

A HISTORY OF THE SIOUX FALLS DOWNTOWN RAILYARD

Minnehaha County, South Dakota

Quality Services, Inc. Project #SD3917023

June 28, 2017



Brenna Moloney
Principal Investigator

Quality Services, Inc.

Archeology, Architectural History, Forestry, Geophysics, History & Paleontology

1621 Sheridan Lake Road, Suite A

Rapid City, SD 57702-3432

Phone 605-388-5309

Fax 605-388-5319

Email : info@qualityservices.us.com

www.qualityservices.us.com



Abstract

This report summarizes the history and development of the Downtown Sioux Falls railyard in Minnehaha County, South Dakota. A 10.25-acre portion of BNSF property encompassing Tracts 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe 4th Addition has been transferred to the City of Sioux Falls for redevelopment. Projected alterations to the railyard include removal of track and demolition of a 20th-Century freight house. This narrative history was prepared to mitigate the effects of the redevelopment plan on the historic railyard and any potentially eligible component features.

For this report, *Quality Services, Inc.*'s principal architectural historian Brenna Moloney synthesized materials previously collected from published histories, primary records, historic map collections, and other sources by the City's legal team and historians at the Siouxland Heritage Museum Archive. It is supplemented by additional sources from the Siouxland's collections and the Center for Western Studies Digital Collections at Augustana College. Lastly, the report draws heavily on the South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office's historic context, *South Dakota's Railroads*, to situate the railyard within the larger story of rail history in South Dakota.

Acknowledgments

Quality Services, Inc. wishes to express the warmest gratitude to Diane Best and Erin Bofenkamp at the City of Sioux Falls; Liz Amlie at the South Dakota Historic Preservation Office; Jenna Carlson Dietmeier with the South Dakota Department of Transportation; and Shelly Sjøvold at the Siouxland Heritage Museums Archive for their comments and assistance during this project.

Table of Contents

Abstract 2
 Acknowledgments..... 2
 Table of Contents 3
 List of Figures 3
 Introduction..... 5
 Early rail in Sioux Falls and the Downtown Yard 7
 Original Land Patents 8
 The Wilmot Brookings Property..... 8
 The Heirs of William Stevens Property 10
 The Phillips Property 10
 The Omaha Road 12
 Dakota Boom years of the 1880s 12
 The Great Northern Railway..... 13
 Growth and decline in the first half of the 20th-Century 18
 WWII and beyond..... 23
 Bibliography 27
 Additional Resources 32

List of Figures

Figure 1. Great Northern freight house (MH00002262). B. Moloney 3/17/2017. 5
 Figure 2. Sioux Falls downtown railyard recordation project area..... 6
 Figure 3. 1860 Plat of Sioux Falls including the area east of the river in Section 16 where the railyard developed (GLO 1860)..... 7
 Figure 4. Judge Wilmot W. Brookings. (South Dakota Magazine 2013)..... 9
 Figure 5. Richard Franklin Pettigrew in 1913. From the Library of Congress Bain News Service Collection: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/ggbain.05072>. 11
 Figure 6. 1895 pass for the Willmar & Sioux Falls Railway (Levine 2017). 13
 Figure 7. 1888 Sanborn Map depicting the railyard. Neither the historic Great Northern passenger depot (MH00000022) or the freight house (MH00002262) were yet built. Note that the 10th Street viaduct was also not present. Purple line delineates the approximate boundaries of the modern railyard. 15
 Figure 8. 1891 Sanborn Map depicting the railyard. The Wilmar & Sioux Falls Railroad is depicted just west of Ohio (later Weber) Street. Purple line delineates the approximate boundaries of the modern railyard (Sanborn 1891). 16
 Figure 9. Detail of the 1891 Sanborn Map. Neither the freight house or the Great Northern passenger depot had been built. Instead, small buildings and dwellings dot the yard. Purple line delineates the approximate boundaries of the modern railyard. 17
 Figure 10. 1902 Sanborn Map depicting the railyard. 18
 Figure 11. Detail of 1902 Sanborn Map depicting the railyard. Ohio Avenue had been renamed Weber Avenue by this time. Purple line delineates the approximate boundaries of the modern railyard. 19

Figure 12. Detail of 1908 Sanborn Map depicting a portion of the railyard, the Great Northern passenger depot and a freight house on the north side of 8th Street. Purple line delineates the approximate boundaries of the modern railyard. 20

Figure 13. Detail from 1937 Argus Leader depicting the railyard. 21

Figure 14. Detail of 1924 Sanborn Map depicting the railyard. The dimensions of the freight house and loading dock had changed from the configuration depicted on previous Sanborn maps. 22

Figure 15. Detail of 1950 Sanborn Map depicting the railyard north of 8th Street and the freight house. Purple line delineates the approximate boundaries of the modern railyard. 23

Figure 16. Detail of 1950 Sanborn Map depicting the portion of the railyard between 8th and 10th Streets. Purple line delineates the approximate boundaries of the modern railyard. 24

Figure 17. 1968 aerial view of the railyard with freight house circled in red. 25

Figure 18. Google Earth aerial screen capture from 2010 (left) and 2015 (right) depicting portion of yard between 8th and 10th streets. 26

Introduction

The Downtown Sioux Falls railyard is located within Section 16, T101N, R49W in Sioux Falls, Minnehaha County, South Dakota. The yard consists of land granted by the United States government to private parties in the latter half of the 19th Century which was eventually conveyed in parallel strips to the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha Railway (the Omaha Road), and to the Great Northern Railroad. Currently, the yard includes Tracts 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe 4th Addition to the City of Sioux Falls.

The railyard is situated near the east bank of the Big Sioux River opposite Sioux Falls' historic downtown commercial district. Tract 1 is 1.34-acre triangular parcel of land north of East 6th Street. This parcel contains track and vacant land. Below East 6th Street is Tract 2 which is 4 acres in size, roughly rectangular, and stretches to East 8th Street. As part of its purchase of the downtown railyard property, the City bought the "Great Northern Freight House Addition (MH00002262)." The building is located between 6th and 8th Street and straddles the east boundary of the property purchased by the City and additional property owned by BNSF on Tract 5 of the SE¼ of Section 6, T101, R49W. It is a single-story, brick warehouse with loading docks and was built in the twentieth century. The freight house has been determined eligible for the National Register by the South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office for its "association with the broad patterns of history, and its connection to the BNSF Rail yard (Alfred Benesch 2013)."



Figure 1. Great Northern freight house (MH00002262). B. Moloney 3/17/2017.

Tract 3 within the downtown railyard lies south of East 8th Street and extends to East 10th Street, which is elevated on a bridge above the yard. This tract is a 5-acre block which contains tracks. The historic Great Northern depot (MH00000022), which is currently used as BNSF offices, lies just outside of this Tract 3 on its east side.

South of the East 10th Street bridge is Tract 4, a small .225-acre block lying directly beneath the 11th Street bridge which contains track. The railyard is bordered on its eastern side by active BNSF track. Commercial space, some of which is converted warehouse space, empty lots, and parks border the railyard.



Figure 2. Sioux Falls downtown railyard recordation project area.

Early rail in Sioux Falls and the Downtown Yard

The history of Sioux Falls, South Dakota is inextricably bound to the transportation systems which allowed people to settle the region. The city was established on the banks of the Big Sioux River, a major tributary of the Missouri, which served as a transportation artery for indigenous people and early Euromerican settlers before the development of modern transportation systems. It was the railroads, however, which played the decisive role in the city and state's development (Hufstetler 2007).

While there were Euromerican expeditions near Sioux Falls as early as the 1830s, it was not until the 1851 Treaty of Traverse De Sioux opened land east of the Big Sioux River that permanent settlement occurred within what is now South Dakota. Another treaty with the Yankton Sioux later in the same decade also made land in the southern part of the territory accessible to Euromerican settlers. Settlement in the early years was sparse however and primarily limited to military encampments or isolated trading posts. Land speculators also began looking westward at this time. Two companies took an interest in settlement near the falls on the Big Sioux. The Western Town Company and the Dakota Land Company arrived in 1857 and began laying out the town. The land in the downtown railyard was across the river to the east of this early settlement. The town was evacuated in 1862 in response to the Sioux Uprising. People did not return to resettle the area until 1865 when a military encampment, Fort Dakota, was established there. The conclusion of the Civil War, the end of the Sioux Uprising, and increasing land prices in the east, prompted growth in the Dakota Territory. These early settlers arrived via the river route or by difficult overland trails (Hufstetler 2007; Rambow 1999).

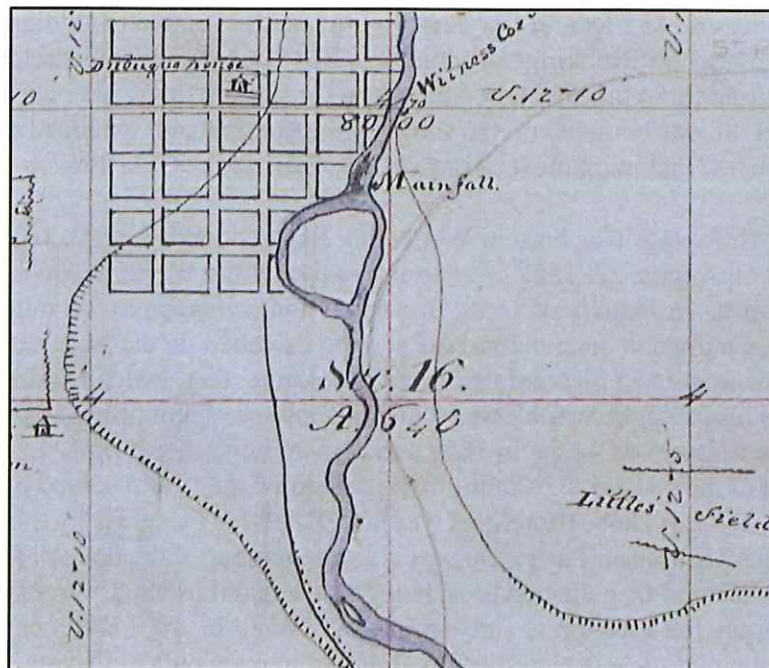


Figure 3. 1860 Plat of Sioux Falls including the area east of the river in Section 16 where the railyard developed (GLO 1860).

Even in the early years of settlement the need for a railway in the region was acknowledged. The nearest railhead in the 1860s was in Iowa, so in 1862, the Dakota Territorial Legislature chartered the Missouri and Niobrara Valley Railroad Company. This railway never materialized however and western rail development during this period circumvented South Dakota. Though John Insley Blair, the wealthy railroad magnate, endeavored to secure a federal land grant to construct a north-south line from the Dakota territorial capital of Yankton to Canada, he was unsuccessful. It was not until 1873 when the Dakota Southern rail line was constructed to connect Yankton to lines in Iowa that rail arrived in the Dakota Territory. The economic panic of that same year halted all other rail development plans however (Hufstetler 2007; Tripp N/A).

Original Land Patents

In Sioux Falls in the 1860s-70s, land sales indicated an intention to develop the area into a permanent settlement and economic center. Land was divided into quarter sections by the United States General Land Office and granted to private parties. The downtown railyard property lies partially in three of the four quarter sections of Section 16, T101N, R49W. Each quarter section and the first land grantees to control property within what is now the downtown railyard are described below.

The Wilmot Brookings Property

The first land grant issued in the Dakota Territory was to Wilmot W. Brookings on September 10, 1862 for a 160-acre parcel in the NW¼ of Section 16, T101N, R49W (Bailey 1899). The grant was made under an 1855 federal law authorizing land be granted to soldiers for their service. The land granted to Brookings straddled the Big Sioux River, and stretched from Minnesota Avenue east for approximately 6 blocks to the middle of the area which eventually became the railyard. It was bounded on the south by Sixth Street and extended north approximately 6 blocks, including most of present day Falls Park (GLO 1862).

