

BRASSFIELD DEPOT (Riney-B Depot)
1964 Brassfield Road
Brassfield
Madison County
Kentucky

HABS No. KY-265

HABS
KY
76-BRASS,
1-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
800 North Capitol Street
Washington, D.C. 20002

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Brassfield, Kentucky
HABS No. KY-265

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

I. Identification Information

A. Primary Name of Structure (Secondary Name)

Brassfield Depot (Riney-B Depot).

The depot was named for the community it served, Brassfield, Kentucky.

The nickname "Riney-B" is an acronym referring to the initials of the company which originally constructed and operated the railroad, the Richmond, Nicholasville, Irvine & Beattyville Railroad Company. Photographs of rolling stock taken in 1890 show the initials "R.N.I.&B." prominently displayed on the sides of boxcars, stock cars, and other equipment.¹ (See Appendix A, Exhibits A.1 and A.2)

The earliest published use of the nickname located during research is in a photo caption in a Lexington, Kentucky newspaper in 1949. Here the text refers to the railroad as "...commonly known as the 'Riney-B'..."² "Riney-B" remained the most popular name for the line long after the demise of the R.N.I.&B., and was used by patrons even when the line was owned and operated by other corporations.

B. HABS Number

A survey number has not been assigned to this structure.

C. Location

1964 Brassfield Road (KY 499), Brassfield, Madison County, Kentucky.
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 16. 751440. 4173390,
U.S.G.S. Moberly, Kentucky quadrangle, 1979.

D. Present Owner

Robert S. Combs
1964 Brassfield Road
Richmond, Kentucky 40475
606/369-5774.

E. Present Occupant

Vacant.

F. Present Use

Agricultural (Intermittent feed storage).

G. Significance

The Brassfield Depot is a combination passenger and freight railroad depot built circa 1893 to serve the small, rural community of Brassfield, Kentucky. Brassfield was established in 1891 as a stop on the Richmond, Nicholasville, Irvine & Beattyville Railroad, one of the earliest railroads to penetrate into the rich timber and coal regions of east-central Kentucky.

The Depot was the center of the community, serving as a post office starting in 1893, a shipping point for agricultural products and livestock, and as a vital connection to the faraway cities of Louisville and Cincinnati. Since the removal of the tracks in 1932, the Brassfield Depot has remained as a symbol of the growth, prosperity, and freedom of movement the railroad brought to the residents of eastern Madison County, as well as the subsequent decline of the community following abandonment of the line.

The Brassfield Depot is one of only two surviving station buildings on the sixty-one miles of line constructed by the Richmond, Nicholasville, Irvine & Beattyville Railroad between Versailles and Irvine, Kentucky, and is the only unaltered structure. It is a rare example of a once-common building type which is quickly disappearing from the rural landscape of Kentucky.

¹ ACF Industries, Photograph Archives.

² Lexington Herald-Leader, November 27, 1949, p.30.

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II. Historical Information

A. Physical History

1. Date of Erection

Circa 1893.

Documentary and physical evidence supporting an 1893 construction date is largely circumstantial in nature. Construction of the Richmond, Nicholasville, Irvine & Beattyville Railroad through eastern Madison County occurred during the summer and fall of 1891. According to the *Railroad Gazette*, the first regular train to operate on the completed line from Richmond, to Irvine was run on August 5, 1891 and Brassfield is listed as a station on the first timetable issued for the line; Timetable Number 1, issued December 7, 1891.^{3,4}

Kentucky law mandated that "...every company operating a railroad in [Kentucky] shall provide a convenient and suitable waiting-room and water-closet at all depots in cities and towns...", and regular operation of the railroad would have demanded the construction of a minimum number of depots and other service buildings immediately following, if not concurrent with, the construction of the track itself.⁵ Tax assessments reported by the Kentucky Railroad Commission indicate that the R.N.I.&B. owned \$1,625 in property in Madison County, excluding the track itself, in 1892.⁶ One year later, in 1893, the Railroad Commission reported \$3,050 in property for the same area, an increase of \$1,425.⁷ Since the line was completed and operational in 1891, it may be assumed that the sharp increase in property value between 1892 and 1893 was due to the construction of depot facilities along the line.

The Brassfield Depot bears a striking resemblance to a combination depot illustrated in *Buildings and Structures of American Railroads*, a standard reference work published in serial form in the *Railroad Gazette* in 1891, and later released as a book in 1893.⁸ (See Appendix B, Exhibit B.1)

A property transfer deed dated 1904, during the Louisville & Atlantic Railroad period of operation, also specifically mentions "...a building occupied by [the railroad company] as a depot...", indicating the construction of a depot at Brassfield sometime before this date.⁹

Based on this information, it seems likely that the Brassfield Depot is one of several depots built for the Richmond, Nicholasville, Irvine & Beattyville Railroad during the initial construction of the line between Richmond and Irvine, Kentucky.

