

MAY 12 1992

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

JUL 25 1988

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad: Wilton Depot  
other names/site number Wilton Depot

## 2. Location

street & number N. Railroad Street ☐ not for publication  
city, town Wilton ☐ vicinity  
state IA code IA-19 county Muscatine code 139 zip code 52778

## 3. Classification

## Ownership of Property

☐ private  
☒ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

## Category of Property

☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

## Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
	<u>0</u> sites
	<u>0</u> structures
	<u>0</u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/ANumber of contributing resources previously  
listed in the National Register 0

## 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  
☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the  
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.  
In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

James E. Jackson DSHPO  
Signature of certifying official

July 13, 1988

Date

Bureau of Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of Iowa

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

## 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register.  
☐ See continuation sheet.  
☐ determined eligible for the National  
Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.  
☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register.  
☐ removed from the National Register.  
☐ other, (explain:)

Albert Egan  
Signature of the Keeper

8/25/88  
Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Rail Related Transportation, Depot

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant

Tentative plans for local museum

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Romanesque

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls brick

roof composition shingle

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

### 9. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation

Period of Significance

1898-1927

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

☒ See continuation sheet 9.2

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre, specifically .62 acres

### UTM References

A 

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

C 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

B 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description Beg. at iron pipe at N.E. corner Lot 1, Block 41, O.T., thence S66°28'W on the north line of said Block 41, 75.96 feet to the true point of beginning; thence N12°45'W 32 feet; thence S77°15'W, 412.19 feet; thence S37°21'E, 135.95 feet; thence N45°58'E, 97.15 feet; thence N74°10'E, 78.73 feet; thence N66°28'E, 197.44 feet to the true point of beginning

☐ See continuation sheet

### Boundary Justification

Contains depot and immediate surround (area once paved, located at juncture of two tracks.

☐ See continuation sheet

## 11. Form Prepared By Research/writing by Patricia Smith, Wilton Historical Society

name/title James E. Jacobsen, Bureau Chief

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date July 13, 1988

street & number 600 E. Locust telephone 515-281-4137

city or town Des Moines state IA zip code 50309

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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The Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad: Wilton Depot is a single story brick building, rectangular on plan (94' x 27'). The dark brown brick walls are flared out at the base around the entire perimeter. The roof is a hipped gable form. A broad overhanging roof, set above large decorative curved brackets, provides a covered way around the building's perimeter.

The plan consists of three main rooms. A baggage room on the west end measures 49' x 27'. A freight door is centered on the west end of the depot. Side doors are centered on each side of this room, each being flanked by two half windows, set high in the wall. A central office area measures twelve feet wide, and features rounded bays on each side, each having three full length windows. A waiting room is on the east end. This room has single doors on each side wall, set near the office, and six full length windows, two on each wall. A central stack, set on the roof ridge, serviced a stove in the office area. The original window configuration was (and remains) double hung sash with a single upper pane and two lower panes, divided vertically.

The station was located at the east end of a triangular-shaped railroad property in the center of the town. The Wilton Branch, connecting Muscatine to the south, with Wilton, connected with the main line at that point. A large open area to the east and south of the depot featured bricked walkways, and a park-like setting. These elements are now gone. Associated railroad structures included a massive sixty foot tall water tower (extant 1880-c. 1950's) just to the east, and a second water tower (c. 1920's) to the west. Neither of these remain. A range of repair buildings, including a quarter-round roundhouse were gone by the 1890's. In 1895, facilities included an earlier baggage/freight and passenger station complex, single story high. The present station, with a tile or slate roof, was the only railroad building present in 1901.

The depot was constructed in 1898. The original roof was replaced with composition shingles. The interior remained in mint condition until quite recently. Vandalism and deterioration due to abandonment have largely eliminated these interior features. The office area desks remain as does the interior trim. All windows are broken out and are presently covered with protective plywood sheets. Interior woodwork including wainscoting remains intact. Ceiling plaster and lath are largely gone in the office area. The roof, including covering and sub-roof, are in a deteriorated state. Only the west roof plane

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has been recovered.

