

MINNESOTA HISTORIC PROPERTIES INVENTORY FORM

APR 16 1979

HISTORIC NAME: Chicago & North Western RR Depot

COUNTY: Brown

CURRENT NAME:

CITY/TWP.: New Ulm

LEGAL DESC.: Tract 780'x186'. Directly opposite Blocks 15 and 25, Original Plat. Bounded by First South St., Valley Street, Third South Street, and West side of Chicago North Western driveway between First South and Third South Streets.

ADDRESS: S. Valley St.

CLASSIFICATION:

Building XStructure Object District

CONDITION:

Excellent Good XFair Deteriorated

SIGNIFICANCE:

Local XState National

THEME/S:

Primary TransportationSecondary ArchitectureOthers OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: Yes No X Restricted

PRESENT USE:

VISIBLE FROM THE ROAD: Yes X No

Railroad Offices

OCCUPIED: Yes X No

DATE CONSTRUCTED: c.1895

ORIGINAL USE: Depot

ORIGINAL OWNER: Chicago & North Western RR.

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Unknown

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: Chicago & North Western Transportation Company
Madison Chicago, Ill.

ACREAGE: Less than one acre XLOCAL CONTACT/CRG.:

UTM REFERENCE:

15 / 384090 / 4907440

FORM PREPARED BY: Dennis Gimmetstad

New Ulm Quad.

DATE: January 1979

DESCRIPTION:

The New Ulm Chicago and NorthWestern Depot is a rambling structure opposite South Valley Street in New Ulm. David Gebhard and Tom Martinson, in their Guide to Minnesota Architecture, suggest that the building is modeled after the suburban Boston stations of H.H. Richardson.

The main section of the building is a one-story hip-roofed mass broken at the center by a two-story section whose gable roof runs perpendicular to the main roof ridge line. The street side of this area, which originally housed the offices of the depot, presents an uninterrupted parapeted facade with a linked, tripartate window arrangement at both levels. The trackside of the center area features a three-window projecting bay and is broken at the second level by a continuation of the main roof overhang. Windows and doors on the balance of the main section reflect the arrangement of rooms at either side of the office area.

Extending both north and south from this main section are arcaded open baggage and waiting areas. The hipped roofs of these sections follow the lines of the main roof but are lower in slope and peak. The three bays of the north arcade are delineated with stone piers and wooden arches.

Extending yet further from the south arcade is a one-story freight room with details similar to those of the main section. The north arcade is open at the end.

The entire structure is of buff colored stone, and heavy brackets are utilized under the wide eaves of all sections.

With the discontinuation of passenger service, the interior of the building has been somewhat remodeled to create office and storage space from former waiting areas. The exterior of the building remains in good and unaltered condition.

SIGNIFICANCE:

New Ulm is not a "railroad town" in the sense that it was founded by or because of the railroad; from its beginnings in the 1850's until the 1870's the Minnesota River steamboats were of central importance. Yet, after the Winona and St. Peter (later called the Chicago and NorthWestern) entered the county in 1872 and thence extended to the western areas of the state, the local area of the rail yard became a regionally important center of grain marketing and processing. The Depot is the major surviving railroad building in New Ulm to represent the crucial rail network linking the town with both the hinterland and with larger markets.

SIGNIFICANCE - continued

The Chicago and NorthWestern Depot was constructed near the time when the competing Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad had laid tracks through the town and built a frame depot a few blocks north. The stone CNW structure was one of several "second-generation" masonry depots which the rail companies often constructed to replace earlier frame depots at communities which had enjoyed significant growth since their establishment. The rock-faced stone, arcaded ends rambling profile, and general design of the New Ulm Depot rank it as one of the most handsome of several of these replacement depots constructed at various stations in the southwestern portion of the state.

The New Ulm Chicago and NorthWestern Depot is significant as the most visible local symbol of the important rail network, and as a regionally distinctive example of the second-generation masonry depot.

