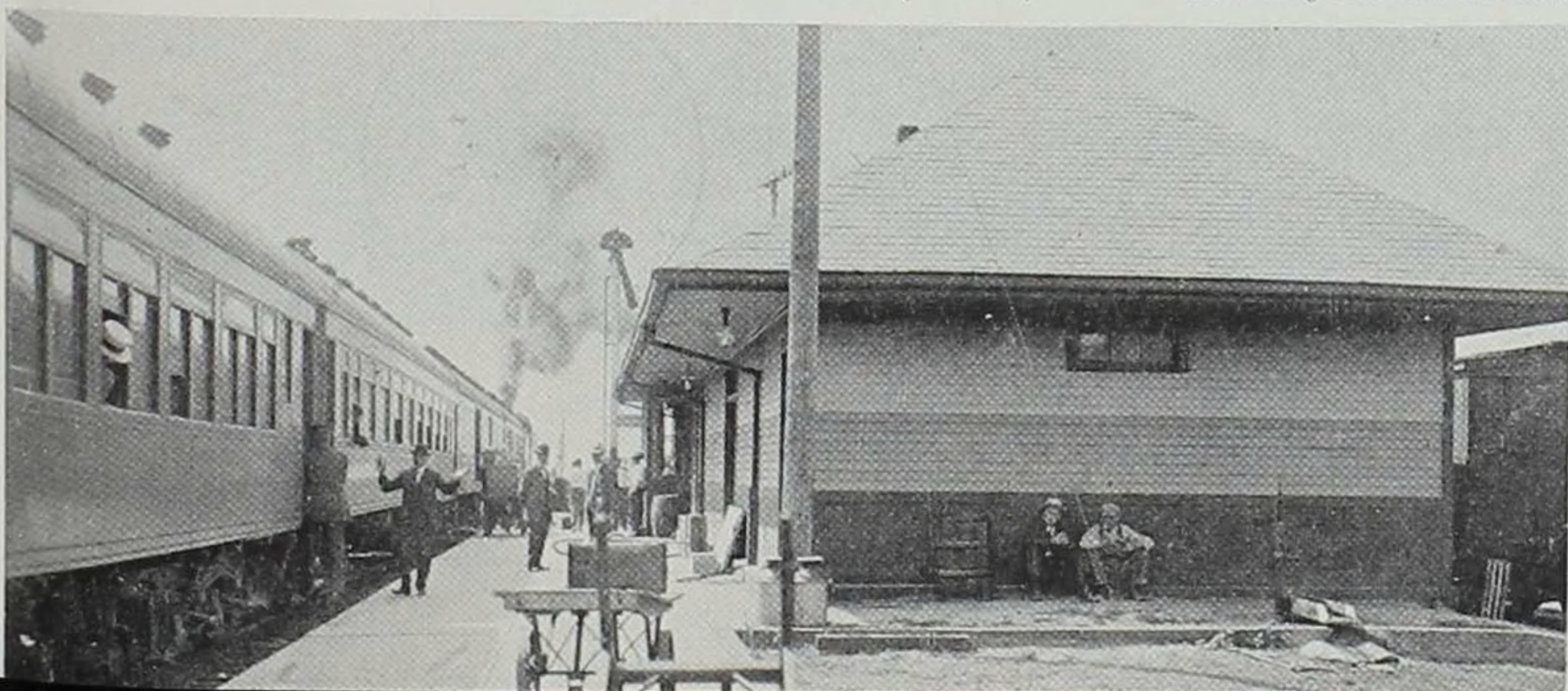
Train time at the Illinois Central depot at Storm Lake.



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.