The freight room floor is made of paving brick, matching that which once surrounded the building, the waiting room floor is made of square tile, the other floors are of wood.

**Present Condition:**

There have been no significant structural changes in the building since 1898. The local Federated Womens' Club successfully promoted the addition of indoor toilets. In 1922, a minor interior alteration was made when a womens' restroom was installed in the corner of the passenger waiting room. The original tile roof was replaced with an asphalt shingle roof in the 1950's. The walls of the building are in good structural condition. The integrity of the building as an original rail depot is extant.

In 1895, the City of Wilton purchased the Depot from the railroad for a sum of \$1.00. Recently the City Council has decided to transfer the building to the Wilton Historical Society for use as a museum.

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The Wilton Depot calls attention to the key part that the railroad has played in the town's history. More specifically, the depot marks a second phase in the relationship of Wilton to the Rock Island Railroad when the town served as a focal point for railroad passenger service. During the first phase, which encompassed the period from the town's beginnings to 1898, Wilton had grown and prospered as a repair/maintenance center for the Southwestern division of the Rock Island line where all mainline trains stopped. Thereafter (with the loss of the shops after the Rock Island built a separate line from Davenport to Muscatine) Wilton became a Junction point to which all passengers wishing to travel west on the main line from Muscatine came to Wilton to catch the westbound passenger train.

Probably in anticipation of increased transportation traffic, the Rock Island erected a new brick depot in Wilton as they were putting down an additional track making it a double track system to Moscow. In addition to Wilton's role as a junction for passenger service, the town was a shipping center for livestock and grain and a water and coaling point along the line. The construction of the new depot at Wilton marks a general upgrading of the Rock Island line across the state.

### The First Phase of Railroad History:

During the first phase, which encompassed the period from the town's beginnings in 1848 until the construction of the subject depot in 1898, Wilton had grown and prospered as a repair maintenance center, the eastern terminus point of the Southwestern Division, servicing all mainline trains. The Mississippi and Missouri Railroad reached Wilton in 1855 from Davenport. The first passenger train reached the town on November 20 of that year. A plain wooden shed then served the purpose of a depot. A freight house was added in 1856 along with the first real depot building adjacent to the freight house. In the succeeding years, Wilton became a major repair point for trains, employing 100-25 railroad men.

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By 1866 a roundhouse and turntable, a carpenter shop, and a dispatch office were all in full operation. The C.R.I. and P. repair shops were located to Wilton in 1877. In 1876, the ticket office was expanded. In 1883, the United States Lime Company engaged the railroad to ship fifteen car loads of lime per day over the Rock Island line. As business increased the repair shop was enlarged to twice its original size (1885). Passenger service increased during this period as well. The Wilton Exponent of February 19, 1875 reported: "From 4:00 Tuesday morning until 10:00 in the evening, 42 trains...arrived at or departed from this station. Where is the town that can boast such railroad proportions?" Further growth was documented in the Wilton Review of March 25, 1880: "Business is booming on the C.R.I. and P. Railroad. Three days in succession last week there were 43 trains passed this place on the main line. Add to this about 20 on the branch line and you have over 60 trains a day."

In the fall of 1881, the C.R.I. and P. Railroad added a line from Muscatine to Davenport, which followed the Mississippi River. Direct routing of trains along this track into Davenport left Wilton marooned. The change went into effect on November 10. The Wilton Review discounted the impact of the change, noting that the offices of the division Train Dispatcher and Train Master had departed for Davenport, and that other railroad employees had been moving out all summer preparatory to the new routes and schedules. However "...As fast as one moved out, the house was filled by a permanent resident who either came here to educate his children at the Academy or was attracted by the beauty of the place or its business inducements." The roundhouse and car shops soon located further west, reducing Wilton to the role of a line junction point.