MINNESOTA HISTORIC PROPERTIES INVENTORY FORM

HISTORIC NAME: Chicago and NorthWestern Section House		COUNTY: Brown
CURRENT NAME:		CITY/TWP.: Comfrey
LEGAL DESC.: 50' x 175' of former RRR/W OPP. N.E. corner of B7	ADDRESS: Railroad and Brown Streets (S.E. corner)	
CLASSIFICATION: Building ☒ Structure Object District	CONDITION: Excellent Good Fair ☒ Deteriorated	SIGNIFICANCE: Local ☒ State National
		THEME/S: Primary Transportation Secondary Settlement Others
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: Yes ☐ No ☒ Restricted	PRESENT USE: Residence	
VISIBLE FROM THE ROAD: Yes ☒ No		
OCCUPIED: Yes ☒ No		
DATE CONSTRUCTED: ca.1899	ORIGINAL USE: Section Foreman's Residence	
ORIGINAL OWNER: Chicago and Northwestern Railroad	ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Chicago and Northwestern Railroad	
OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: Darlene Harmon P.O. Box 3 Comfrey, MN 56019	ACREAGE: Less than one acre ☒	
LOCAL CONTACT/Org.: Brown County Historical Society 27 No. Broadway, New Ulm, MN 56073	UTM REFERENCE: 15 / 347800 / 4885600	
FORM PREPARED BY: Dennis Gimmetstad	Comfrey Quad	
DATE: January 1979		

DESCRIPTION:

The Chicago and North Western Section House in Comfrey is located on the original railroad right-of-way just south of the site of the town's combination depot (now razed).

The saltbox-roofed house faces away from the tracks towards Railroad Street. It is of frame construction and utilizes six-over-six windows in a simple fenestration on both first and second levels. The basic interior features of the interior are thought to be mostly original.

Although porches have been added to both the front and the rear and the siding has been covered with "Insul-brick", the readily-apparent saltbox form and the original location contribute to the house's integrity.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The term "section house" was popularly used to describe two kinds of railroad structures: those built as storage for maintenance equipment and those built as a residence for the section crew foreman and his family. The Comfrey house is of the latter type.

As was the case with depots, the railroads often utilized standardized building plans for these houses. This was especially true in the later railroad communities which were established along the later grange lines; the rapidity of platting a large number of townsites in a short time was conducive to a high degree of standardization.

A saltbox-roofed section house appeared in several of the towns which were platted by the Western Town Lot Company (the Chicago and North Western's subsidiary) around the turn of the century. As track maintenance practices have been consolidated and rail lines abandoned, these have generally passed into private ownership, and often razed, moved, or remodeled almost beyond recognition.

The Comfrey Section House retains the best integrity of the known existing examples of this structure type in the area. Current owner of the house is the widow of the last section foreman to live in Comfrey. She recalls her birthplace in Iowa, where her father was a railroad employee, to be a section house of similar features.



Chicago and Northwestern Railroad
Depot

New Ulm, MN

Dennis Gimmiestad
1979

APR 16 1979

Minnesota Historical Society, 690
Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN 55101
Perspective from NE
02858/17