It can be said for certain that the Brassfield Depot is not a replacement depot designed and constructed by the Louisville & Nashville Railroad, which purchased the line in 1909 and began operation in 1910. As early as the mid-1890s the Louisville & Nashville adopted standard designs for all buildings. Drawings of the Hopkinsville and Owensboro, Kentucky depots published in 1893, as well as the Richmond, Kentucky depot published in 1895, all indicate adherence to a standard set of architectural details and forms.^{10,11} A comparison between the Louisville & Nashville's standards as published in 1911, and the Brassfield Depot clearly indicates that the Brassfield Depot is not a Louisville & Nashville structure.¹² (See Appendix B, Exhibit B.2) The Versailles Depot, built by the Louisville & Nashville in 1912 and one of the few depots built along the line after the Louisville & Atlantic was purchased in 1909, rigidly adheres to these standards.

³ *Railroad Gazette*, 1891, p. 588.

⁴ *Ghost Railroads of Kentucky*, p. 38.

⁵ Kentucky Railroad Commission, *Annual Report, 1893*, p.229.

⁶ Kentucky Railroad Commission, *Annual Report, 1892*, p.112.

⁷ Kentucky Railroad Commission, *Annual Report, 1893*, p. 59.

⁸ *Buildings and Structures of American Railroads*, p. 250.

⁹ *Deed Book 58*, p. 9.

¹⁰ *Buildings and Structures of American Railroads*, pp. 334, 335.

¹¹ *Proceedings of the Association of Railway Superintendents*, p. 131.

¹² President's Correspondence Files. *Louisville & Nashville Standard Buildings C-19543*, pp. 4, 26.

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2. Architect

Unknown, but J. H. Pearson of Nicholasville, Kentucky, Chief Engineer of the Richmond, Nicholasville, Irvine, & Beattyville Railroad, may have been responsible for the design.¹³

3. Original and Subsequent Owners

On December 20, 1889, the Richmond, Nicholasville, Irvine & Beattyville Railroad purchased a sixty-six foot wide right-of-way across the land of David G. Martin and his wife Sallie Martin for \$450.00.¹⁴ This is the only property transfer in the Brassfield vicinity during the period of operation by the R.N.I.&B. Railroad. Ownership of this right-of-way was transferred to the Louisville & Atlantic Railroad in 1900.

On August 8, 1904, David G. Martin and his second wife, Temperance Oldham Martin, sold an additional tract of land to the railroad company, then the Louisville & Atlantic Railroad. The parcel was a narrow strip, only 1.125 acres in area, paralleling the right-of-way from the county road down to the depot and included the depot itself.¹⁵ It appears that David G. Martin allowed the railroad company to construct a depot on his land, perhaps charging a rental fee, but that at some point, the railroad company elected to purchase the land and depot outright. It is also possible that David G. Martin, or other Brassfield citizens, funded the construction of the depot themselves, perhaps in response to the railroad company's reluctance or inability to build the type of building they felt befitted their new community.

When the Louisville & Atlantic Railroad was purchased by the Louisville & Nashville Railroad in 1909, all property, including the Brassfield Depot, was transferred to the Louisville & Nashville Railroad.

After the railroad was abandoned in 1932, the Louisville & Nashville Railroad transferred the right-of-way and the depot grounds to the adjacent land owner, then N. G. Todd, for one dollar on April 14, 1933.¹⁶

The Brassfield Depot and the surrounding land was owned by N. G. Todd until his death in 1952. His will, probated in court on June 3, 1952, states that "...prior to my wife's death I had willed to her the farm I now live on starting at the pike including the store, house & depot...containing 122 acres..." and that "...it was my wife's intention to give what she had at her death to Bobby Combs...he has also been a loyal and constant companion of mine since my wife's death 5 years ago...consequently I am inclined & also feel honor bound to give him at least one half of this farm..."¹⁷

The will instructs the executor of the estate, Luther Todd, to give Robert (Bobby) Combs one year to clean and prepare the property for public sale. Robert Combs was to receive one half of the proceeds and the balance was to be divided among the heirs of Luther and George Todd.¹⁸

Six months after the will was probated, Robert Combs purchased two adjacent tracts of land, totaling 133.78 acres, for \$25,425.00 from Luther Todd by deed dated January 5, 1953.¹⁹ The Brassfield Depot was included in this purchase. Eight thousand dollars of the purchase price was borrowed at five per cent interest from the Madison Southern National Bank and Trust Company, which attached a lien on the property. The source of the balance of the purchase price is not mentioned, but it is possible that Robert Combs applied the value of the smaller tract inherited from N. G. Todd towards the purchase price of the entire farm.