A later retrospective is perhaps more descriptive of the real impact of the change:

"When they removed all of their equipment and buildings, the Division set up was as follows--Round House with 9 stalls, a Turntable, Blacksmith Shop with 4 forges employing 4 men to each forge, a large carpenter shop for the bridge gang with 8 or 10 men and a construction train with 15 to 20 men, about 15



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Conductors, 15 Engineers, 15 Firemen and Brakemen for all of the trains, 4 Telegraph Operators, Dispatcher Office, Wheel Tapping gang of 4 or 5 men. When all of this left this little berg, it was disastrous."

As of May, 1882, Wilton continued to serve as division point in terms of railroad mail car service to Council Bluffs. The mail clerks sorted the mail en route, a Rock Island innovation begun that year. Similarly, Wilton was the terminus point for the "Cannon Ball", a new train established in 1883 to service the Chicago-Twin Cities. "Water Cranes" watered west and east bound trains, the water coming from a railroad low dam across Mud Creek, and thereafter pumped by steam power to the standpipe west of the depot.

The "Plug" continued to travel thrice daily between Wilton and Muscatine to the south, a rate that would increase to four times daily by 1900. This train departed from the south side of the depot. The majority of main line passenger trains travelling east and west stopped at Wilton to make connections with this short line. In 1883 a six-mile "Lime Kiln Branch" to Lime City was constructed, beginning twenty years of hauling lime, ballast stone, and building stone as well as local grain and livestock. An estimated 500 carloads of freight were generated annually, but by 1900 the line was too decrepit for use and was abandoned following a three year attempt to run horse cars along its length.

By 1895, Wilton retained the old baggage and freight house, single story, at Cherry and North Railroad Streets, the old depot adjacent, the two joined by an open platform (see photo) and several water tanks. The various other railroad structures were gone.

While the first phase of railroad history in Wilton was clearly the more significant, there are no surviving resources available for nomination to associate with that period.

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### The Second Phase:

It was in response to the rapid growth of rail service and in anticipation of increased rail traffic that the present depot was built in 1898. The construction of the depot marked the beginning of the second phase of railroad history in Wilton. During the spring of that same year, the Rock Island double tracked the line to Moscow, Iowa. A new depot was first hinted at as being a possibility in the December 16, 1887 Tipton Advertiser. The following March 17, the same source noted the construction of the road's largest water tank, twenty feet in diameter and sixty feet high. The stock yards are to be moved, a new dep and freight office erected and other substantial improvements made." The depot was a "first class depot of fine brick work, a tile roof with arch braced overhang, a freight room on the west end, a waiting room with colored block floor and an office in the center." The depot serviced trains on its north and south sides.

This second phase was marked by continued growth in passenger, freight, and mail service, and a decline and eventually an end in the provision of repair service. However, Wilton maintained its role as a railroad junction point as before. The depot construction coincided with the construction of the road's largest watertank, measuring 20 feet in diameter and sixty feet high.

Clark Brown was station agent from 1893 through 1911. M. J. Doyle (1887-1969) replaced him that year, serving in that role until 1952. Doyle started in railroad work at the depot in 1902. He would also serve two terms as town councilman, and a member of the township rationing board during World War II. Six railroad employees worked at the depot as of 1911. Doyle was the sole employee at the depot for his last 20 years of service.

The railroad offered same day travel with return to Chicago by 1922. A passing train awakened the town to a major industrial fire that same year, when the Swift packing plant near the depot burned. In 1911, there were six passenger trains which stopped daily at Wilton. This rate declined to one train per day by

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1948. By 1947 there were five or six daily freight trains through Wilton.

The American Legion landscaped the depot, adding a flagpole and plantings in 1927.\* The depot construction coincided with a minor building boom in Wilton. Three new commercial brick buildings were constructed in the years 1898-99,

The "Omaha Limited" or "Train #23" linked Chicago and Council Bluffs, and passed through Wilton. The "Buttermilk Special" was a noted local short run train. The "Rocky Mountain Limited" or "Train #7" provided mail service to Wilton but didn't stop there.