- Wilmot W. Brookings was born in Woolwich, Maine on October 23, 1830. He arrived in Sioux Falls on August 27, 1857 as a representative of the Western Town Company of Dubuque, Iowa. In January of 1858, Brookings and a companion set out for the Yankton area to locate a town in an area that was soon to be ceded by the Native Americans. The two soon encountered a blizzard that froze Brookings' feet, which had to be amputated. Despite this hardship, he was elected a member and president of the council of the People's Legislature of Dakota in 1859 and then appointed governor. In 1861, Brookings was elected to the Dakota legislature from Yankton County and served until 1865; he was speaker in 1864. In 1866, Brookings was nominated for Congress by the anti-Johnson branch of the Republican Party. He was elected member of the council from Yankton County in 1867 and then elected president of the council in 1868. Brookings served as district attorney for Yankton County from 1867-1868. In April 1869, he was appointed by President Grant to Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Dakota serving until 1873. Brookings was a member of the constitutional conventions of 1883 and 1885 from Minnehaha County. He was the most prominent organizer of the Dakota Southern Railroad, and was either president, vice president or solicitor for more than ten years of the Dakota Southern, Sioux City & Pembina, and the Sioux City and Dakota Railroad,

which was eventually incorporated into the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul system. The county and city of Brookings, and the city of Wilmot were named for him (Bailey 1899; South Dakota Magazine 2013).



Figure 4. Judge Wilmot W. Brookings. (South Dakota Magazine 2013)

Various early Dakota promoters and investors purchased an interest in the Brookings property in 1879, including Michigan businessman and surveyor George D. Hill. Hill was among the first to encourage immigration to Dakota Territory and was instrumental in inducing a New York colony of nearly one hundred families to settle in Sioux Falls in 1864 (Minnehaha 1879; Kingsbury 1915).

In August 1879, much of the 160-acre parcel, embracing “the main Island and the Big Sioux River to the general level of the top of the West bank thereof” was purchased by James H. Drake, Trustee for E.F. Drake, George Seney and others for “improvement of water power of said river” or for “water power (Minnehaha 1879).”

- E.F. Drake was born, in Urbana, Ohio, Dec. 21, 1813 and became a prominent businessman and rail developer in the Upper Midwest. In 1860 he came to Minnesota, under contract to build the St. Paul & Pacific Railroad. He brought the first locomotives, cars, and rails ever seen in Minnesota, and put into operation the state’s first ten miles of railroad between St. Paul and St. Anthony. In 1864, he became involved with the St. Paul & Sioux City road, and was its president for sixteen years until it was merged into the Omaha line. For nearly thirty-two years Drake was president of different railroad companies in Ohio, Indiana, and Minnesota, and supervised the construction of 600 miles of railroad. He was actively engaged in his various property interests until the time of his death on Feb. 14, 1892, at Hotel del Coronado, San Diego, California (Bishop 1905).

- James H. Drake was a St. Paul business man and friend of Sioux Falls lawyer and later South Dakota Senator, R.F. Pettigrew. James Drake was active in both the quarry and railroad industries. In 1883, he began the construction of a stone polishing works, the Drake Polishing Works, at the falls of the Big Sioux River on the east bank to the north of the Queen Bee Mill in Sioux Falls. Local quartzite as well as petrified wood from Arizona was polished at Drake Polishing Works. James Drake obtained a concession from the US Government to remove petrified wood from the government land around Prescott, Arizona. In 1906, the State of Arizona stopped the removal of the petrified wood and the Petrified Forest National Monument was created, and as a result, Drake Polishing Works closed. Pettigrew purchased the remaining stock of petrified wood and used it for the entrance to Woodlawn Cemetery and for the north wall of the Pettigrew Museum in Sioux Falls. In 1888, James H. Drake discovered a natural spring on his land, near the present-day Drake Springs Aquatic Family Center in Sioux Falls. Drake died December 15, 1912 in Los Angeles County, California (Rambow 1999; Siouxland 2016).
- George Seney was an American banker, investment capitalist and philanthropist born in Astoria, Illinois on May 12, 1826. In 1877, he became the President of the Metropolitan National Bank in New York City and held the office until 1884. He was the principal stockholder of the Sioux Falls Water Power Company and one of the main investors in the Queen Bee Mill. The island above the falls of the Big Sioux River was named Seney Island in his honor. He died in New York City on April 7, 1893 (Rambow 1999; Siouxland 2016).

Through these various purchases, most of the 160-acre parcel in the NW¼ of Section 16, T101N, R49 became the property of the Sioux Falls Water Power Company (Chicago 1883).

The Heirs of William Stevens Property

The second quarter section which eventually became part of the railyard was 160 acres in the SE¼ of Section 16, T101N, R49W. It extended from the middle of the railyard property east to Cliff Avenue and then stretched from 6th Street south to 12th Street.

- William Stevens settled here and made a pre-emption claim under the 1820 Land Act. According to land records, he settled on the land, but was “driven off by Indians” before the federal government could survey and convey the land to him. Stevens returned to the property and died of consumption in December 1870. The property was later granted to the heirs and assigns of William Stevens pursuant to an August 15, 1876 Private Act of Congress for the relief of the heirs of William Stevens. The heirs sold a portion of the land to railroad interests (U.S. Congress 1820; U.S. Congress 1876; Minnehaha 1878).

The Phillips Property

On June 5, 1871 President Ulysses S. Grant issued a land patent to Josiah L. Phillips for 160 acres in the SW¼ of Section 16, T101N, R49W; the third quarter section. This land was bounded by Minnesota Avenue on the west and the middle of the railyard property on the east. It also stretched from 6th Street south to 12th Street (GLO 1871).

- Dr. Phillips was born in Farmington, Maine on June 8, 1835, and was educated at Bowdoin College. He studied medicine with his father, Dr. Allen Phillips, and then went to Chicago where he graduated from Rush Medical College at twenty-one. He was a member of the party sent by the Western Town Company of Dubuque, Iowa to establish a settlement at the falls of the Big Sioux River where he arrived on August 27, 1857. Upon the organization of Big Sioux County, he was appointed Justice of the Peace by the governor of Minnesota. From 1861-1865 he served with the 16th Iowa regiment as an assistant surgeon and, later, a surgeon. He returned to Sioux Falls in 1869, and his wife Hattie C. Daggett Phillips followed the next year. Phillips bought the old Fort Dakota buildings at auction and his family used the officers' quarters as their first home. In 1871, he filed the first village plat within the city of Sioux Falls which comprised a nine-block area from Minnesota to Phillips Avenue and from Sixth to Ninth Streets. When Sioux Falls incorporated in 1877, Phillips was elected as a trustee. Though he was trained as a physician, he rarely practiced in Sioux Falls. While serving as a surgeon during the Civil War, he suffered an injury to his eyes during General William Tecumseh Sherman's March to the Sea and never completely recovered. Instead he devoted himself to various business interests and to governing the city. Phillips grew ill and died unexpectedly in June of 1882 at just 47 years of age. He left six children and his wife, who was pregnant with their seventh (Bailey 1899; Andrews 2014).

At the time of these land purchases and transfers, the 1870s, the population of Sioux Falls was about 1,000 people. Even so, plans for rail development emerged. On August 20, 1874, a group of prominent citizens gathered at Allen's Hall to consider attracting a rail line to their town which they considered a necessity if the town continued to grow (Bailey 1899; Hufstetler 2007).



Figure 5. Richard Franklin Pettigrew in 1913. From the Library of Congress Bain News Service Collection: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/ggbain.05072>.

One local champion who played an instrumental role in bringing rail to Sioux Falls was Richard Franklin Pettigrew. Pettigrew settled in Sioux Falls in 1869 as a young man and immediately became instrumental in the growing town's success. Having worked as a surveyor and lawyer, Pettigrew raised capital, befriended wealthy investors, and assisted in purchasing the land required to develop the railroads in Sioux Falls. Eventually Pettigrew represented the Dakota

Territory in Congress and became the first U.S. Senator from South Dakota. In addition, to his business interests, Pettigrew was also an outspoken critic of capitalism and war. In 1917, he was indicted under the Espionage Act for criticizing WWI (Novack 1949; Hendrickson 1962).

At the Allen’s Hall meeting, it was resolved that the “town of Sioux Falls and the Minnehaha County will donate \$50,000, provided said railroad reaches Sioux Falls by the first day of November 1876.” In 1875, at another meeting at Allen’s Hall, this amount was increased to \$100,000 and the Sioux Falls Railroad Company was organized, with Pettigrew as president. Though they planned the railroad to run from Yankton to Sioux Falls, this line never materialized (Bailey 1899).

The Omaha Road

Citizens of Sioux Falls would not have long to wait however. The Worthington and Sioux Falls Railroad was organized in St. Paul, Minnesota in March 1876 and immediately began plans for expansion toward the town. The company acquired land for this venture from William Stevens’ heirs in 1878 and that part of the W.W. Brookings property that had been sold to the Sioux Falls Water Power Company in 1880. By the time the Sioux Falls Water Power Company sold the land, the Worthington and Sioux Falls Railroad had sold the St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad Company “*all and every part and parcel of its line of railroad.*”

On Thursday August 1, 1878, the first train to Sioux Falls pulled in to town. Trains from St. Paul arrived in Sioux Falls at 11:45 am, and departed at 1:15 pm. The first passenger fare established to St. Paul was \$9.75. To Sioux City via Worthington it was \$6.20 (Bailey 1899; Tripp N/A).

Freight rates to St. Paul along this line were as follows:

First-class	\$1.00 per hundred pounds
Second-class.....	\$0.90 per hundred pounds
Third-class.....	\$0.70 per hundred pounds
Fourth-class.....	\$0.60 per hundred pounds
Lumber	\$60.00 per car
Wheat	\$0.30 per bushel

In 1881, the St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad Company conveyed various railroad property to the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railway which became known as the Omaha Road. The Omaha Road also acquired additional property in the present-day downtown railyard from Josiah Phillips (Bailey 1899; Minnehaha 1879; Minnehaha 1878; Minnehaha 1880).

Dakota Boom years of the 1880s

In the decade of 1870-1880 the population of the southern half of the Dakota Territory grew from 11,776 residents to 98,268. The next decade would see an even greater explosion as the population increased to 263,411 by 1885. Sioux Fall experienced tremendous growth as its population more than quadrupled from 2,161 in 1880 to over 10,000 by 1890. Railroads were instrumental in this growth.

Railroad companies encouraged growth along their routes and often established towns as speculative ventures. Many communities in South Dakota can trace their history to this development. While many smaller communities were dependent on one rail line for their contact with the world and to transport their agricultural products, larger communities, such as Sioux Falls, who were served by multiple lines, could take advantage of lower rates because of competition. This allowed Sioux Falls to become a regional manufacturing and transportation hub. The rail lines extended to Sioux Falls during this period included the Illinois Central, Rock Island, and the Great Northern as rail mileage within the state grew from 0 to 2,456 (Bailey 1899; Tripp N/A; Olson 2004; Hufstetler 2007).

The Great Northern Railway

The Willmar and Sioux Falls Railway was organized in 1886. It ultimately purchased and operated property in the downtown railyard parallel to the Omaha Road. In February 1886, Sioux Falls businessmen Edwin A. Sherman and Henry T. Corson were elected to the Board of Directors. The Willmar and Sioux Falls Railway sought and obtained the right of way through Sioux Falls along with a “bonus” of \$50,000 from the City of Sioux Falls to ensure the railway would be constructed from Willmar, Minnesota to Sioux Falls. This enterprise acted in conjunction with the Manitoba Railway Company (“Manitoba”) who built the line. The Manitoba was interested in having access to “depot grounds near the Omaha depot south of Eighth Street.” The Manitoba was operated by James J. Hill who made the decision to build the line to Sioux Falls. The first Willmar and Sioux Falls passenger train left Sioux Falls on November 1, 1888 (Bailey 1899).

