

Worthington and Sioux Falls Freight Depot
106 East Fletcher Street
Luverne
Rock County
Minnesota

HABS No. MN-135

HABS
MINN
67-LUV,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
WORTHINGTON AND SIOUX FALLS FREIGHT DEPOT

HABS No. MN-135

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MINN
67-LUV,
1-

Location: Luverne, Rock County, Minnesota
106 East Fletcher Street
Located between railroad tracks to the southeast of the
current intersection of Fletcher Street and Freeman Avenue.

Luverne Quadrangle, 7.5' (1967)
UTM Coordinates: 14/725075/4836730

Present Owner: Chicago and NorthWestern Transportation Company
One NorthWestern Center
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Attn: D. R. York, Assistant Vice President

Present Occupant: Not applicable; building demolished in August, 1992.

Present Use: Not applicable; building demolished in August, 1992.

Significance: The construction of the Worthington and Sioux Falls Railway was a critical factor in the settlement and early commerce and industry of southwestern Minnesota. The original 1876 depot in Luverne was, until its demolition in 1992, the only structure known to exist which physically represented the initial railroad construction era in Rock County and the Worthington and Sioux Falls Railway Company. The Luverne depot also may have been the oldest surviving railroad depot in Minnesota.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1876
2. Architect: Unknown
3. Original and subsequent owners:
Worthington and Sioux Falls Railway Company, 1876-1879
St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad, 1879-1880
Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha Railway Co., 1880-
(part of the Chicago and NorthWestern system)

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4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Unknown

5. Original plans and construction:

Construction plans, early photographs, or other documentary evidence of original design and construction have not been found. An 1883 "birds eye" depiction of Luverne shows a one story, rectangular plan, gabled building similar to the basic structure documented in January, 1992 (Rock County Herald 1883).

6. Alterations and additions:

The 1883 depiction of the depot shows three openings on the eastern half of the south side, not present in 1992, and shows a large door located slightly to the west of the door located at center of the south side in 1992. The 1883 depiction also shows a narrow landing along the west end and the western two-thirds of the south side of the structure; this landing was present when the structure was photographed by the Minnesota Historical Society in July, 1978, but it had been removed prior to January, 1992.

Other alterations of unknown date or purposes were evident in the material fabric in January, 1992. A substantial portion of the exterior wall sheathing on the north side appeared to have been replaced. A separation of siding on the upper east gable end, apparently caused by foundation failure, had been patched with board and sheet metal. The large west end door had been removed, and pieces of it lay within the structure near the door opening; the door remains exhibited evidence of at least one episode of reconstruction/repair. A rectangular hole in the roof had been covered with plywood sheets; this hole might have been used as a portal for a grain auger. Asphalt shingles on the roof in 1992 were not attached during the original construction episode.

The foundation system near the southwest corner had partially failed, and the west end of the building consequently canted slightly to the south.

A rectangular area of the interior flooring had been replaced, and several holes in an adjacent area of floor had been repaired or covered with sheet metal. Much of the upper interior wall sheathing had been removed. Ceilings and interior partition walls may have been removed, but physical evidence of these features was not recognized in January, 1992.

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B. Historical Context:

Construction of the St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad spurred settlement of southwestern Minnesota and western Iowa. In competition with the Southern Minnesota Railroad for land grants and service area, the St. Paul and Sioux City extended its lines westward and southwestward from St. Paul beginning in 1871. In March, 1876 the St. Paul and Sioux City formed a subsidiary, the St. Paul and Dakota Railroad Company, to build a line which would beat the Southern Minnesota Railroad's proposed line to Sioux Falls, Dakota Territory. On June 23, 1876, the name St. Paul and Dakota Railroad was changed to Worthington and Sioux Falls Railroad. Construction was completed from the St. Paul and Sioux City line at Worthington to the bank of Rock River at Luverne in October, 1876, 8 miles westward to Beaver Creek in December, 1877, and to Sioux Falls in the spring of 1878 (Bishop 1905:399,401; Luecke 1990:107; Rose 1911:70, 85-86).

Settlement had spread westward from the St. Paul and Sioux City rail line after 1872, and the town of Luverne was one of the few towns in the region established in advance of a railroad. The importance of a railroad line to the continued settlement and prosperity of the area was well understood, and in April, 1876, county voters provided \$42,750 in bonds to the railroad company (Rose 1911:87). An article in the Rock County Herald on August 26, 1876, reflected the excitement in Luverne at the imminent arrival of the railroad; the article also reported the result of a decision by the Railroad to slow its construction after it learned that the Southern Minnesota Railroad had delayed its own construction plans.