As trains became faster and stops less frequent, towns like Wilton declined in importance to the railroads. The faster trains didn't stop and their speeds led a number of citizens to petition without success for an underpass beneath the rails. The railroad continued to serve as a vital link to the national culture. In July of 1915, the touring Liberty Bell passed through Wilton on its way to the Panama Exposition. The 70th anniversary of the C.R.I. and P. Railroad was observed at Wilton in 1922, ceremonies being held at the depot where Benjamin B. Brayton (then deceased) was honored for a lifetime of service to the Road. In 1937 the 100 mile per hour "Rocket Train" came to town, and in 1955, the "Eisenhower Special" presidential campaign train visited the town.

The decline in railroad passenger and freight traffic, in response to other forms of transportation, reduced business at the depot, part time service being offered between 1963 and 1974, when the depot closed. In the 1960's the depot services at Wilton and Durant were combined in favor of the latter point. The building remained vacant except for a brief use for storage in the 1970's.

There is no sharp demarcation in time to terminate the period of associated significance for the Wilton Depot. 1911 appears to have been the high water mark of railroad service to the community.

\*Given current research, this final community effort to revamp their local depot provides a useful date for concluding the period of significance. The date at which all railroad functions save the depot were discontinued is not-known, but appears to have been c. 1907. Since only the depot survives, it is most fitting that it exemplify that specific function only, and this depot continued as a valued community service with a heavy and on-going usage at least through 1927.

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Postcard view of Wilton Depot, c. 1917, showing "Plug"

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Andreas. Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa, 1875,  
Published by Andreas Atlas Co.

Behnke, Ed. (Former Depot Agent for the Rock Island Railroad.)  
Interview by Pat Smith of the Wilton Historical Society,  
October 20, 1987.

Cole, Cyrenus. Iowa through the Years, Des Moines, Iowa: State  
Historical Society of Iowa, 1940.

Frymoyer, Curtis. Wilton, Moscow, & Yesteryear, Wilton, Iowa: Wilton  
Bicentennial Committee, 1976.

Grunder, Fay. Original painting, 1975 - The Wilton Depot. Owner Thelma  
Nopolous, Wilton, Iowa.

Huebinger Surveying & Map Publishing Company. Atlas of Muscatine County,  
Iowa, Davenport, Iowa, 1899.

Mahan, Charles. Interview by Pat Smith of the Wilton Historical Society,  
October 19, 1987. (Photo) The Muscatine Journal November 2, 1984.

Sage, Leland L. A History of Iowa, Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University  
Press, 1974.

Sanborn Fire Maps: 1895, 1901, 1909, 1922, and 1939.

The Tipton Advertiser: December 16, 1897 and March 17, 1898.