4. Builder, Contractor, Suppliers

Unknown, although the Brassfield Depot was most likely built by the Richmond & Irvine Construction Company.

¹³ Poors, 1891, p. 903.

¹⁴ Deed Book 37, pp. 235, 236.

¹⁵ Deed Book 58, p. 9.

¹⁶ Deed Book 111, pp. 449-450.

¹⁷ Will Book 8, p. 67.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Deed Book 154, pp. 76-78.

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5. Original Appearance, Construction, and Cost

Because the Brassfield Depot has not undergone any major changes, its original appearance would have been very similar to the current appearance. Residual paint on the exterior suggests that the building was originally painted white with red trim.

The original construction cost is unknown, but a description of a similar depot in Buildings and Structures of American Railroads includes the observation "...that a depot...with stone foundations, costs about \$1,000."²⁰ This figure is well within the \$1,425 increase in property value in 1893 as reported by the Kentucky Railroad Commission.²¹

6. Alterations and Additions

The only alteration made to the Brassfield Depot since its construction was the subdivision of the baggage room into three smaller rooms. To accomplish this subdivision, simple wooden partitions were added and the original freight doors on the east and west faces were removed and the openings infilled with smaller doors. Physical evidence also suggests that the single window on the north face was added at the same time.

When these alterations were made, and their purpose is unknown. It is possible that changes in railroad operations required a change in facilities. A decline in freight business might have eliminated the need for a large baggage handling area, which was converted to administrative offices. It is also possible that the changes were made after the depot was abandoned by the railroad.

B. Historical Context

The Richmond, Nicholasville, Irvine & Beattyville Railroad, or Riney-B as it is most commonly known, was the final segment of an elaborate scheme to invade the territory controlled by the Louisville & Nashville Railroad, break the Louisville & Nashville's monopoly on traffic entering and leaving Louisville, and develop the natural resources and agricultural markets of eastern Kentucky. The principal moving force behind this scheme was Bennett Young, a prominent Kentucky businessman.

This effort began with the completion of two independent railroads in Indiana which both terminated in New Albany, Indiana. The Louisville, New Albany & Chicago, financed by John Jacob Astor III of New York, and the Louisville, New Albany & St. Louis, controlled primarily by Bennett Young, both recognized their mutual need for interchange with southern railroads in Louisville. Through a combination of strong local leadership and northern financing, these two railroads united their efforts, building a new bridge from New Albany to Louisville, the Kentucky & Indiana Bridge, and a new line, the Louisville Southern, to connect the Indiana railroads with the Southern Railway at several points along its Cincinnati to Chattanooga mainline. This effort was strongly opposed by the Louisville & Nashville Railroad which feared the loss of its monopoly on traffic leaving Louisville.

Despite opposition from the Louisville & Nashville Railroad, construction of the Louisville Southern was successful, and with access to southern traffic secured, penetration into the mountains was begun under a separate corporation, the Richmond, Nicholasville, Irvine & Beattyville Railroad. On October 11, 1888, the Richmond, Nicholasville, Irvine & Beattyville Railroad Company contracted with the Ohio Valley Improvement & Contract Company for the construction and equipping of the line from Versailles to Beattyville, Kentucky.²² The Ohio Valley Company was a corporation owned and controlled by the same group of people as the R. N. I. & B.; in effect, the railroad was acting as its own general contractor.²³

Construction east began in 1889 and proceeded rapidly until the death of John Jacob Astor III on February 22, 1890. With secure financing in question, Dr. William Breyfogle of New Albany, sympathetic to the Louisville & Nashville's interests, seized control of the Louisville, New Albany, and Chicago Railway.

Under new control, the L. N. A. & C. abandoned all expansion efforts into Kentucky. Colonel Young repossessed the Louisville Southern and promptly leased it to the Southern Railway, and the R. N. I. &

²⁰ Buildings and Structures of American Railroads, p. 255.

²¹ Kentucky Railroad Commission, Annual Report, 1893, p. 59.

²² Federal Reporter, Vol. 68, p. 92.

²³ Ibid, p. 108.