The railroad grade including side-tracks, etc., is now complete, and in a few more days our people may expect to see the smoke of a locomotive tower up on the eastern horizon, and hear the angry snort of the fiery monster. It is expected the cars will be running to a point on the other side of the river, near town, by the 5th of September ... Work on the elevator has been stopped by the railroad officials

The first train arrived at the Rock River, about a half mile east of Luverne, on October 2, 1876. Until the railroad bridge over the river was completed in 1877, passengers and freight were hauled to the town by wagon. As railhead for a year and as a regional trade center, Luverne benefitted greatly from the railroad. In one week in May, 1878, the depot at Luverne is reported to have received 1,747,150 pounds of freight (Rose 1911:94). The railroad also brought a rush of people to the

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town, as described by historian John Luecke:

So many workers and immigrants were flooding into the area that the St. Paul & Sioux City had to assign a second passenger coach to the branch. Yet, this was not even enough to deal with the area's boom, as "pilgrims are compelled to ride among the baggage and on the tops of freight cars" (Luecke 1990:107).

The Rock County Herald was strangely silent about construction of the railroad depot during the summer and fall of 1876, but a local history states that a depot was constructed during the summer of 1876.

The Omaha depot was built during the summer of 1876, before the railroad came into town. This was a wooden building which is still standing [1977] between the tracks. In 1911 there was much agitation for a "clean up" of this area of town, the papers stating that the depot area was a disgrace. The city made arrangements to condemn some of the land north of the tracks for a street and a city park. Fletcher Street was widened out and a bend put in it to allow for the building of a new Omaha depot, which was built that year. This time a fine brick building with wide eaves for passenger protection, brick paving surrounding it, and a covered driveway, was built (Rock County Historical Society 1977:57).

The "Omaha" spoken of above is the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Omaha Railroad, the 1880 successor of the Worthington and Sioux Falls Railroad and the St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad. The Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Omaha became part of the Chicago and NorthWestern Railway, which owned the property in 1992.

The wood frame depot apparently served as both passenger and freight depot until 1913, but the single-room interior without heat, lights, plumbing, or windows does not seem amenable to use as a passenger depot. An 1883 illustration of Luverne shows a very similar building on the same location as the structure reported herein, but with two windows on the eastern end of the south side, which in 1992 had no windows (Rock County Herald 1883). The illustration shows no other building which might have been a depot in Luverne at that time. A second combination depot was built in Luverne around 1884 for the Cedar Rapids, Iowa Falls & Northwestern Railroad; this two-story

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structure which was demolished in 1962 (Minnesota Historical Society; Rock County Historical Society 1977:57).

Sufficient synthesis information has not been found to adequately place this structure within an architectural context of early railroad depots. The building was very similar to a depot constructed in 1899 by the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Omaha Railroad at Jeffers, Minnesota (Luecke 1990:238-239), and it is possible that the two depots were constructed from a common standard plan.

At least from 1876 to 1913, this structure was an extremely important institution in local and regional commerce and transportation. At the time of its demolition in 1992, this building alone represented the frontier period of railroad construction in the community. State-wide synthesis information for early railroad depots is not currently available, but this building may have been the oldest surviving railroad depot in Minnesota.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character:

The Worthington and Sioux Falls Railway depot was of simple, utilitarian design and common materials. The most distinguishing features of the building were a "king post" and pendant decorative treatment of the west gable end, broad eaves on north and south sides that were supported by slightly curved wooden brackets, and transom windows over large freight doors on the north and south sides and west end. The wide eaves, general rectangular plan, and location immediately adjacent the railroad tracks distinguished this structure as a depot, but the building was otherwise not outstanding in its design, materials, workmanship, or visual impact. The simplicity of design could have been interpreted to represent the frontier period in which the structure was built, but the structure stood in contrast with surrounding newer buildings, including an adjacent 1913 masonry depot.