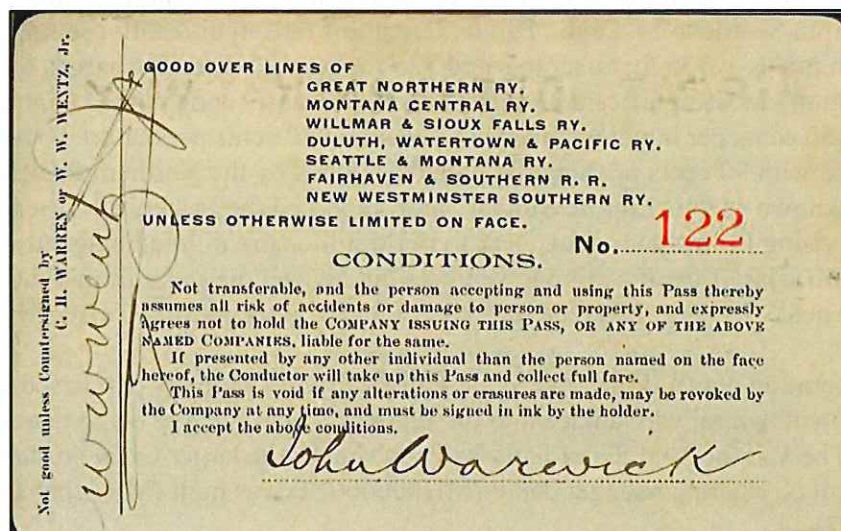


Figure 6. 1895 pass for the Willmar & Sioux Falls Railway (Levine 2017).

- Edwin Sherman was born in Middlesex County, Massachusetts, on June 19, 1844. He arrived in Sioux Falls in June 1873. From 1874 to 1876, he held the office of superintendent of schools of Minnehaha County. In 1875, he built the first brick building in Sioux Falls, this being the third building on Phillips Avenue south of the Edminson-

Jameson block. He was instrumental in securing the location of the “state school for deaf mutes” in Sioux Falls, and he gave the institution five acres of land. He was one of the first trustees of this school and president of the board. Sherman Park was one of the first parks in the city. The 52 acres were donated by Sherman and his wife, on the stipulation that no “intoxicating liquors” be allowed in the park. Sherman also helped to establish McKennan Park with an endowment from Helen McKennan. For this he was called the Father of the Sioux Falls Park System. Edwin A. Sherman died at the age of 81 on June 15th, 1916 (Robinson 1904; Renshaw 2012; Odland 2007).

- Henry T. Corson was born November 8, 1837 in Maine. When his brother, Harry Corson began in the hotel business in Sioux Falls, Henry contributed to the enterprise, and in 1878 moved to Sioux Falls with his family and took up his residence at the Cataract Hotel, which he and his brother managed until 1894. He was a member of the board of directors of the Dakota penitentiary in 1885-6, took a very active part in procuring the building of the Willmar & Sioux Falls Railroad into Sioux Falls, and was one of the directors of the first railroad corporation organized for that purpose. The first railroad station built in Sioux Falls was named in his honor (Bailey 1899).
- James J. Hill was born in his family's log house in Rockwood, County of Wellington, Upper Canada (later Ontario) on September 16, 1838. In 1878 Hill purchased the financially troubled St. Paul & Pacific Railroad. Hill pushed the line toward the Pacific coast and reached its terminus in Seattle on January 7, 1893. During 1893, many of the railroads went bankrupt leaving the Great Northern the only solvent transcontinental line. In 1889, the St. Paul & Pacific Railroad was renamed the Great Northern Railway. The Northern Pacific Railroad charged \$60 for tickets in first class and \$35 for second-class tickets from Seattle to St. Paul. Hill undercut this rate significantly, setting the Great Northern prices at \$35 for first class and \$25 for second. Freight charges on timber, Washington's most significant product, also significantly undercut the competition: Hill charged 50 cents per hundred pounds of cedar and 40 cents per hundred pounds of fir, compared with 90 cents per hundred pounds charged by the Northern Pacific. Hill became known as the “Empire Builder” and embodied the archetypal American story of success, rising from a poor dock clerk to multimillionaire railroad magnate. Hill paid himself no salary from his railroad ventures but his income came from the Great Northern stock he held. James J. Hill died on May 29, 1916, at the age of 77 (Becker 2007).

As part of its operation, the Willmar and Sioux Falls Railway Company purchased various parcels in the downtown railyard adjacent to the line which was already being operated by the Omaha Road. The Willmar and Sioux Falls Railway sold to the larger Great Northern Railway in 1907 and Great Northern passenger depot (MH00000022) was built (Minnehaha 1903; Minnehaha 1907).

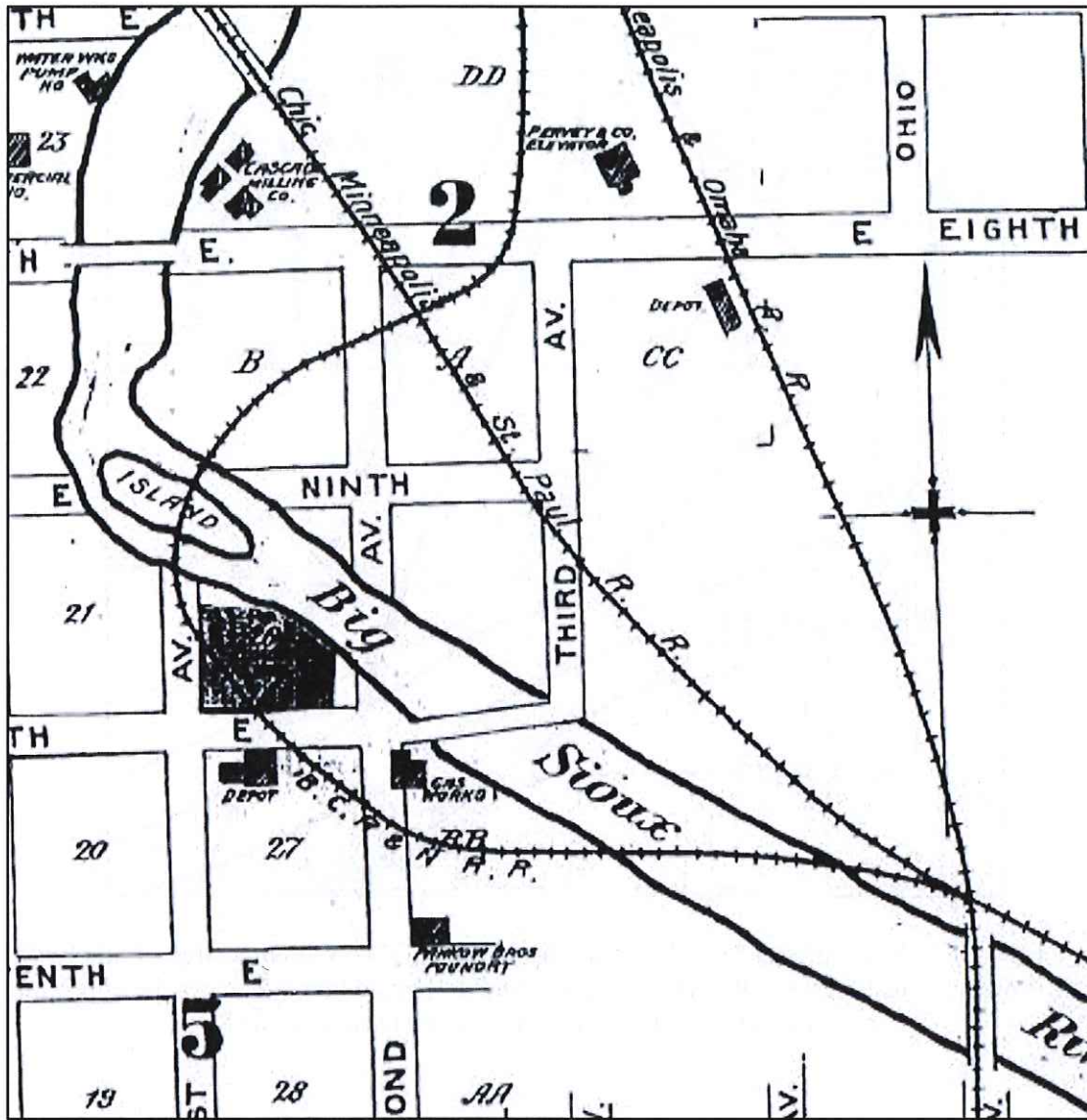


Figure 7. 1888 Sanborn Map depicting the rail yard. Neither the historic Great Northern passenger depot (MH00000022) or the freight house (MH00002262) were yet built. Note that the 10th Street viaduct was also not present. Purple line delineates the approximate boundaries of the modern rail yard.

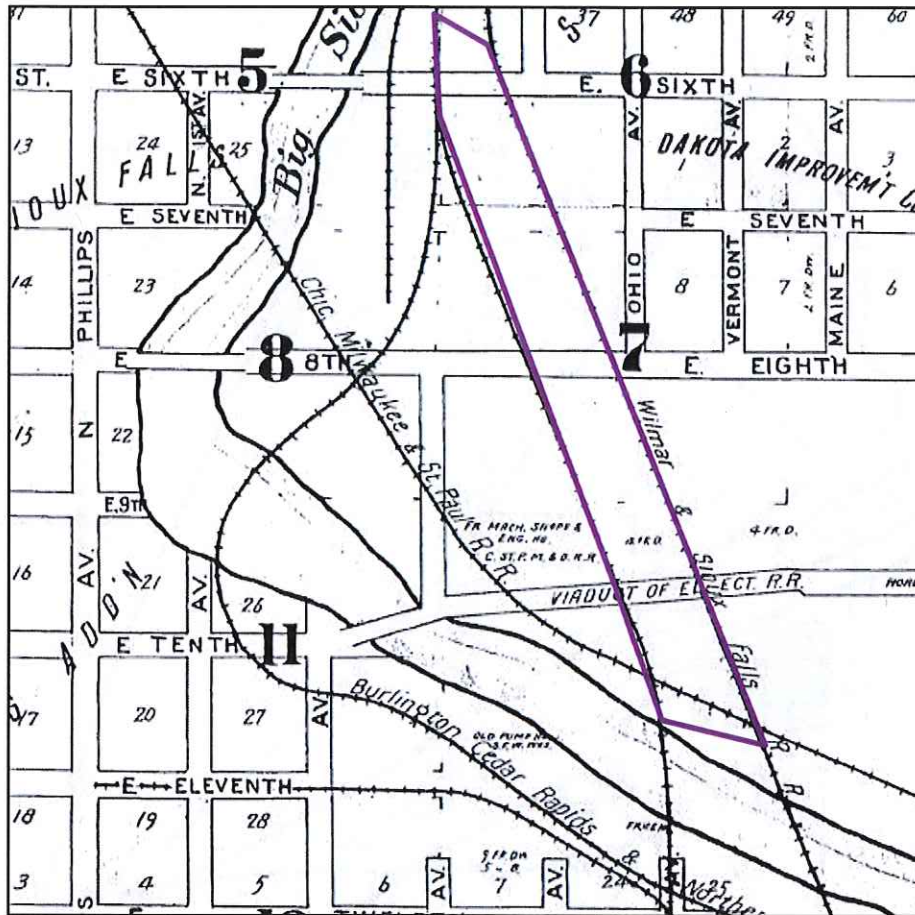


Figure 8. 1891 Sanborn Map depicting the railyard. The Wilmar & Sioux Falls Railroad is depicted just west of Ohio (later Weber) Street. Purple line delineates the approximate boundaries of the modern railyard (Sanborn 1891).

While little photographic evidence of the early railyard exists, historic maps and land records indicate that by the late 1880s and early 1890s, several buildings were present in the yard. These consisted of both passenger and freight depots as well as dwellings. In the 1890s, there was the Sioux Falls Planing Mill, with its warehouses and transfer houses. Other early development near the railyard consisted of the Phillips House Hotel, a large grain elevator which operated under several different names, and several lumberyards. The Tuthill Lumber Company and H. W. Ross Lumberyard operated in various locations around the railyard. During the summer months of 1879 the Omaha Road received 11,125,737 pounds of freight and shipped 3,180,593 pounds of freight (Sanborn 1883; Sanborn 1886; Sanborn 1888; Sanborn 1891; Tripp N/A; Bailey 1899).

The East 10th Street viaduct, at the southern extent of the railyard, was originally built in 1890 after the multiple rail crossings were determined unsafe. The original viaduct was 810 feet long by 32 feet wide, and constructed of iron and wood. This is now the location of the 10th Street bridge (Sanborn 1891; Bailey 1899).