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B. was left to survive independently. Suit, countersuit, defaultment and foreclosure ensued and for the entire existence of the R. N. I. & B. it was entangled in bitter litigation which culminated in the United States Supreme Court. The capital of the Ohio Valley Company was insufficient to complete the construction of the line, and in January of 1891, the Ohio Valley Company contracted with the Richmond & Irvine Construction Company for "...the acquirement of rights of way, grading, track laying, [and] bridge and depot building..." on the line between Richmond and Irvine.²⁴

Upon resolution of the legal issues, the R.N.I.&B. was reorganized in 1900 as the Louisville & Atlantic Railroad, which completed construction for the line to Beattyville and operated independently until 1909. The Louisville & Nashville Railroad purchased the Louisville & Atlantic in 1909 to provide access to the coal fields of eastern Kentucky. The former Louisville & Atlantic proved unable to handle the increased traffic and the L. & N. constructed a new mainline from Winchester to Beattyville, reducing the former L. & A. to branchline status. By 1932, reduced revenue and deferred maintenance made abandonment inevitable and the last scheduled run was made in September, 1932.

Brassfield was established as a stop on the R. N. I. & B. in the fall of 1891. The station was named by David G. Martin, R. N. I. & B. stationmaster, after his maternal grandfather, James Ely Brassfield. On August 31, 1893, a post office was established at the depot to serve the surrounding region.

²⁴ Federal Reporter, Vol. 68, p. 111.

III. Architectural Information

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character

The Brassfield Depot is a single-story, wood-frame building with a hip roof. It is representative of the typical combination depots built during the late nineteenth century. A combination depot is a specific building type, "...used on railroads at local stations of minor importance, where the amount of freight or the volume of the passenger business does not warrant the construction of a separate freight-house or a separate passenger depot."²⁵ The depot closely follows what were considered standard design practices as described in Buildings and Structures of American Railroads, including a centrally located office "... which serves as freight-office, ticket-office, and telegraph office...", and a bay window "...so the track is visible in both directions from inside the office..."²⁶ The depot is simple in appearance with a minimum of decoration, built with the utmost in economy in mind, but also with the intent to express pride and prosperity to the railroad's potential customers.

Examination of historical photographs indicates that the Brassfield depot is basically identical to the Rice Station depot, located seven miles to the east on the R.N.I.&B. (See Appendix A. Exhibit A.3) The Valley View depot, the only other remaining station building, is also nearly identical to the Brassfield depot, although the widths vary slightly. Apparently the railroad built "standard" buildings, adjusting the size of the depot to suit the needs of each community and varying minor architectural details to avoid monotony. This was a fairly common practice which reduced the time and cost of construction due to repetition and familiarity, and produced buildings with a strong "family" identity.

2. Condition of Fabric

The Brassfield Depot is in extremely poor condition. Almost all of the wooden parts of the building are in an advanced state of decay and large portions of the wooden fascias are rotten and falling off of the depot. A comparison of the photographs taken by the Kentucky Heritage Council in 1979 and the building at the time of fieldwork indicates that much of the deterioration has occurred during the last fifteen years. The poor condition of the depot may be attributed to two factors; lack of maintenance and the resulting environmental effects, and feed storage in the building.

Virtually no paint is left on the exterior of the depot, and this factor alone has contributed the most to the deterioration. In some places the siding has eroded as much as a quarter of an inch from its original thickness due to the affects of the environment. In addition, as window glass has been broken over the years, it has not been replaced, allowing water to enter the building and saturate the interior finishes. The longevity of the clay roof tile and the protection it offers has probably been the greatest contributing factor to the survival of the building, but it has suffered considerable damage in recent wind storms, and once the leaks spread, the rate of deterioration will accelerate.

Perhaps the most noticeable sign of deterioration is the way the building is twisted, warped, and out of plumb. The extreme distortion of the building is not so much due to rot, as to settlement of the building's frame and foundation. This is due to the weight of the feed corn stored inside, estimated by Robert Combs at twenty tons, which has forced the floor structure further into the ground, producing the distortions. The building has sunk the most on the southwest corner, the waiting room, while the north end does not appear to have settled appreciably.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall Exterior Dimensions

The building is rectangular in plan, approximately 20'-3" wide, 55'-5" long, and 21'-10" in height.

2. Foundation

The foundation consists of round timber piles, approximately 16 inches in diameter and spaced at irregular intervals.

²⁵ Buildings and Structures of American Railroads, p. 246.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 247.