2. Condition of fabric:

The structure as a whole was in poor condition in January, 1992. The foundation system had partially failed, causing the building to slump to the west and southwest and also at the center of the east end. Exterior wall sheathing, although weathered, was in fair

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to good condition, except in limited areas of the lower walls where the sheathing had abutted a landing. Facia boards had been removed from some areas of exterior wall corners. The roof was in poor condition as a result of natural weathering of shingles and roofing boards and apparent removal of a small area of roofing boards. Remaining interior wall sheathing was generally sound, but several areas of the floor were rotted and nearly collapsed.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: 54.59 feet (16.64 meters) East to West, 24.34 feet (7.42 meters) North to South, 10.5 feet (3.2 meters) from floor line to eaves, about 17.2 feet (about 5.25 meters) from floor to gable peak.

2. Foundations:

The superstructure was set on sill beams around the perimeter of the building; sill beams were about 10.2 x 7.7 inches (25.9 x 19.5cm). Sill beams surmounted wooden piers about 12 x 9.8 inches square (30.5 x 25cm). The apparent original pier system was eight evenly-spaced piers along the north and south side and a single pier at the centers of the east and west ends. In 1992 a line of piers of similar size existed along the east-west center of the building; some of these piers may have dated from original construction, but others appeared to be newer. Several other piers did not conform to the original foundation system but rather appeared to have been installed to support specific areas of the floor. Newer piers typically had shims inserted between the tops of piers and 7.8 x 5.5 inch beams, and some beams directly supported the floor or were bolted to floor joists.

3. Walls:

Exterior wall sheathing was horizontal wooden lap siding (shiplap) with gross dimensions 7.3 inches wide and .79 inches thick. Twenty-nine courses of siding were on gable ends from sill to wall peak, and north and south sides had 18 courses from sill to eaves. Three courses of 2.64 x 8.81 inch butted plank sheathed the walls below the siding on the east and west ends. Exterior wall surfaces had been painted several times, but most paint had weathered from the walls by 1992.

Interior walls were rabbet-fitted horizontal 3/4x6 inch boards. Interior walls appeared to have extended about 7 feet upward

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from the floor, above which the wall studs were exposed. Interior wall sheathing did not exist in 1992 on the east end nor in bays that would have received opened freight doors on other walls, and some wall sheathing had been removed in other areas. An interior wall on the west end of the north side contained faint graffiti indicating a number of loads of goods (carloads shipped/received?) in 1916 and probably other years. Interior wall surfaces were unfinished.

4. Structural systems, framing:

The depot had a simple balloon frame of 2x6 inch studs spaced 24 inches on center, which met 2x6 inch wall plates. The roof system was 17 "king post" trusses, consisting of 2x6 inch mitered rafters and horizontal tie and 1x6 inch vertical and diagonal truss members. Floor joists were 2x10 inch planks oriented north-to-south and spaced 12 inches on center. Except for the mitered rafters, all joints were butted and nailed.

5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads:

None of these features existed in 1992.

6. Chimneys:

Chimneys or evidence of former chimneys were not observed in 1992.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors:

Three large freight doors were located at the centers of the north, south, and west walls. Actual openings were 5.0 feet wide and 5.5 feet high on north and south sides and 6.1 feet wide and 6.5 feet high. Each of these openings contained a door mounted on rollers on the inside of the opening. The surround for each freight door included a 7-light transom the width of the door. North and south door surrounds included a battered and slightly gabled head on exterior wall face, but the west door had a simple flat board surround. North and south doors were vertical tongue-and-groove 1x6 inch board secured with 1x6 inch and 1x10 inch boards. Possibly original rollers remained on north and south doors in 1992. The west door appeared to be non-original to the building and substantially newer than other doors; it was double-layered, vertical 1x4 inch tongue-and-groove board.

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A pedestrian door on the east wall had a simple butted-board surround around an opening 2.83 feet wide and 6.6 feet high. The door had a large plate light over two wooden panels.

b. Windows and shutters:

The structure contained no windows in 1992 other than the transoms over the freight doors, and evidence was not observed that windows had been blinded or removed.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: Gabled, weathered asphalt shingles.

b. Cornice, eaves:

Raking eaves on east and west ends had 3/4x4 inch fascia boards on walls, and roof edges were closed with 3/4x4 inch boards with attached milled wooden molding. Decorative treatment in the west gable end mimicked the actual "king post" trusses supporting the roof: a 4x4 inch king post with ball and pendant at lower end was supported by 3x4 inch horizontal and diagonal members.