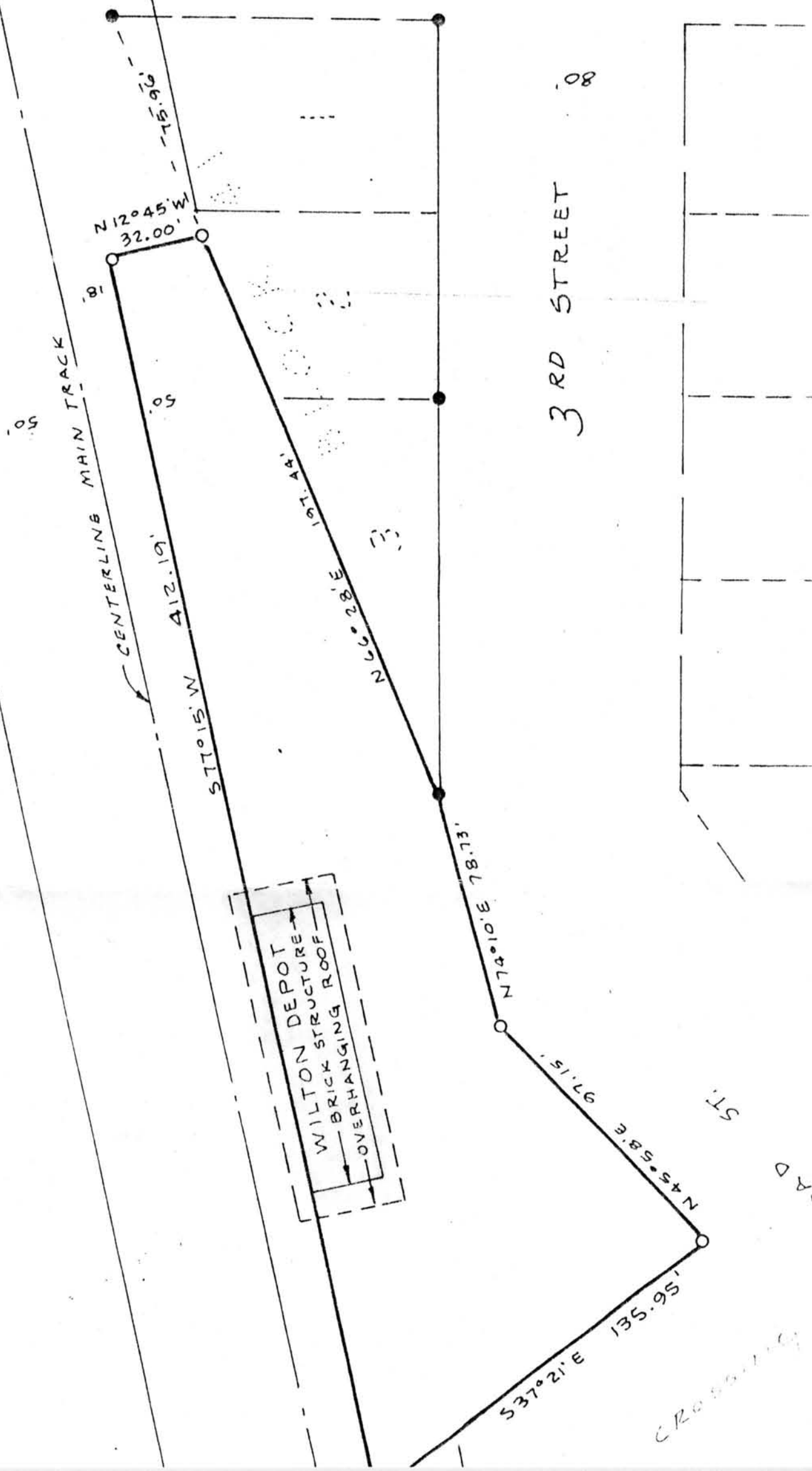
Wildasin, Henry. History of Wilton, Iowa, containing a complete reprint  
of Wilton History 1854-1876, Wilton, Iowa: Rider and Stevenson,  
Printers, 1947.

The Wilton Advocate: August 17, 1912; July 15, 1915; January 23, 1919;  
January 5, 1922; October 10, 1922; June 17, 1937; August 31, 1944; April  
15, 1948; December 6, 1951; September 18, 25, 1952; January 9, 1969;  
August 10, 1976; April 11, 1985, October 15, 1987.

The Wilton Exponent: February 19, 1875.