Brown County Multiple Resource Area

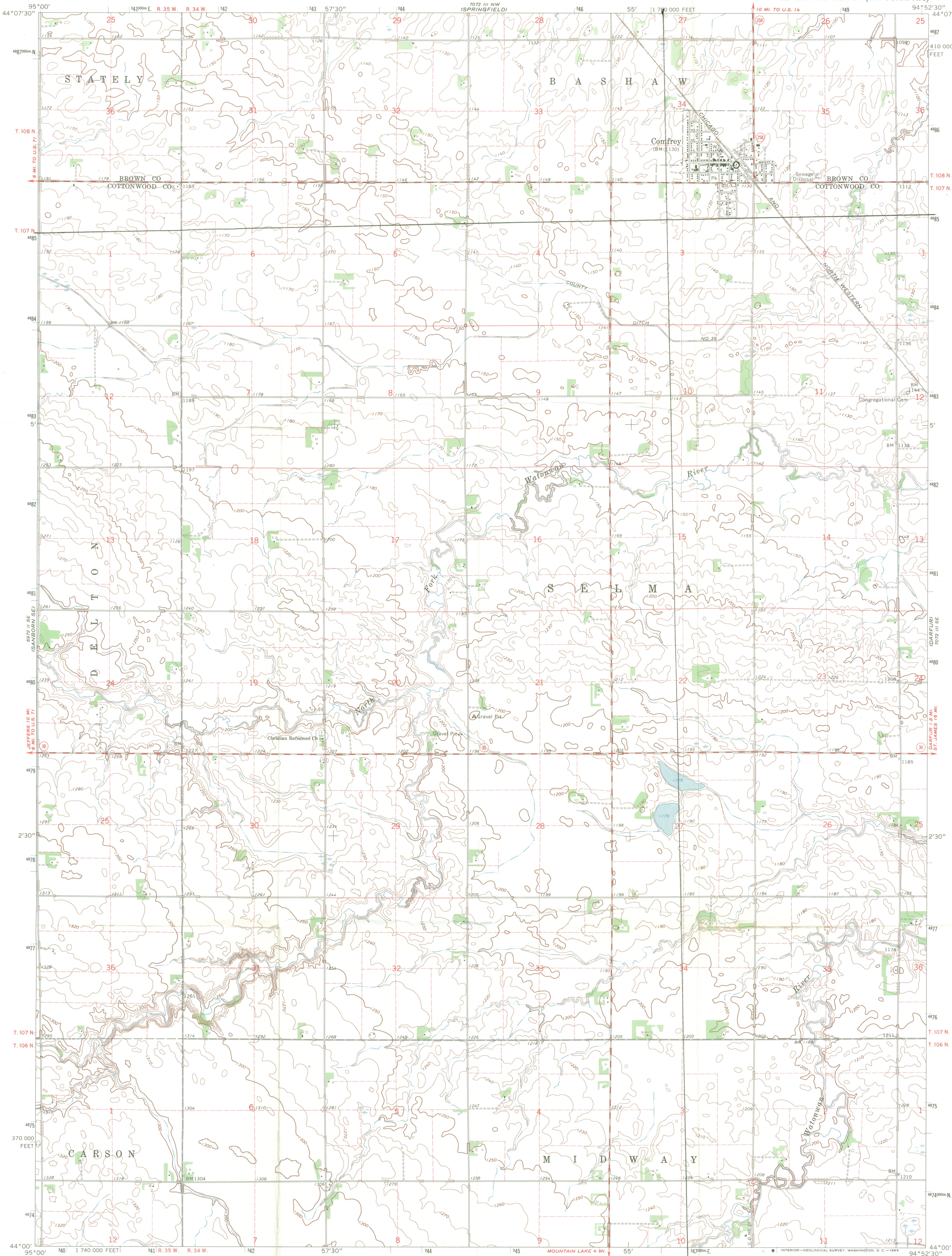
Brown County, Minnesota

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DEC 31 1979

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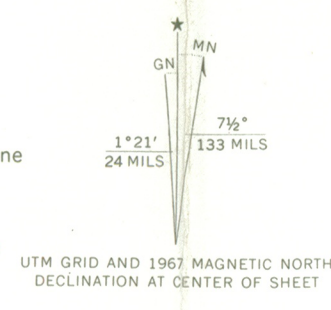
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Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1967

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum. 10,000-foot grid based on Minnesota coordinate system, south zone 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



SCALE 1:24 000
1 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET
1 5 10 KILOMETER
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Medium-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Unimproved dirt ———
State Route ———

COMFREY, MINN.
N4400—W9452.5/7.5

1967
AMS 7072 III SW—SERIES V872

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
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A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Chicago and Northwestern Section Hse.
Comfrey, MN; Brown County
UTM References
15 / 347800 / 4885600

DEC 31 1979

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