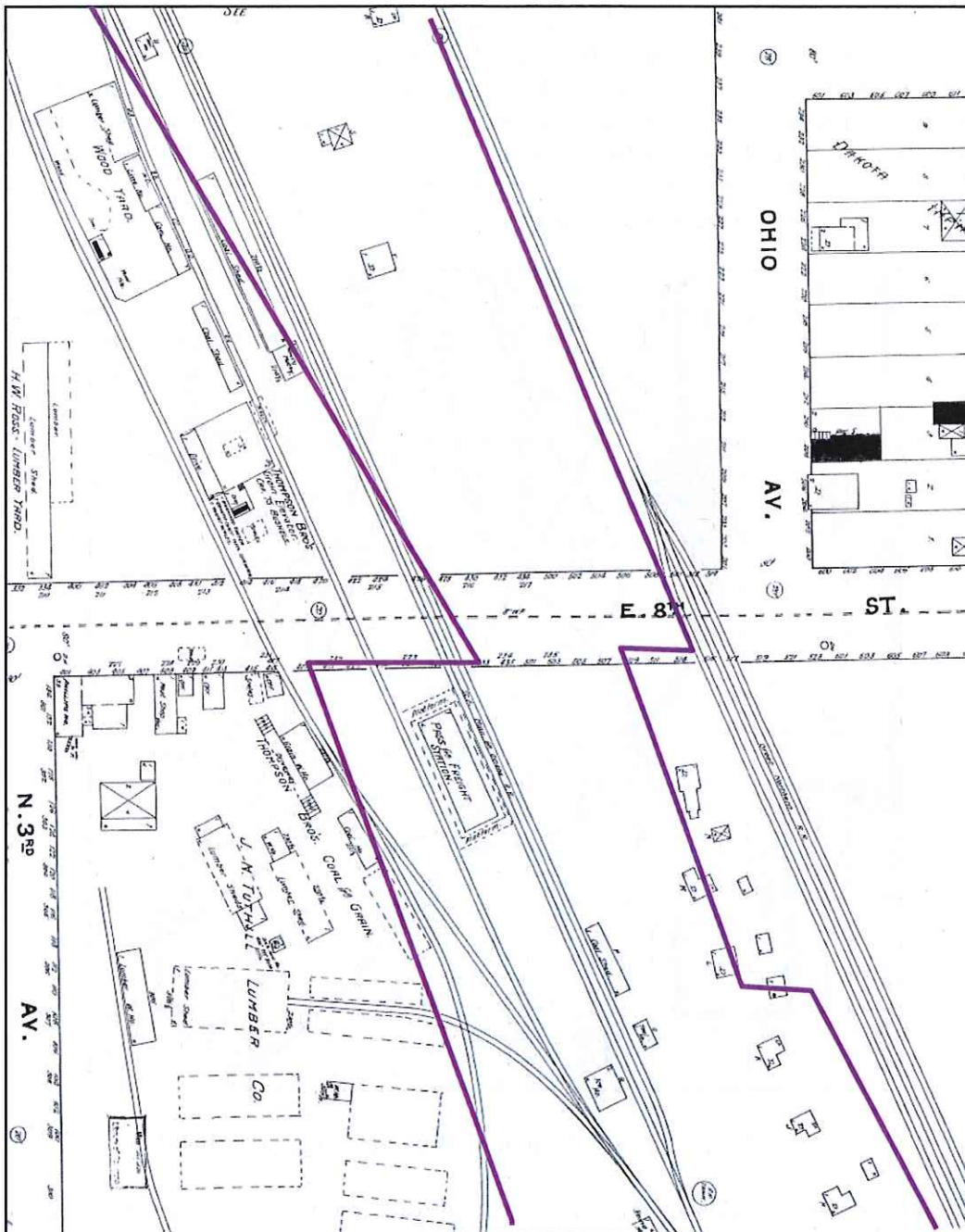


Figure 9. Detail of the 1891 Sanborn Map. Neither the freight house or the Great Northern passenger depot had been built. Instead, small buildings and dwellings dot the yard. Purple line delineates the approximate boundaries of the modern railway.

Growth and decline in the first half of the 20th-Century

By the time South Dakota became the 39th state in 1889, declining wheat prices, drought, and severe economic depression signaled that the Great Dakota boom was over. New railroad construction within the state shifted to the Black Hills before ceasing altogether. From this period until the Great Depression, South Dakota experienced periodic economic downturns and climactic events that tempered settlement and growth. Sioux Falls weathered these storms better than many other South Dakota communities as its meatpacking, service, and processing industries continued to expand. This resilience was due in large part to the city's rail lines, which connected it to larger markets (Hufstetler 2007; Olson 2004).

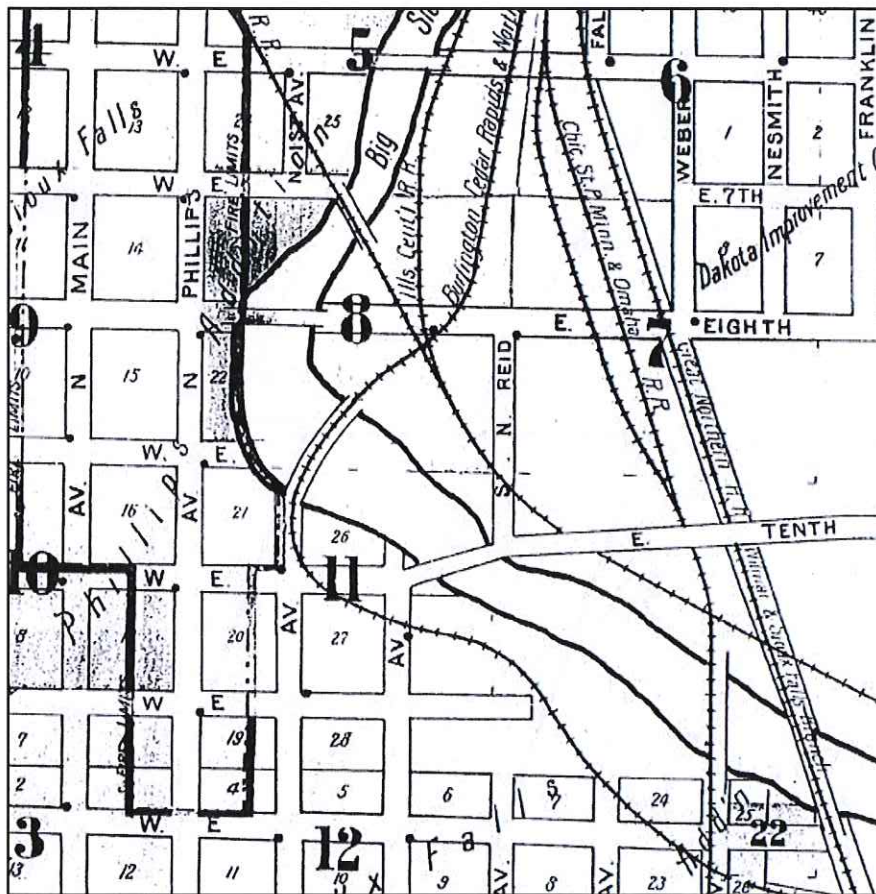


Figure 10. 1902 Sanborn Map depicting the railyard.

The 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance map depicts several warehouses adjacent or within the railyard property including the Farley-Loetscher Company millwork factory and warehouse, the Sioux Falls Produce Company buildings, and the Great Northern Implement Company warehouse. Throughout the early 1900s, several additional warehouses, transfer houses, agricultural implement companies, lumberyards and building supply companies, food/beverage/produce companies, and grain elevators appear around the railyard. Many of these adjacent structures are still standing.

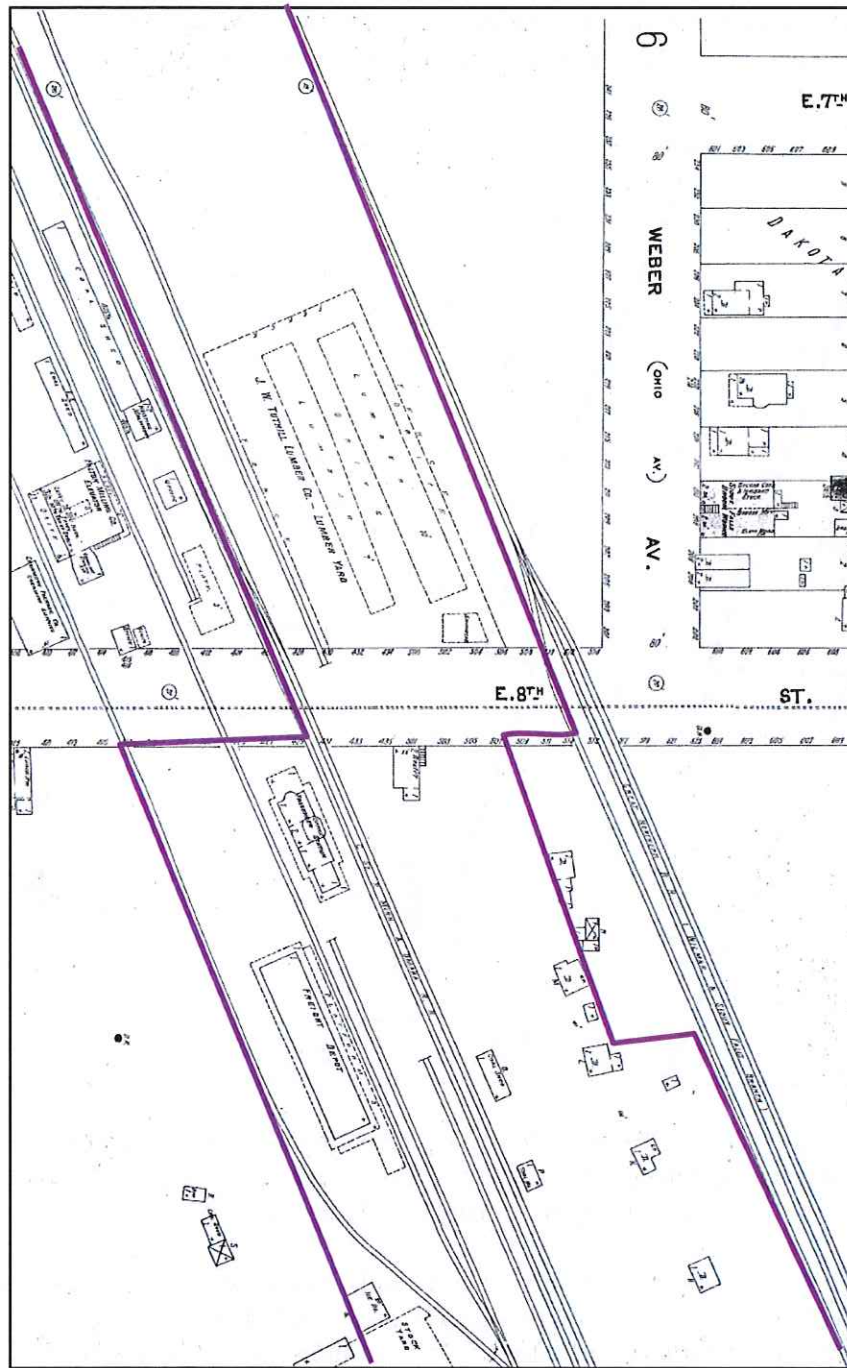


Figure 11. Detail of 1902 Sanborn Map depicting the railyard. Ohio Avenue had been renamed Weber Avenue by this time. Purple line delineates the approximate boundaries of the modern railyard.

The Farley-Loetscher Company owned the quartzite building at 322-324 East 8th Street which was built in about 1900 for custom millwork operations. In 1917, they built a larger building, to the east of the railyard at 701 East 8th Street. The Plumbing Supply Company, 326 E. 8th St., was built in 1911 in an “L” shape, common for warehouses as it allowed for maximum loading

space. The Cochran-Sargent Company building at 601 East 8th Street was built in 1920, and continues to serve as a heating and plumbing warehouse (Sanborn 1902; Sanborn 1908; Sanborn 1911; Alfred 2013).