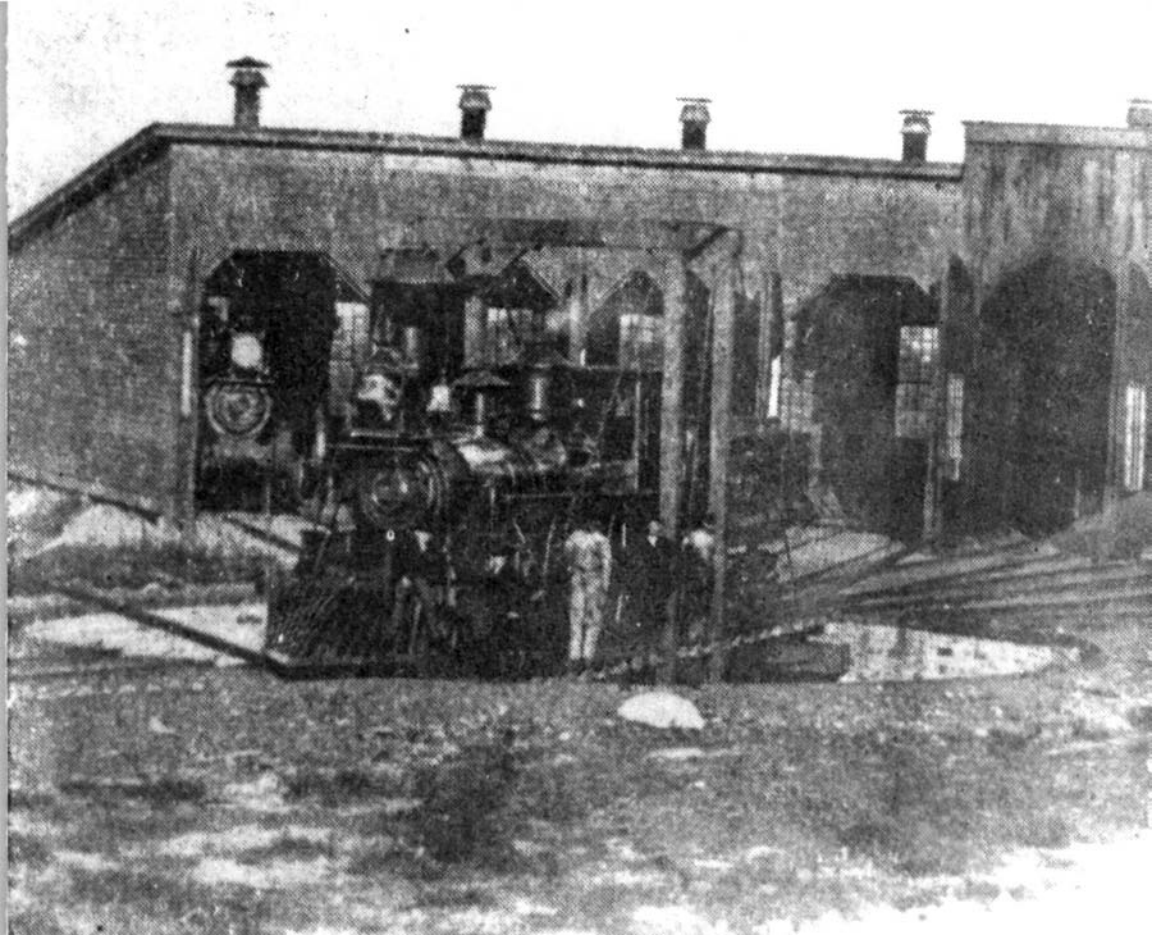
The Wilton Review: December 18, 1879; March 25, 1880; February 1, 1883;  
March 12, 1885; October 29, 1885; August 10, 1876.

The Quad City Times: October 18, 1987.



2012

0 5/8" x 3/4"