Major overhanging eaves on north and south walls were supported primarily by 10 slightly curved, scroll-cut wooden brackets with gross dimensions 2x8 inches. Smaller brackets under the east and west ends of the north eave were constructed of 2x4" members; similar brackets were not found under south eaves in 1992. A single horizontal 3x4 inch brace at the west end of the north side was apparently not part of original construction.

c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: None

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plan:

The interior consisted of a single space or room in 1992, and evidence was not observed that the space had been previously divided.

2. Stairways: None

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3. Flooring:

Apparently original flooring was two layers of 1x5 inch planking laid east-to-west on the long axis of the building. An area about 6x8 feet near the center of the floor had similar planking laid north-to-south; this area may represent a former scale or hoist facility. All floor surfaces were unfinished.

4. Wall and ceiling finish:

Ceilings did not exist in the building in 1992. Interior walls were unfinished.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: None

b. Windows: None

6. Decorative features and trim: None

7. Hardware: Simple roller mechanisms on freight doors were commonly used in barns and other service buildings until at least the 1950s. Lock and latch had been removed from the east-end pedestrian door, and hinges and strike plate were very simple and common.

8. Mechanical Equipment:

a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: None

b. Lighting: None, but electrical insulators and wiring remained in the building in 1992.

c. Plumbing: None

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation:

The Worthington and Sioux Falls Railroad depot was located at the southern edge of the town of Luverne, in extreme southwestern Minnesota (see attached Luverne, Minn. Quadrangle map). The building was situated between the former main branch line of the railroad, on the north, and a spur track serving a grain elevator complex. The structure was oriented parallel to the tracks, with long axis east-west. When the depot was recorded

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in January, 1992, the setting was visually dominated by a ca. 1913 railroad depot about 40 yards northeast of the subject depot, a multiple story grain elevator less than 75 yards southwest, and grain storage buildings less than 30 yards south of the subject depot. The setting retained virtually no quality of feeling from the 1876-1913 period of significance for the subject depot.

2. Historic landscape design:
Evidence has not been found that landscape design was ever done in association with this property.
3. Outbuildings: None

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original Architectural Drawings:
None found. A search of Chicago NorthWestern Railway archives in 1991 yielded no information about this building.
- B. Early Views:

Rock County Herald
Birds Eye View of Luverne, County Seat of Rock County, Minnesota. Rock County Herald, Luverne, MN, 1883.
- C. Interviews:
- D. Bibliography:

Secondary and published sources:

Bishop, Judson W., History of the St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad, 1864-1881. Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society, Vol. X, Pt. 1, 1905. Pp. 399-415. [The St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad absorbed the Worthington and Sioux Falls Railway in 1879].

Fulda, City of, Rails Across the Prairie: The Story of Pioneer Railroading in Southwestern Minnesota. Westbrook, MN: Sentinel News, Inc., 1989.

Lueke, John C., The Chicago and Northwestern in Minnesota. Eagan,

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MN: Grenadier Publications, 1990.

Minnesota Historical Society, Photograph Collections, Rock County, Collection MR8.9-LV8-P.5. Minnesota History Center, St. Paul.

Rock County Herald, August 26, 1876.

[This article announces the imminent arrival of the railroad and the decision by the Railroad to stop work on a new grain elevator. Mention of construction of the depot was not found in any 1876 or 1877 editions of this local newspaper.]

Rock County Historical Society, A History of Rock County. Luverne, MN: Rock County Historical Society and Luverne Mrs. Jaycees, 1977.

Rose, Arthur P., An Illustrated History of the Counties of Rock and Pipestone, Minnesota. Luverne, MN: Northern History Publishing Company, 1911.

Luverne Quadrangle, Minnesota -- Rock Co., 7.5 Minute Series (Topographic). Denver, CO: U.S. Geological Survey, 1967.

E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

Records of successor railroads to the Worthington and Sioux Falls Railway.