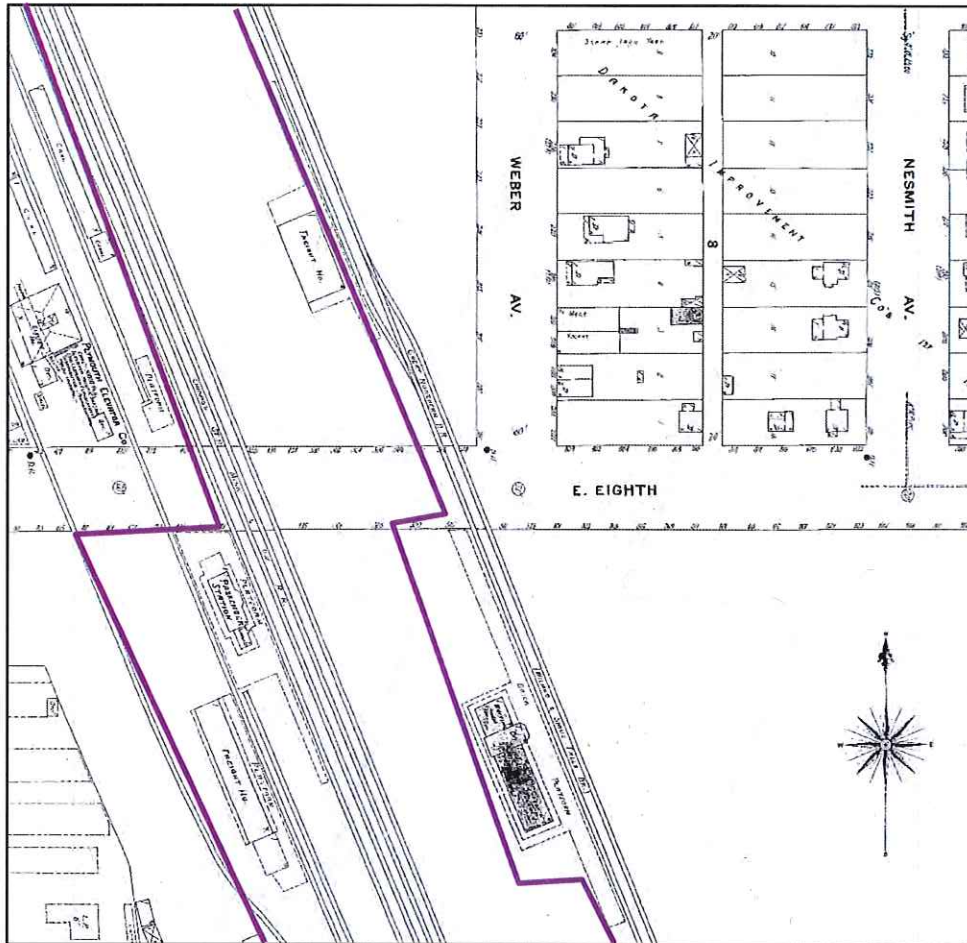


Figure 12. Detail of 1908 Sanborn Map depicting a portion of the railyard, the Great Northern passenger depot and a freight house on the north side of 8th Street. Purple line delineates the approximate boundaries of the modern railyard.

The Great Northern owned various buildings in the railyard including the Great Northern freight house (MH00002262). The 1908 Sanborn map shows a freight house in the same location as the Great Northern freight house but the footprint of this building and its adjacent platform appears to be smaller than what is currently present. By 1924, Sanborn maps depict a freight house in a location and configuration like what exists today, though it seems to be slightly farther south and closer to 8th Street than the present freight house. Tax records do not indicate when the freight house was constructed and very little photographic evidence of this area from the period exists so it is unknown whether the building depicted on the 1924 Sanborn represents the extant building or a predecessor (Sanborn 1916; Sanborn 1924). Often historic Sanborn maps can be georeferenced and overlain contemporary aerial photos to confirm a building's age or historic footprint. This is challenging in the railyard however because many of the landscape features

which could be used to do this, such as street corners and edges, rail lines and buildings, have been extensively modified or moved over the years.

A promotional insert for the *Argus Leader* from 1937 included an aerial view of the railyard. Though the photo is not clear and its exact date unknown, a building with at least four bays across the south elevation, no loading dock, and a possible false front is depicted in the approximate location of the freight house. This does not match the present building's morphology. Unfortunately, no clearer photos of the freight house from this period are known to exist (Argus 1937).

In addition to its use by the Great Northern, Sanborn maps indicate that the freight house was also used by the Russell-Miller Milling Company from 1936 until 1947. The Great Northern then leased the building to the Sharp Milling Company, a grain and feed business, from 1947 to approximately 1955 (Sanborn 1924; Sanborn 1950; Polk 1936-47).

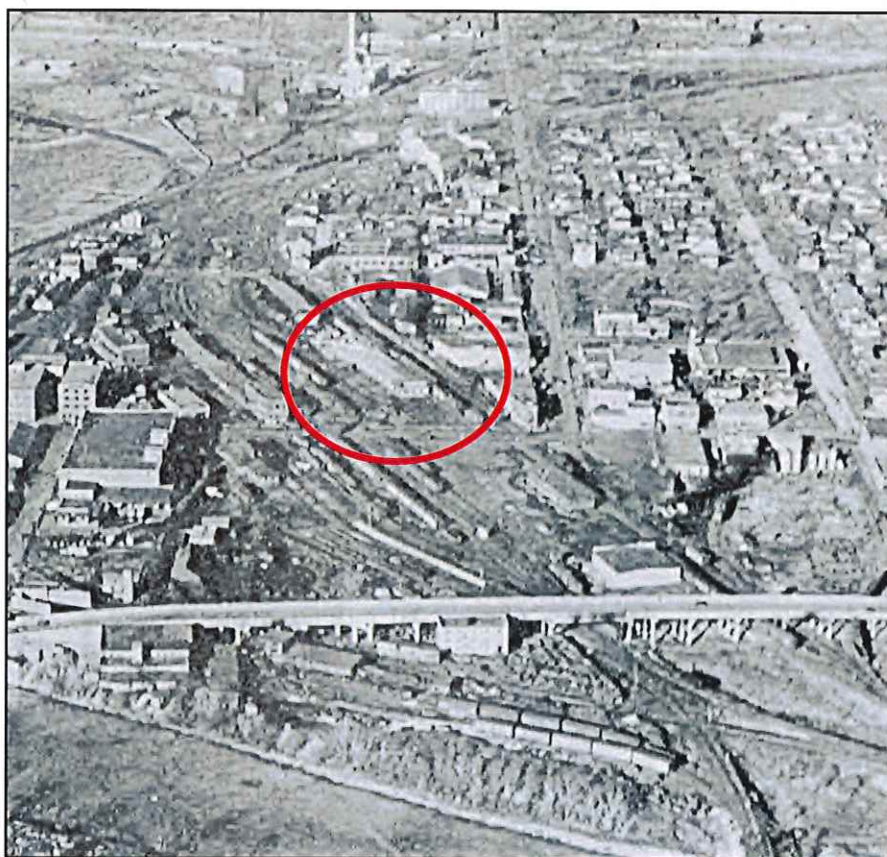


Figure 13. Detail from 1937 *Argus Leader* depicting the railyard. The location of the freight house is circled in red though the building is not clear.

While Sioux Falls survived the ups and downs of the early 20th-Century better than many smaller South Dakota communities, the city was not immune to the Great Depression which arrived in the Midwest and Great Plains earlier than the rest of the country. By 1924, 175 banks had failed in South Dakota due to the pressures of depressed commodity prices and stagnating land values.

The stock market crash five years later was accompanied by a severe drought which resulted in the displacement of thousands of South Dakota farmers.

The population of the state declined during this period from 692,849 in 1930 to 589,920 by 1945. In addition, the number of farms fell from 101,224 in 1915 to 68,705 in 1945. This, combined with the mass production of the automobile, the growth of interstate trucking, and better-quality roads had a negative effect on the railroad industry. The Milwaukee and North Western, for example, filed for bankruptcy in 1935 (Tripp N/A; Hufstetler 2007).

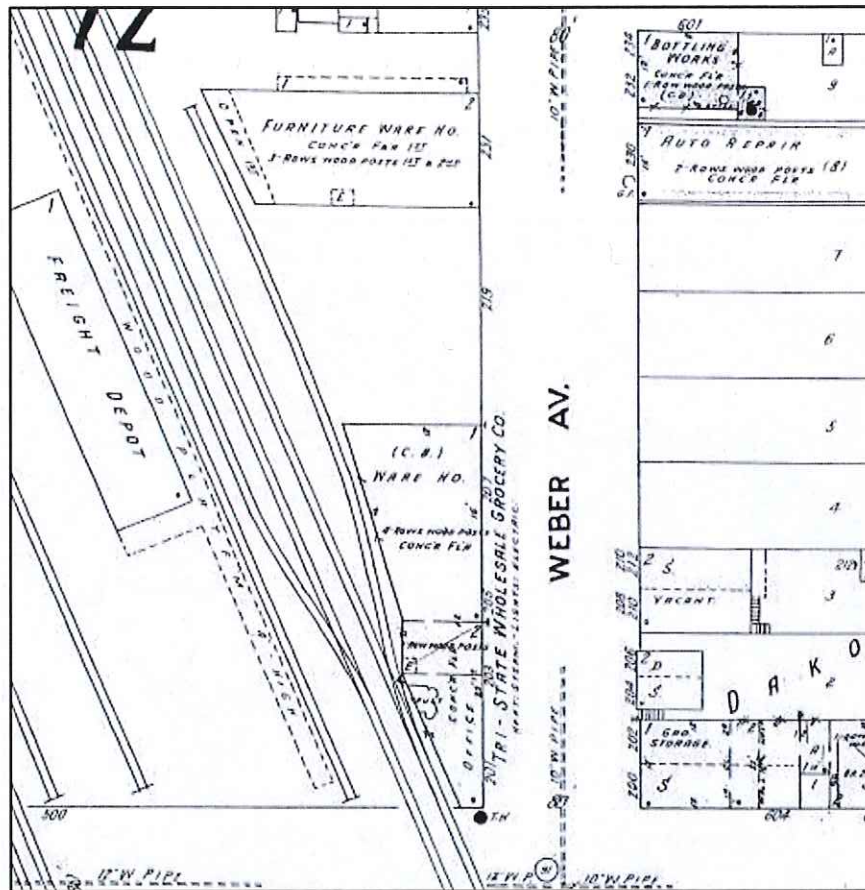


Figure 14. Detail of 1924 Sanborn Map depicting the railyard. The dimensions of the freight house and loading dock had changed from the configuration depicted on previous Sanborn maps.

Despite these hardships, the Omaha Road and Great Northern continued working in the railyard through the period operating both passenger and freight trains. The Omaha operated four passenger trains out of Sioux Falls with connections in Worthington, Minnesota for St. Paul and in Salem, South Dakota for all points west. They also ran a night passenger train to Minneapolis-St. Paul and six regular freights (Tripp N/A).

WWII and beyond

The eruption of WWII resulted in temporary economic stabilization for rail companies in the United States and in South Dakota. Rail was used for troop transport and to transport cargo. After the war, railroads continued to be an important transportation mode though the increasing availability and convenience of commercial airline travel eroded its role in passenger travel significantly over time. The increased use of telephone and radio communications also supplanted the community rail station as a communication hub.

After midcentury, many small-town rail stations and feeder lines in South Dakota were abandoned and passenger services scaled back. The Omaha Road ceased passenger service to Sioux Falls in 1955 and the passenger depot, which once stood on the south side of 8th Street to the west of the Great Northern passenger depot, was demolished. Historian Leonard Tripp notes in his undated manuscript, “History of Railroads in Sioux Falls,” that telegraph and train order operations were shifted to a freight house at the same time. Tripp does not note the location of this freight house but it is possible he is referring to the railyard freight house located north of 8th Street (Tripp N/A; Hufstetler 2007).