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Muncie, Ind.  
7-310

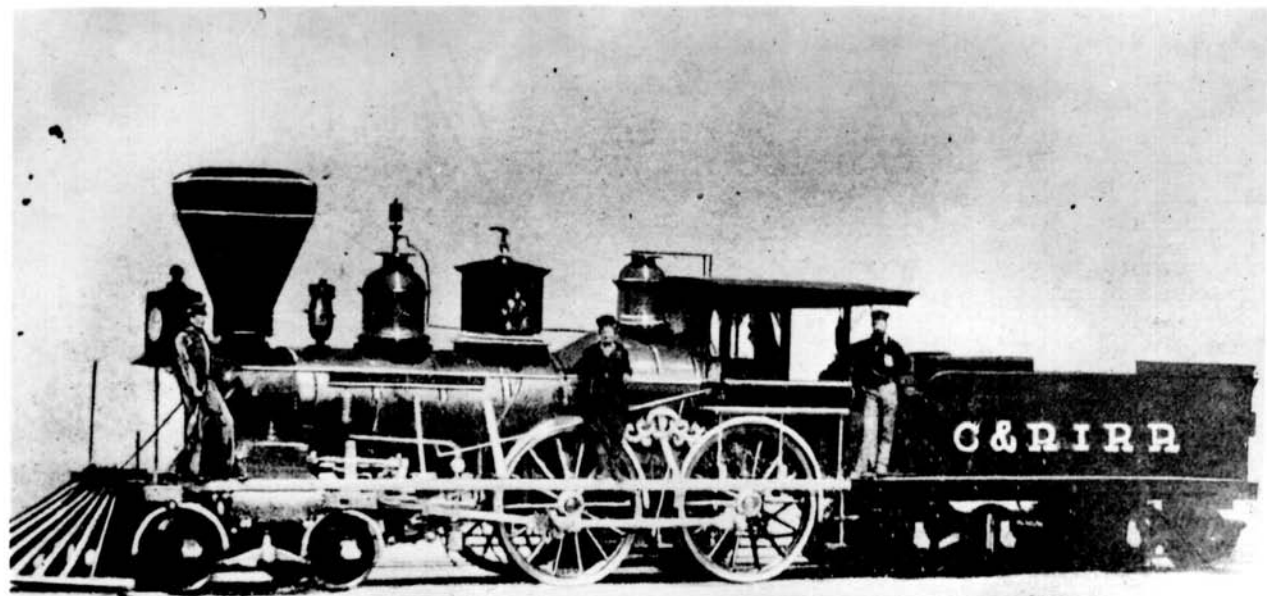
Rock Island Rail Road  
Property. A. Part of the  
Roundhouse & turntable  
# 1 From Henry Wildason  
History of Wilton

DATE 1880 Page 5/1974

View Facing Roundhouse  
(A portion of) Rock Isl.  
Engines and possibly  
3 men.