Prepared by: Kurt P. Schweigert, Historian
Tellus Consultants, Inc.
1315 Glenwood Avenue North
Minneapolis, Minnesota

March 15, 1993

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

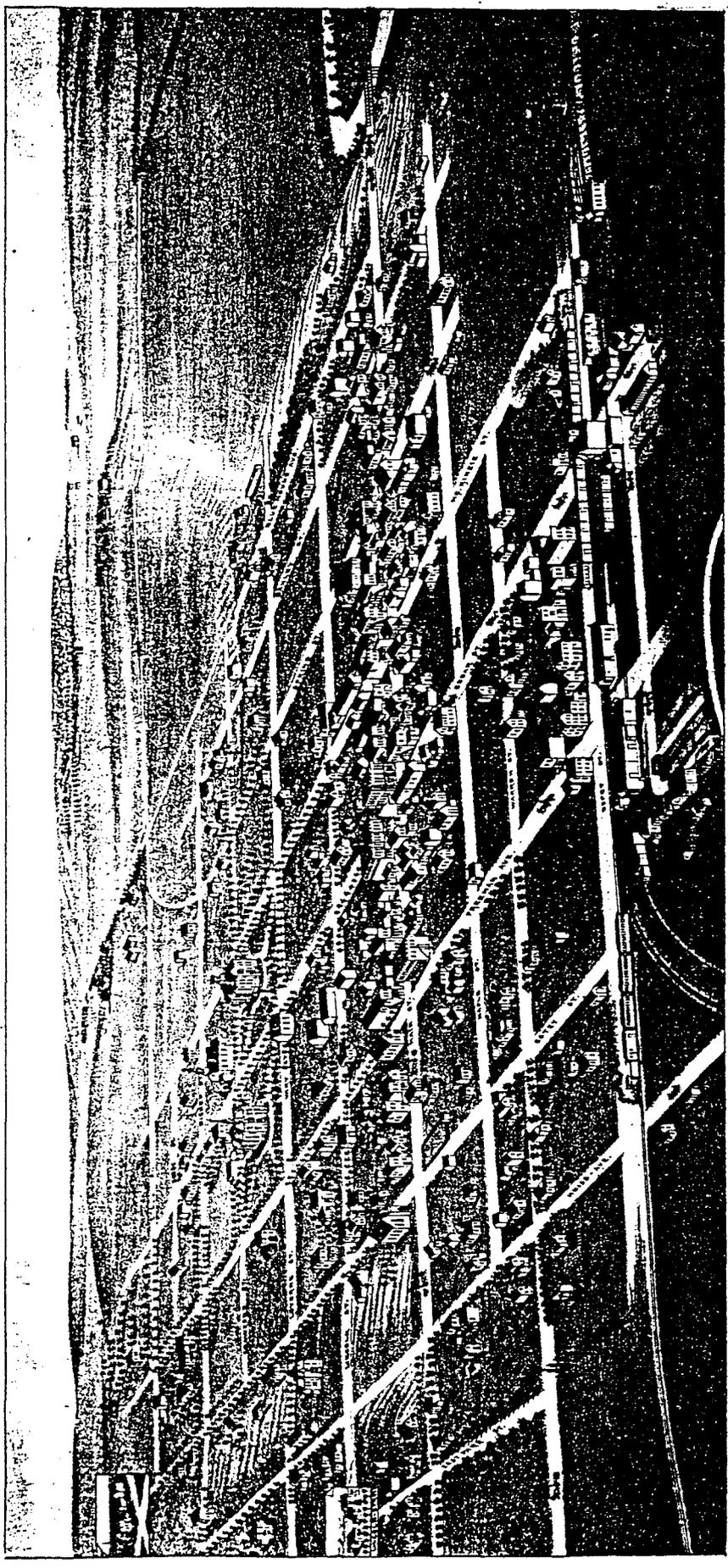
The Chicago and NorthWestern Transportation Company (CNTC) proposed to sell the Worthington and Sioux Falls freight depot to the City of Luverne, Minnesota. After consultations with the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) determined that the sale would constitute adverse effect to an historic property under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. In November and December, 1991,

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ICC, SHPO and CNTC entered a Memorandum of Agreement which required recording of the building to appropriate standards of the Historic American Building Survey/Historic American Engineering Record. In November, 1991, CNTC contracted with Tellus Consultants, Inc. to accomplish the appropriate recording and preparation of materials.

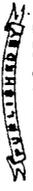
Initial field recording of the building was conducted in January, 1992, by Kurt Schweigert, historian, and Kathy Hanson, engineer of Tellus Consultants, Inc. In February, 1992, Burt Levy photographed the building.

In regard to HABS documentation, the completion of adequate photography for the building removed apparent need for the continued existence of the structure. The structure presented an extreme fire and health hazard to the Luverne community, and with concurrence of SHPO, ICC allowed CNTC to convey the property to the City of Luverne. The City of Luverne demolished the structure in August, 1992.