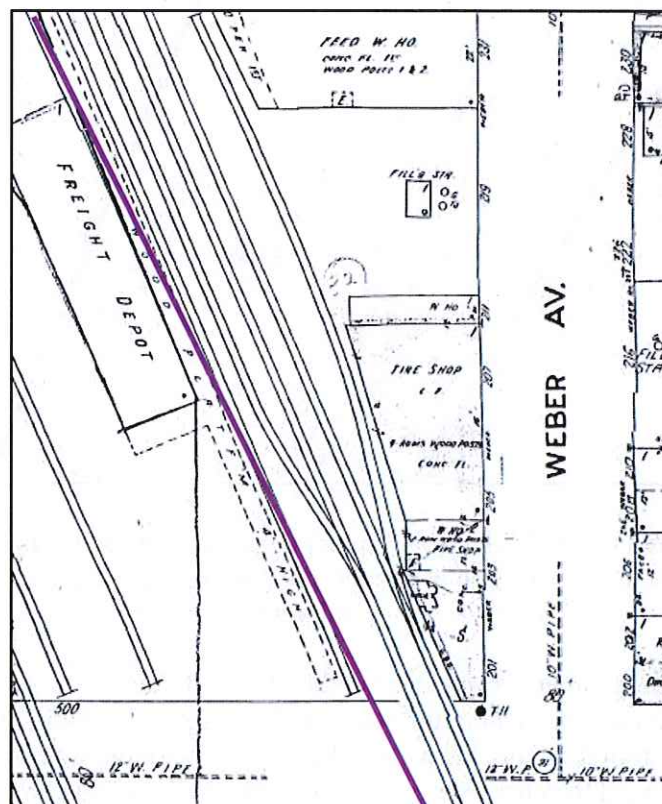


Figure 15. Detail of 1950 Sanborn Map depicting the railyard north of 8th Street and the freight house. Purple line delineates the approximate boundaries of the modern railyard.

The Great Northern also scaled back during the mid-20th-Century, discontinuing passenger service to Sioux Falls in 1959. In addition, the company closed their roundhouse on Main Street and moved their locomotive servicing facilities to an area south of the depot in the present-day

railyard. Aerial imagery of this area of the railyard, just north of the East 10th Street bridge and south of the historic Great Northern depot, depicts a large building in the yard until 2010, after which it appears to have been demolished.

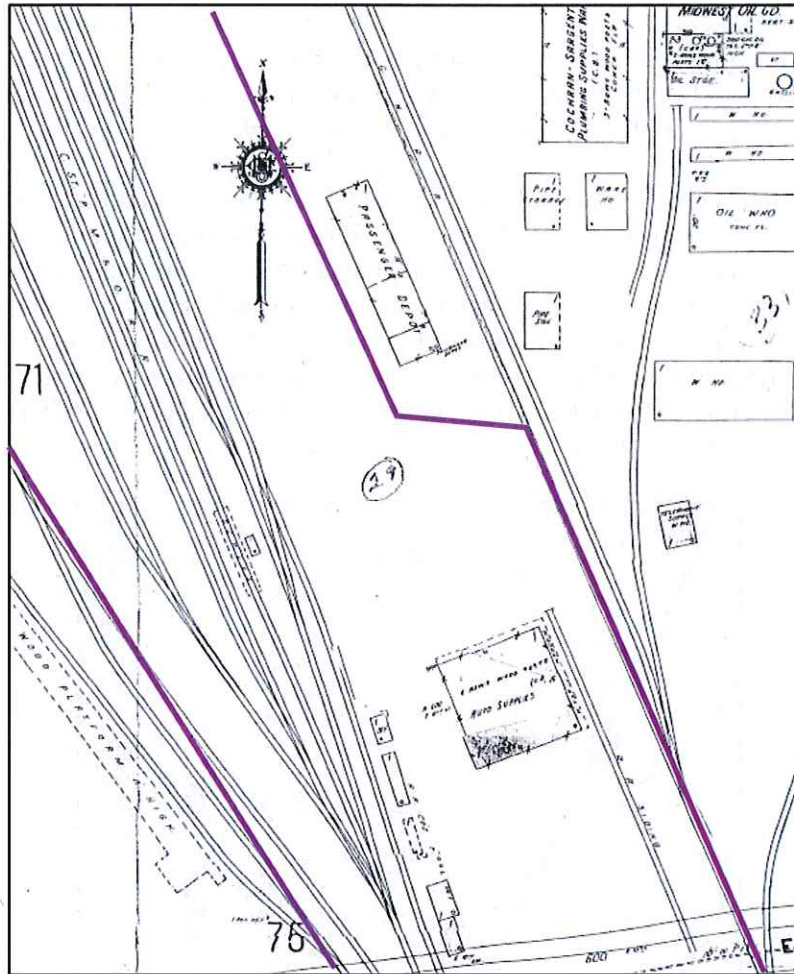


Figure 16. Detail of 1950 Sanborn Map depicting the portion of the railyard between 8th and 10th Streets. Purple line delineates the approximate boundaries of the modern railyard.

The process of track abandonment accelerated in the 1960s-70s across South Dakota. By the end of the 1970s, 60% of all rail lines within the state had been abandoned and one of the largest companies operating within the state, the Milwaukee, again filed for bankruptcy. Mergers and consolidations also changed the character of the companies who had historically operated in the state. In March 1970, the Great Northern was consolidated in to the Burlington Northern, Inc. Fearing the negative effect that track abandonment and rail company failures would have on the state's economy, the South Dakota Rail Authority purchased over 1,200 miles of track. The Burlington Northern was contracted to provide service over these state-owned lines. Eventually the Burlington Northern purchased much of this track becoming the largest rail operator in the state of South Dakota (Tripp N/A; Hufstetler 2007; Smith 1971).

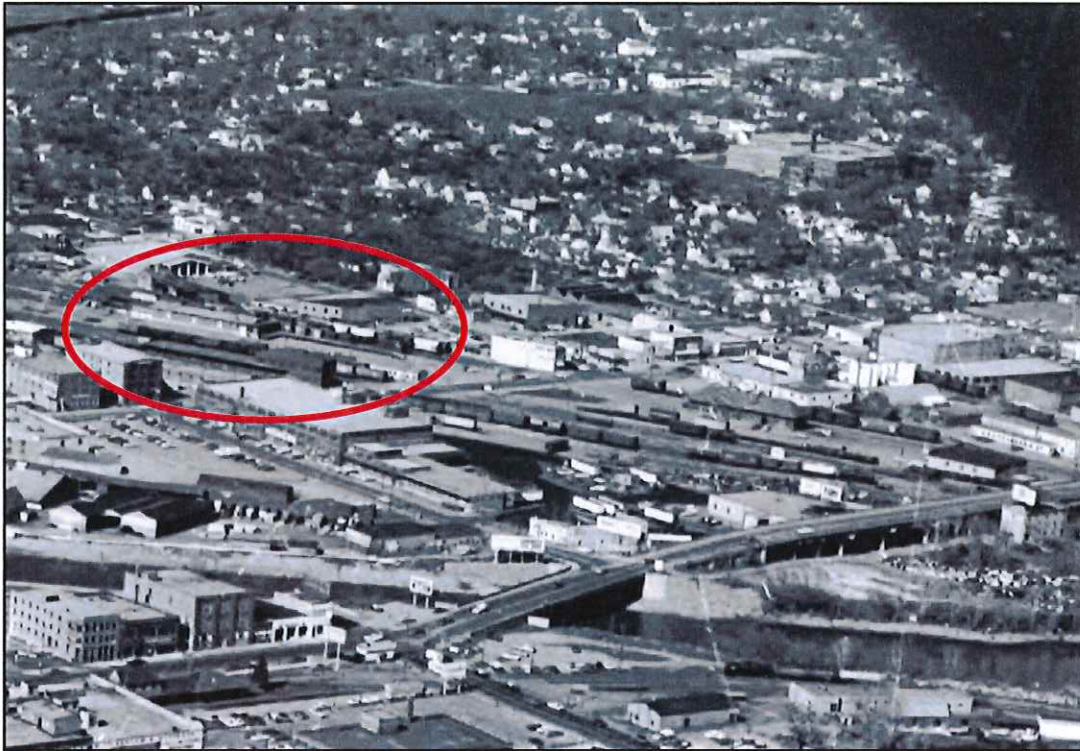


Figure 17. 1968 aerial view of the railyard with freight house circled in red.

The Omaha Road used the railyard for over 75 years before it sold it to the Chicago Northwestern (CNW) in 1972 as part of a larger land sale. The property was later included in the sale of CNW property in the Sioux Falls area to the Ellis and Eastern (E&E) on January 31, 1989. Later that year, E&E sold part of its acquisitions, including the railyard, to the Burlington Northern. In 1996, the Burlington Northern was merged with the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad and was renamed the BNSF. The City of Sioux Falls acquired the former Omaha Road property and a narrow sliver of the Great Northern property from the BNSF on November 2, 2015, drawing the period of nearly one hundred and forty years of rail ownership and use of the yard to a close (Tripp N/A; Hufstetler 2007; Alfred 2013; Minnehaha 1972; Minnehaha 1989; Minnehaha 2015).



Figure 18. Google Earth aerial screen capture from 2010 (left) and 2015 (right) depicting portion of yard between 8th and 10th streets.

Bibliography

Alfred Benesch and Company

- 2013 *Cultural Resources Identification and Evaluation for the Downtown Sioux Falls Rail Yard Redevelopment Project, Sioux Falls, Minnehaha County, South Dakota.* Report prepared for the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and the South Dakota Department of Transportation. Omaha, Nebraska.

Andrews, John.

- 2014 “The Parents of Sioux Falls.” *South Dakota Magazine*. Yankton, South Dakota, <https://southdakotamagazine.com/josiah-phillips>. Accessed June 20, 2017.

Argus Leader

- 1937 “Industrial and Jobbing District.” Promotional insert. *Argus Leader*. Sioux Falls, South Dakota. In the collections of the Siouxland Heritage Museums Archive.

Bailey, Dana R.

- 1899 *History of Minnehaha County, South Dakota*. Brown & Saenger, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Becker, Paula.

- 2007 *Hill, James J. (1838-1916): HistoryLink.org Essay 8115*. Seattle, Washington. <http://historylink.org/File/8115>. Accessed March 20, 2017.

Bishop, J. W.

- 1905 *History of the St. Paul & Sioux City Railroad*. Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Chicago Tribune.

- 1883 “Heavy Attachments Against the Sioux Falls Water Power Company.” April 17, 1883 edition of Chicago Tribune: Industrial News. <http://Archives.chicagotribune.com/1883/04/17/page/4/article/heavy-attachments-against-the-sioux-falls-water-power-company>. Accessed March 6, 2017.

Hamburg, James Frederic

- 1970 *The Influence of Railroads upon the Process and Patterns of Settlement in South Dakota*, New York, Arno Press.

Hendrickson, Kenneth Elton, Jr.

- 1962 “The Public Career of Richard F. Pettigrew of South Dakota, 1848-1926.” PhD dissertation. Department of History, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma. <http://hdl.handle.net/11244/1573>. Accessed June 5, 2017.

Hufstetler, Mark and Michael Bedeau.

2007 *South Dakota Railroads: A Historic Context*. South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Pierre, South Dakota.
<http://history.sd.gov/Preservation/OtherServices/SDRailroad.pdf>. Accessed March 6, 2017.

Kingsbury, George W.

1915 *History of Dakota Territory*. The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, Chicago, Illinois.

Levine, Brian.

2017 “1895 Pass for the Willmar & Sioux Falls Railway.” *Mt. Gothic Tomes and Reliquary: Rare Books & Western Americana*. Crested Butte, Colorado.
http://www.mtgothictomes.com/railroad_passes.htm. Accessed June 14, 2017.

Minnehaha County Register of Deeds

1878 Quit Claim Deed from Mary A. Murdoch and James E. Murdoch to the Worthington and Sioux Falls Railroad, Book B, page 140.

1878 Quit Claim Deed from Andrew W. Gilbert to the Worthington and Sioux Falls Railroad, Book B, page 139

1879 Warranty Deed from Wilmot W. Brookings to George D. Hill, Book G, page 331.

1879 Warranty Deed from Wilmot W. Brookings and his wife Clara to James H. Drake, et. al. Book G, page 347.

1879 Warranty Deed from Charles G. Wicker and Elizabeth I, his wife, to James H. Drake, Trustee, et. al., Book G, page 348.

1879 Warranty Deed from Newtwn and Margaret E. Edmunds to James H. Drake Trustee, et. al., Book G, page 355.

1879 Warranty Deed from Andrew C. and Imogene E. Phillips to James H. Drake Trustee, et. al., Book G, page 387.

1879 Deed from Worthington and Sioux Falls Railroad Company to the St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad Company, Book G, page 364-5.