# 1212021

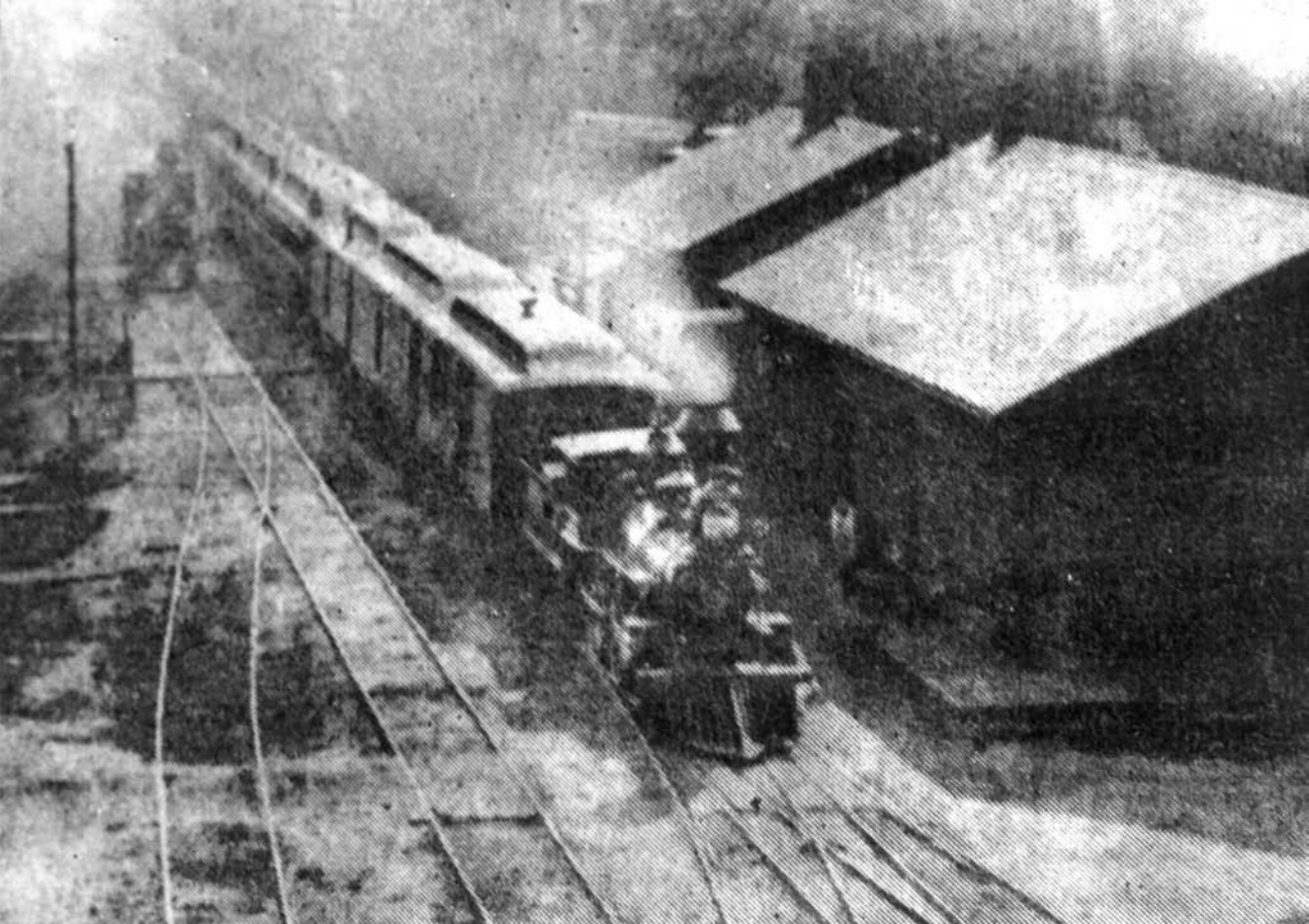




Antoine LeClair - 2nd locomotive

Antoine LeClair, WORK TRAIN  
1854/55 used to build TRACKS.  
Compliments Iowa City Historical  
Society  
Year 1855 # 2

WORK TRAIN



1880 approx.

Rock Island R.R. Road  
1st Depot, Wilton, Muscatine  
County, Iowa. Photo #  
Photographer unknown  
From Henry Wilda's History of Wilton 1974  
Year: 1880 #3  
View of morning mail  
Train, Depot and  
dispatchers office  
Double Track system  
(Page 52)

WILTON  
1st St.  
No. 52761  
57555

# 12 D 2627



Wilton Depot

WILTON Passenger  
Depot Musc  
County, Iowa

#5 Year: About, 1900 or so

LOOKING WEST NOTE CAR Behind

The Depot

Women To Right

Photo

Courtesy of  
George Leggin's  
of Moscow Ia  
R.R. BuFF

Musce

1-3

Newton  
15th St

51  
5

# 14 D 3940



Rock Island Rail Road  
Wilton Passenger Depot  
Wilton, Muscatine County  
Iowa  
Photo # 6

DATE 1908<sup>3</sup>  
✓ Courtesy of George Legains  
FRONT SIDE of Depot  
FACING NORTH

Copied & Printed By  
Doris W. Newton  
705 West 5th St.  
Muscatine, Iowa 52761  
1-319-263-7955

#14D 4142





Rock Island Rail Road.  
Wilton Passenger Depot,  
Wilton, muscatine County  
Iowa # 8

Photo Courtesy of George  
Source Leggins, Moscow, Ia.  
DATE: R.R. Buff

View: Southwest, South side, Tracks for Plus  
Passenger side for tickets  
on the Junction to muscatine  
Ticket Window

Muscatine, Ia.  
1-319-263-1255

# 11 D 1112



1920

Wilton Passenger  
Depot, Muscatine  
County, Iowa.

# 9  
Photo from Carl  
MOELLER Family  
Wilton

DATE. 1920  
VIEW, ~~East~~  
Rock Island  
WATER TOWER  
Park on this  
side of Depot

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# 14D 3334



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Wilton Depot  
Rock Island R.R.  
Muscatine County  
Iowa  
Photo # 10  
OCT 1922  
Monument  
TREE dedication

Photo Taken  
From Henry  
Wildasin  
History of  
Wilton, 1947

# 6D 2930



*W. R. S. R. Depot, Wilton, N. H.*

(Wilton) C.R.I & P. Depot.  
1898

Pic approx. 1947  
(guess)