Printed by J. J. Miller, Luyverne, Minn.

1883.
BIRDS EYEVIEW OF
LUYVERNE.
COUNTY SEAT OF ROCK COUNTY, MINNESOTA.



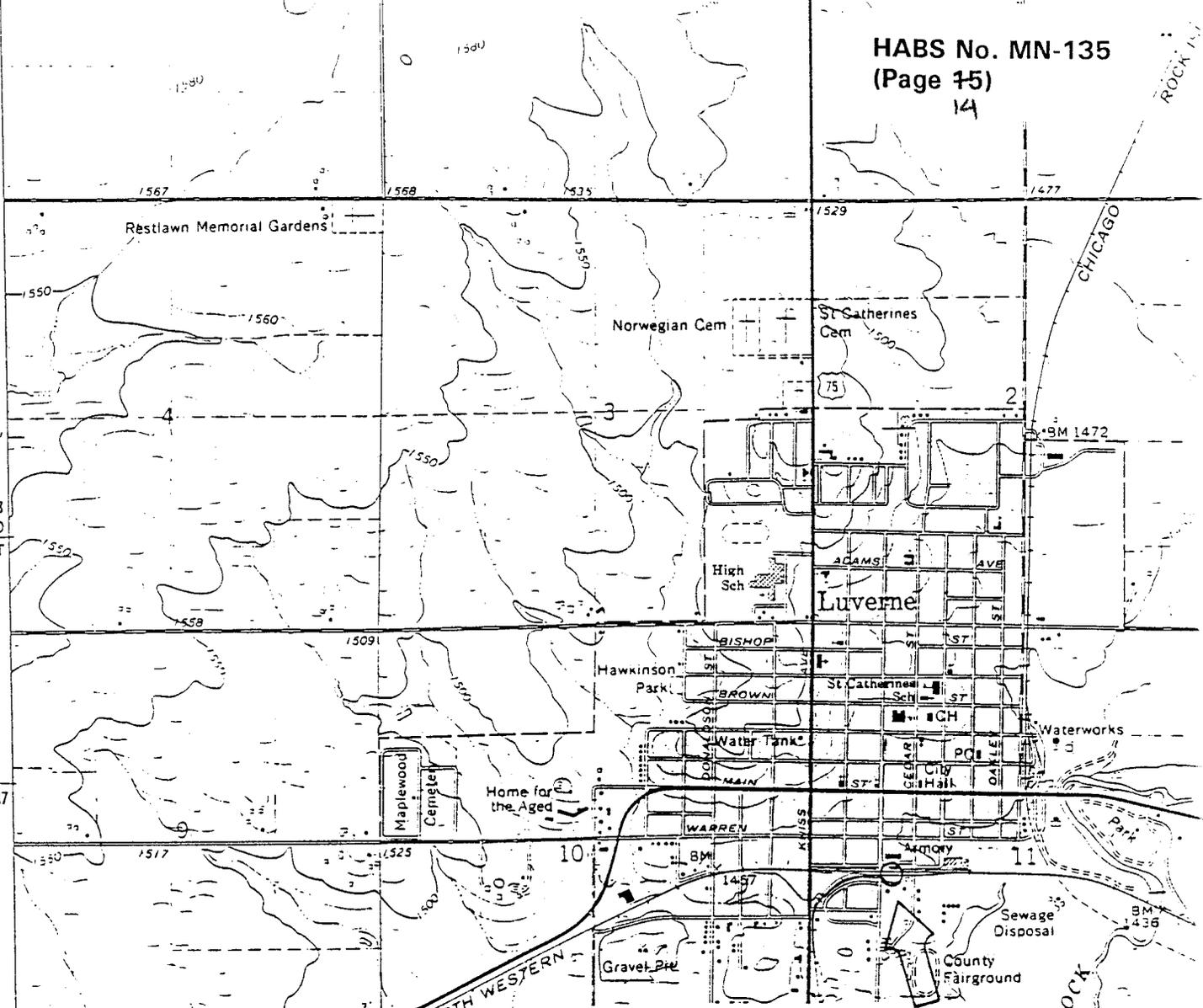
THE ROCK CO. HERALD
STEAM NEWS BOOK AND JOB PRINTING HOUSE
H. MILLER PROPRIETOR
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- 1. Luyverne Station
- 2. Luyverne Hotel
- 3. Rock County Jail
- 4. Rock County Court
- 5. Rock County Office
- 6. Rock County Jail
- 7. Rock County Jail