1880 Right of Way Deed from Sioux Falls Water Power Company to the Worthington and Sioux Falls Railroad Company, Book I, page 143.

1881 Deed of Conveyance from St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad to Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha Railroad, Book I, page 578.

1903 Deed Record from E.A. Sherman and Katherine Sherman, his wife, to Sarah E. Brockway, Book 78, page 515.

- 1903 Deed from Sarah E. Brockway and Charles F. Brockway to Willmar and Sioux Falls Railway, Book 78, page 406.
- 1907 Deed from Willman and Sioux Falls Railway to Great Northern Railway, Book 86, page 82.
- 1972 Confirmatory Deed from Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha Railroad to Chicago Northwestern Railroad, Book 283, page 339.
- 1989 Deed No. 85892 from Chicago Northwestern Railroad to Ellis and Eastern Railroad, Book 397, page 810.
- 1989 Quit Claim Deed from Ellis and Eastern Railroad to Burington Northern and Santa Fe, Book 402, page 59.
- 2015 Quit Claim Deed from BNSF Railroad to City of Sioux Falls, Book 565, page 863.

Novack, George.

- 1949 "A Forgotten Fighter against Plutocracy." *Fourth International*, Vol.10 No.2, New York, New York.

Odland, Dr. Rick D.

- 2007 *Sioux Falls*. Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, South Carolina.

Olson, Gary D.

- 2004 "A Dakota Boomtown: Sioux Falls, 1877-1880." *Great Plains Quarterly*, Winter 2004. University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Polk, R.L. & Company

- 1936-1947 *Polk City Directory: Sioux Falls, South Dakota*. Detroit, Michigan.

Rambow, Dave.

- 1999 *The Falls of the Big Sioux River*. Siouxland Heritage Museums, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Renshaw, Eric.

- 2012 *Forgotten Sioux Falls*. Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, South Carolina.

Robinson, Doane.

- 1904 *History of South Dakota*. B.F. Bowen & Co. Aberdeen, South Dakota.

Sanborn Map & Publishing Company

- 1883 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map: Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Sheet 1*. New York, New York.

- 1886 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map: Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Sheet 2.* New York, New York.
- 1888 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map: Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Sheet 2.* New York, New York.
- 1891 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map: Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Sheet 1 & 7.* New York, New York.
- 1896 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map: Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Sheet 1 & 7.* New York, New York.
- 1902 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map: Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Sheet 1 & 7.* New York, New York.
- 1908 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map: Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Sheet 2.* New York, New York.
- 1911 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map: Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Sheet 2.* New York, New York.
- 1916 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map: Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Sheet 2 & 34.* New York, New York.
- 1924 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map: Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Sheet 0b, 71, 72, & 75.* New York, New York.
- 1950 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map: Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Sheet 0d, 72, & 75.* New York, New York.

Siouxland Heritage Museums.

- 2016 “The Drake Polishing Works, Sioux Falls.” Blog entry for South Dakota Public Radio’s *Images of the Past* series. <http://www.sdpb.org/blogs/images-of-the-past/the-drake-polishing-works-sioux-falls/>. Accessed March 6, 2017.

Smith, James Richard.

- 1971 *Some Changing Features of a Regional Capital: Sioux Falls, South Dakota, 1920-1970.* Doctor of Philosophy Thesis, Graduate College, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska, <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/dissertations/AAI7128646/>. Accessed March 6, 2017.

South Dakota Magazine.

- 2013 “A Spirited Pioneer Promoter.” *South Dakota Magazine*. Yankton, South Dakota, <https://southdakotamagazine.com/wilmot-brookings>. Accessed June 20, 2017.

Tripp, Leonard Y.

N/A “A History Railroads in Sioux Falls.” Unpublished manuscript, Center for Western Studies, Augustana University, Sioux Falls.
<http://np3.augie.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p16078coll12/id/1008>. Accessed March 17, 2017.

U.S. Congress.

1820 Land Act of 1820 (Ch. 51, 3 Stat. 566), enacted April 24, 1820. Washington D.C.

1876 “Act for the Relief of the Heirs of William Stevens.” *United States Statutes at Large: Volume 19*. Washington D.C.

U.S. General Land Office (GLO)

1860 *U.S. Government Survey Plat of Minnehaha County and Sioux Falls, South Dakota*.

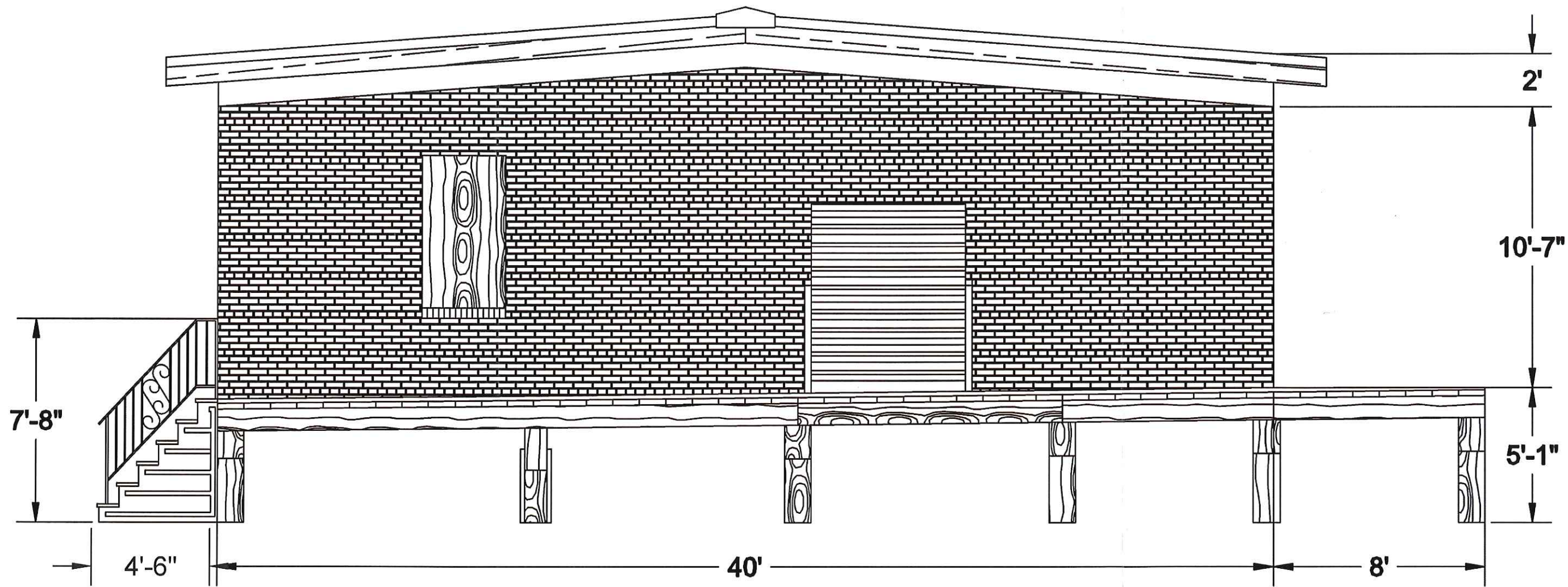
1862 *U.S. Government Land Patent NW1/4, Section 16, T101N, R49W*.


1871 *U.S. Government Land Patent SW1/4, Section 16, T101N, R49W*.

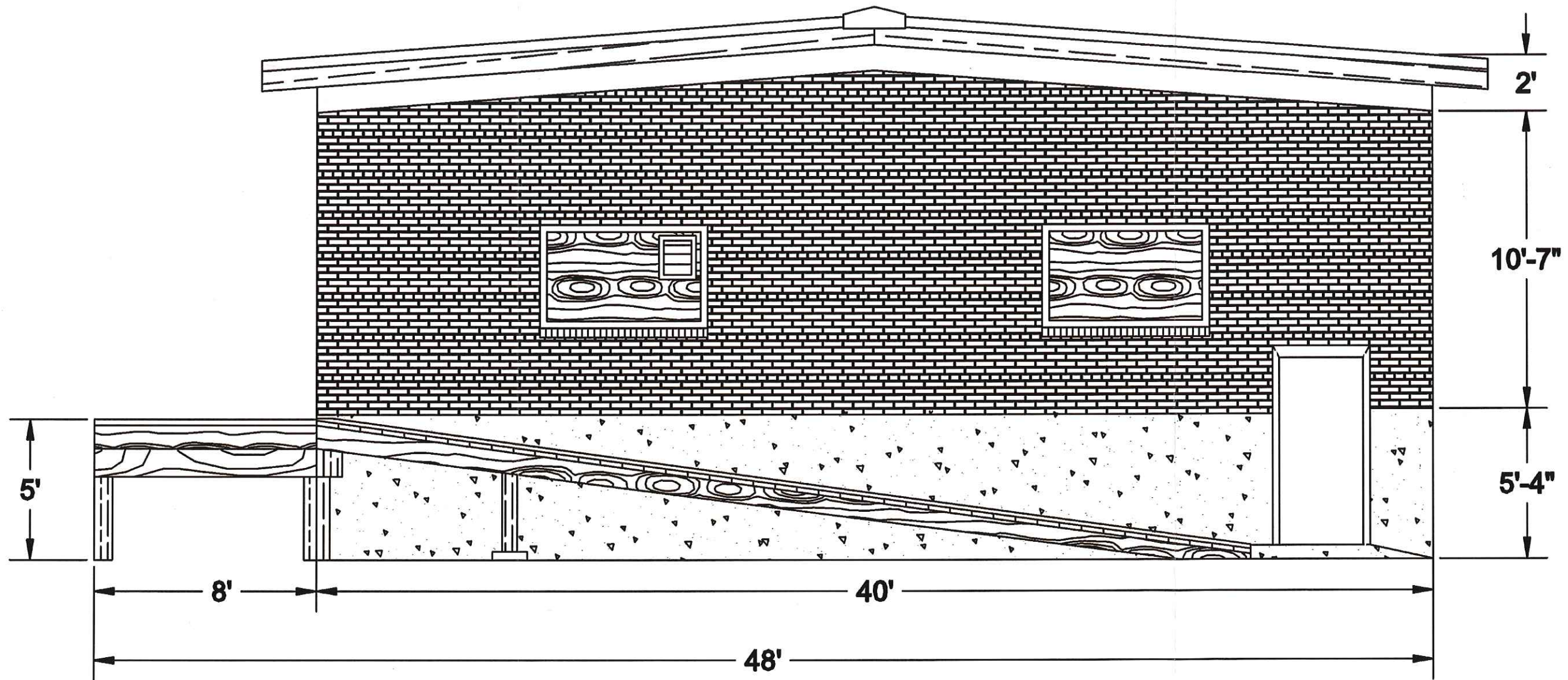
Additional Resources

Photos held at the Center for Western Studies at Augustana University in Sioux Falls, South Dakota which depict portions of the railyard and surrounding area:

1. URL: <http://augustanacws.pastperfectonline.com/media/BA181655-FFE8-4F73-827C-585353410730> Object #:30296P.07.02, Image Name: 30296p0702-6.jpg
2. URL: <http://augustanacws.pastperfectonline.com/media/0CA2DBB8-C6B8-42A9-BFB3-165011558270> Object #:30296P.07.02, Image Name: 30296p0702-7.jpg
3. URL: <http://augustanacws.pastperfectonline.com/media/0CA2DBB8-C6B8-42A9-BFB3-165011558270> Object #:30296P.07.02, Image Name: 30296p0702-7.jpg
4. URL: <http://augustanacws.pastperfectonline.com/media/8805AC63-7C80-4A78-86C9-862074608020>, Object #: 30296P.05.01.0A.0A, Image Name: 30296p05010a0a.jpg
5. URL: <http://augustanacws.pastperfectonline.com/media/6A6482A3-FE77-4CB0-8BBC-952835127179> Object #: 30296P.05.01.0A.0A, Image Name: 30296p05010a0a-2.jpg
6. URL: <http://augustanacws.pastperfectonline.com/media/34F85A5F-16C0-4D62-8927-289643130553> Object #: 30296P.05.01.0A.0A, Image Name: 30296p05010a0a-4.jpg
7. URL: <http://augustanacws.pastperfectonline.com/media/615A4743-CBEF-4DC0-91F1-447422392774> Object #: 30296P.04.02.0A, Image Name: 30296p04020a-10.jpg
8. URL: <http://augustanacws.pastperfectonline.com/media/EF521FC6-59A7-4519-B9C9-192151542679> Object #: 30296P.04.02.0A, Image Name: 30296p04020a-17.jpg



Quality Services, Inc.