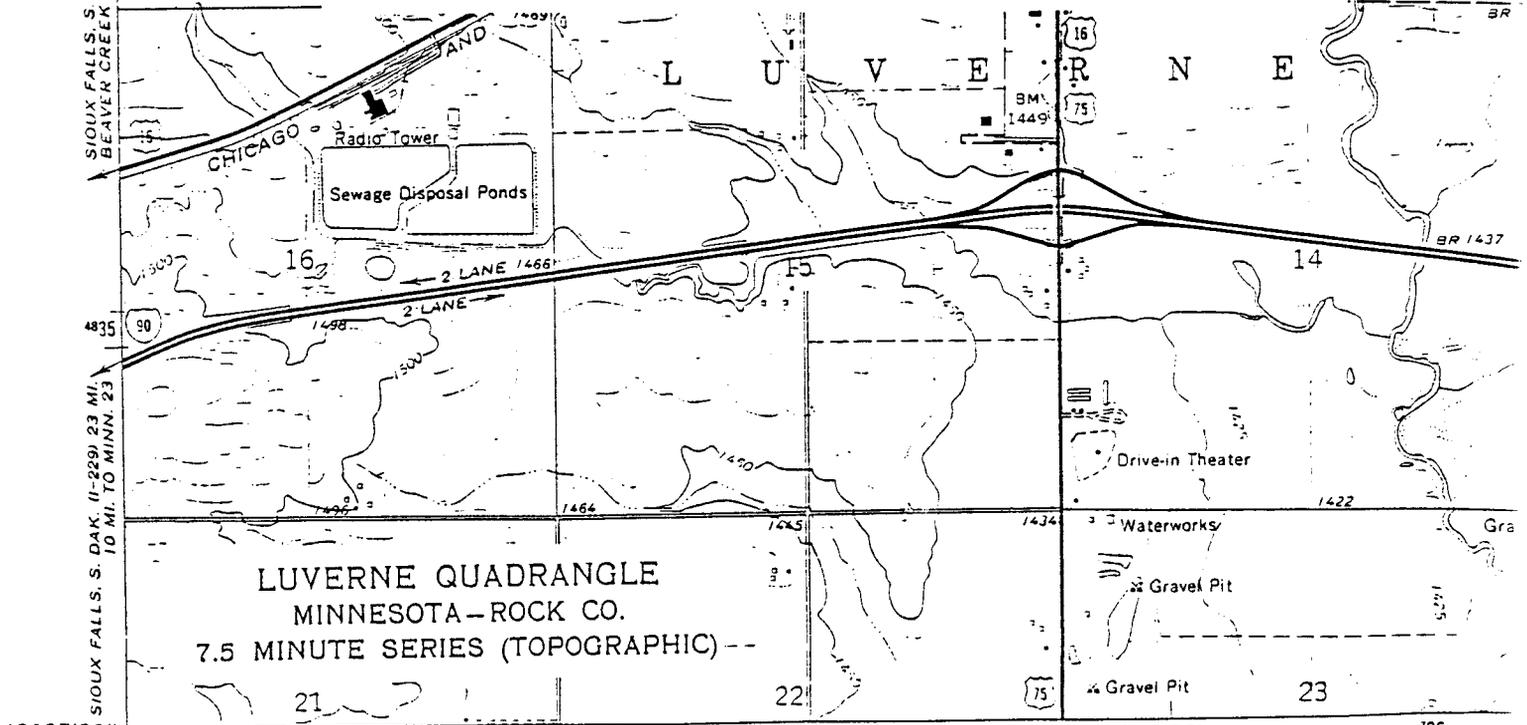
- 1. Episcopal Church
- 2. Catholic Church
- 3. Baptist Church
- 4. Methodist Church
- 5. Presbyterian Church
- 6. Lutheran Church
- 7. Protestant Church

Published by J. J. Miller, Luyverne, Minn.

T. 103 N.
T. 102 N.
4839
40'
4838
250 000
FEET



Location of Worthington and Sioux Falls Freight Depot



LUVERNE QUADRANGLE
MINNESOTA-ROCK CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

43° 37' 30" 96° 15' 22" 723 1 410 000 FEET 724 7 MI. TO MINN. 270 ROCK RAPIDS, IOWA 15 MI. 725 12' 30" 726