 #SD3917023
 Southeast view
 Scale: 1/4" = 1'
 04/10/17 NT

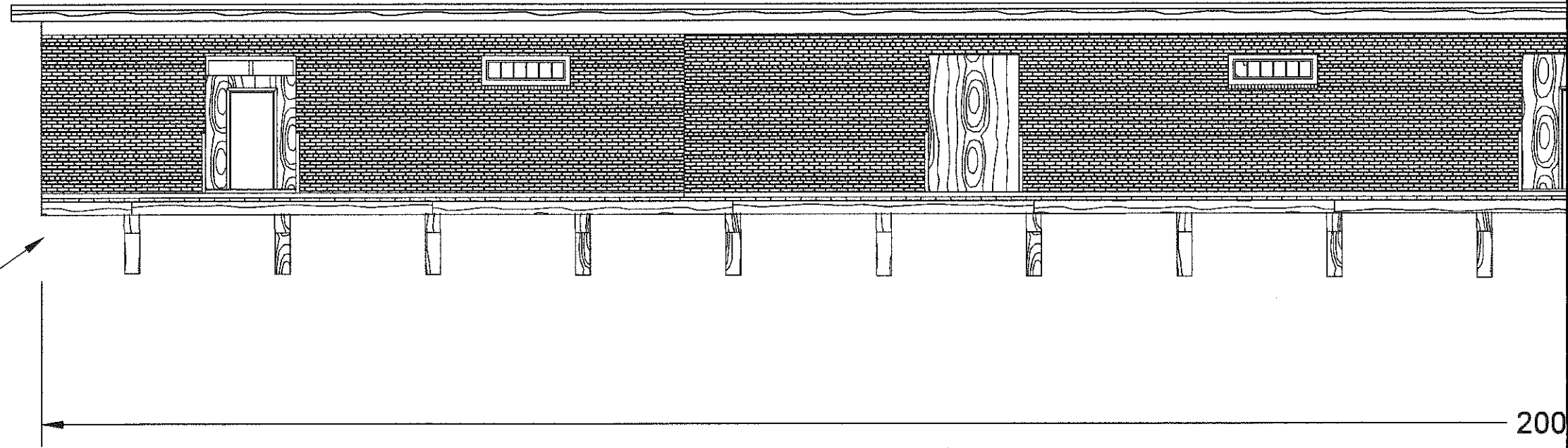


Quality Services, Inc.

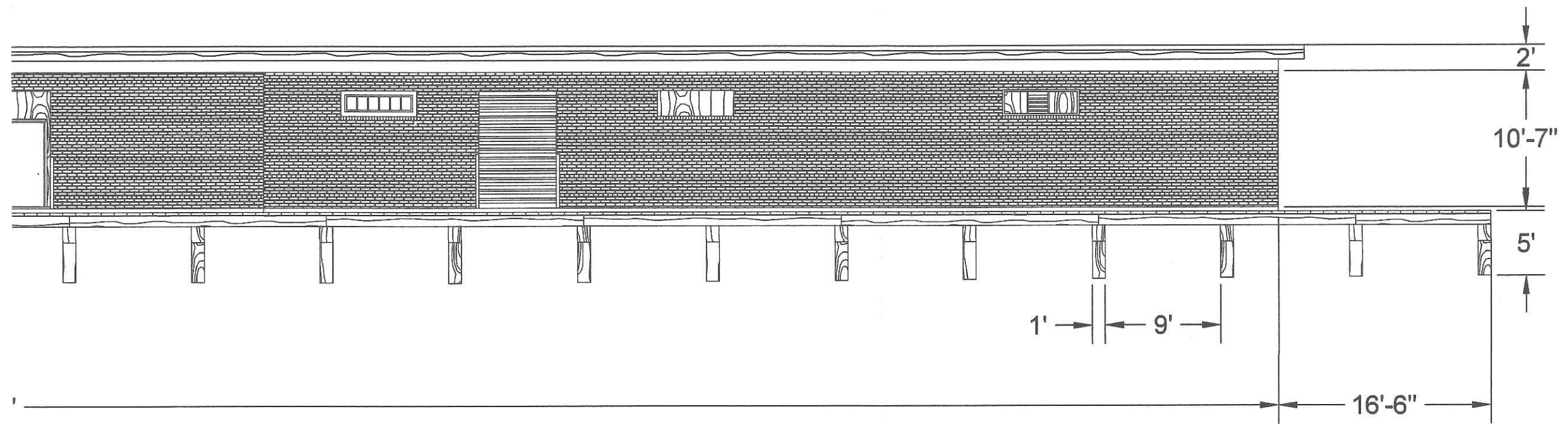


#SD3917023
 Northwest view
 Scale: 1/4" = 1'
 04/06/17 NT

See Northeast
Elevation
Ramp



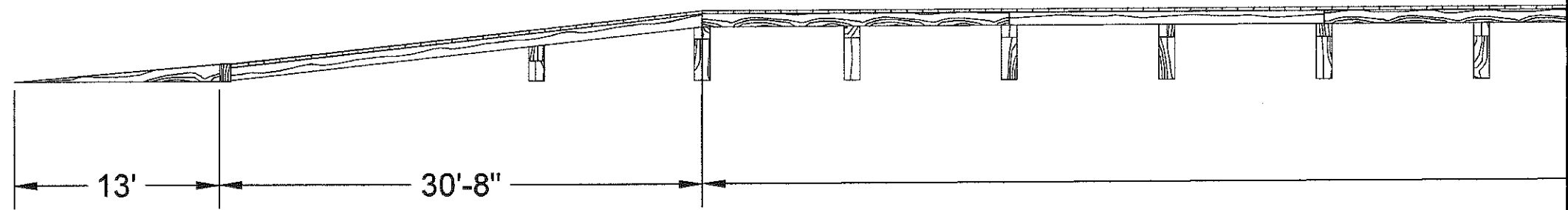
200

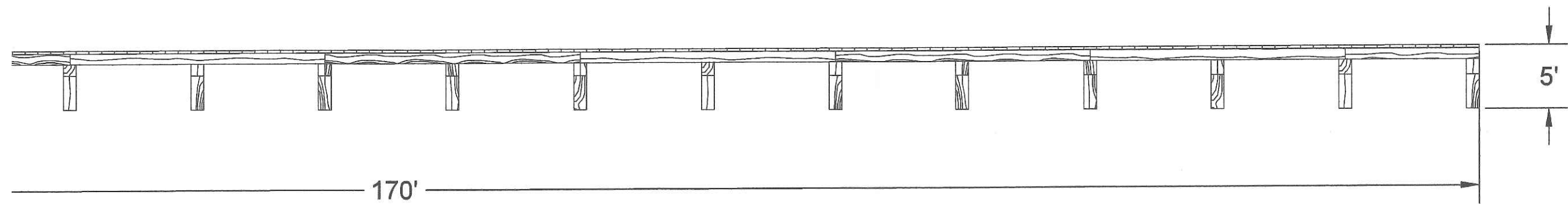



Quality Services, Inc.

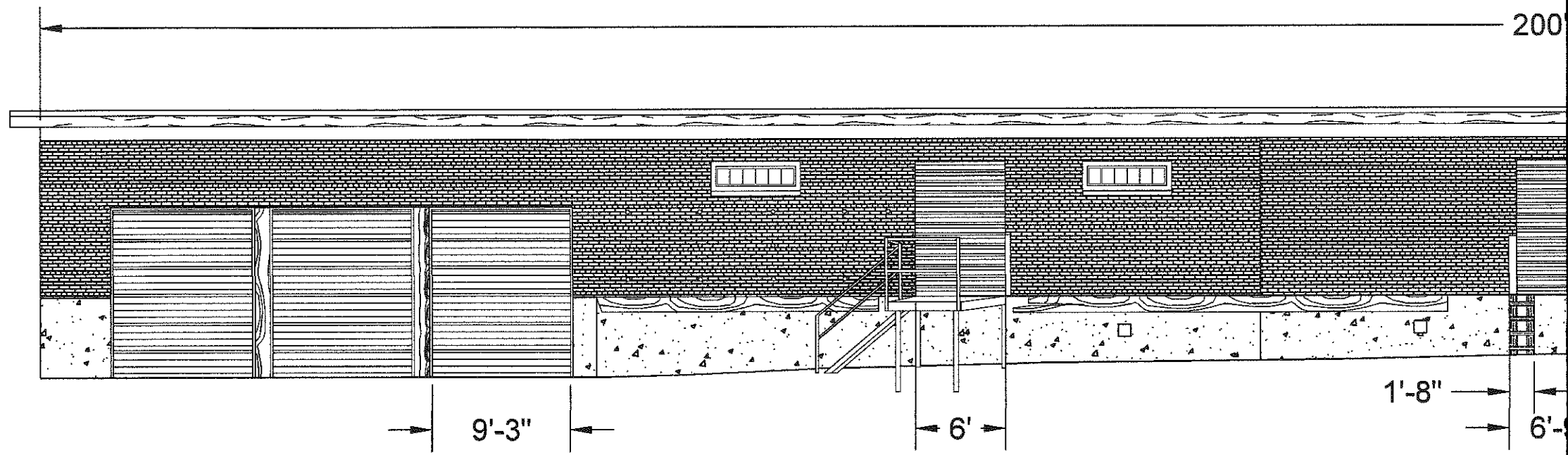


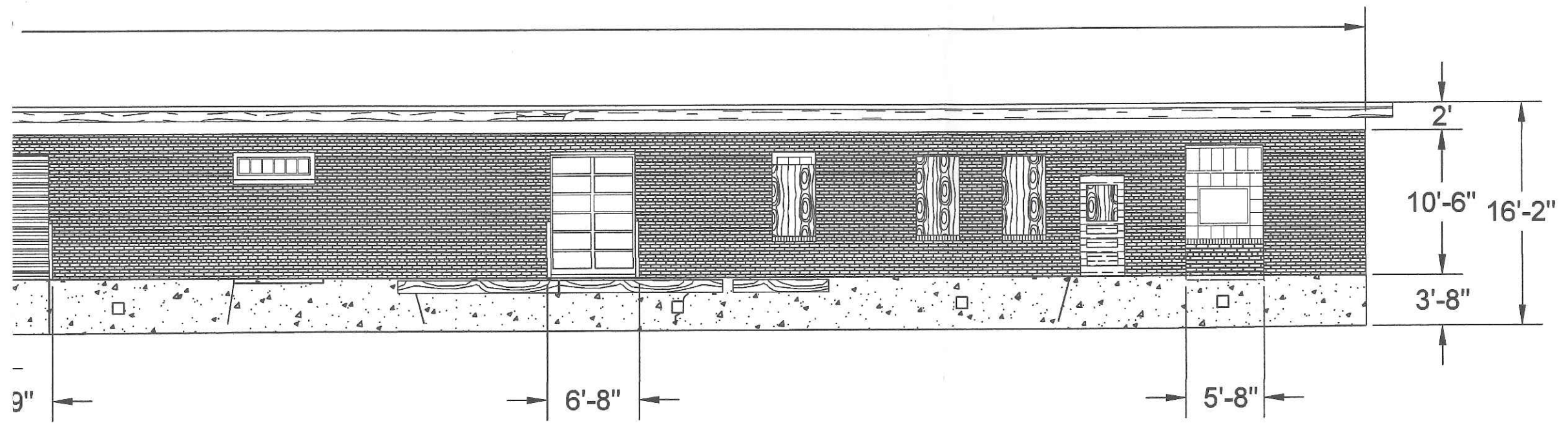
#SD3917023
 Northeast view
 Scale: 1/8" = 1'
 04/06/17 NT





Quality Services, Inc.
 #SD3917023
Northeast Ramp view
Scale: 1/8" = 1'
04/10/17 NT





Quality Services, Inc.



#SD3917023
 Southwest view
 Scale: 1/8" = 1'
 04/07/17 NT