Several of the piles visible on the north end of the building have separate sections of piling on top of the main piles. This implies that the pile was driven until it hit solid material, which would have mushroomed the top of the pile, which was then sawed off level with blocking inserted as required to provide a level surface for the floor framing. The depth of the piles is impossible to determine without extensive excavation, but if the ground around Brassfield is typical for central Kentucky, bedrock is not far below grade.

3. Walls

The exterior of the depot is covered in painted poplar lap-siding, exposed approximately four inches for each course. The siding is nailed directly to the studs without any sheathing, building paper, or insulation.

At the base of each wall, fastened to the sill beam, is an apron board, capped by a piece of milled trim. Corner boards are 1 x 4 poplar with a vertical piece of quarter-round at the actual corner.

4. Structure System and Framing

The structure consists of a simple wood frame; load-bearing balloon-frame walls with wood trusses supporting the roof. All of the lumber is rough-sawn and approximates dimensional lumber in cross section. The lumber was probably milled locally. In all locations visible, the structure is assembled with machine-made nails.

The floor structure is supported by sill beams which are toe-nailed to the foundation piles with large spikes. The sill beams are approximately 6 inches by 10 inches, and vary in length. Joints between beams are located over the foundation piles, and all visible joints are half-lapped. Toe-nailed to the sill beams are 2 x 10 floor joists at sixteen inches on center which support the finish floor. The direction of the floor joists varies, running east/west in the passenger waiting room and the agent's office, and north/south in the baggage room. The floor joists are reinforced against rotational deflection by two rows of bridging in the passenger waiting room floor and an additional sill beam, at mid-span, serves the same purpose in the baggage room.

The exterior walls are framed with 2 x 4 studs, spaced at approximately sixteen inches on center, which are nailed to the sides of each of the floor joists, and span from the sill beam to the double top-plate, following standard balloon-frame practices. At each corner of the building is a double-stud corner post, and double-studs are also located on each side of the original openings for doors and windows. Above each original window or door opening, in lieu of a header, are diagonal timbers which form a small relieving truss to distribute loads to the posts on either side of the openings. The wall studs and corner posts are connected together at the top of the wall by a double top-plate which runs around the perimeter of the building and provides a bearing surface for the roof structure. The exterior walls lack sheathing, and no diagonal bracing of any type was uncovered during fieldwork. A limited amount of bracing is provided by the exterior and interior finishes which act as a stressed skin, stiffening the frame and resisting shear forces, similar to the way freight cars were framed in the late nineteenth century.

The roof is supported by wood trusses at approximately twenty-four inches on center. The trusses are assembled using lapped joints at all connections. Nailed directly to the roof trusses are 1x sheathing boards of varying widths, with small gaps between adjacent boards.

Despite the racking imposed by the extreme weight of feed stored in the building, the structural frame has retained much of its integrity. This is primarily due to the inherent flexibility of a stick-built frame which has allowed distortion of the depot without catastrophic component failure. This is particularly evident in the attic where the roof sheathing has warped between roof trusses, and in the bay window where the wall finishes have been severely distorted by settlement of the foundation. The only clearly identifiable structural failure is on either side of the south window in the passenger waiting room where lateral thrust from the feed has snapped the double-studs, bowing the wall out.

5. Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Bulkheads

The remains of a loading dock are visible at the north end of the depot which was used to transfer freight from the railroad cars to the baggage room. No physical evidence remains of a passenger platform along the tracks, but two brick paver blocks were unearthed near the depot, suggesting that a brick platform on grade was used by the patrons.

A small set of wooden stairs, three risers and two treads, are located at the passenger waiting room door. The steps are heavily worn and are probably original.

6. Chimneys

The Brassfield Depot has two chimneys, both located on the long axis of the building and penetrating the roof at the ridge.

Physical evidence indicates that the southern chimney is the only original chimney, located in the wall between the passenger waiting room and the agent's office. This is supported by historical photographs of the Rice Station Depot which show a single chimney in the same location. (See Appendix A, Exhibit A.3) The south chimney is constructed of red brick, supported on a small stone foundation, and is in fair condition, probably due to high brick and mortar quality. The ridge tile project in either direction from this chimney and all of the roof tiles and flashings are neatly executed. In the attic, the spacing of the roof trusses has been adjusted to allow penetration of the chimney. Stove thimbles in the passenger waiting room and agent's office indicate the original locations of the two stoves that provided heat for the depot.

The north chimney is located in the center of the former baggage room and was added when the room was sub-divided. The north chimney is in much poorer condition than the south chimney; the mortar and brick are very soft and easily damaged. The base of the chimney is triangular in plan and is supported by a wooden platform nailed to the wall studs instead of bearing on a foundation. Above the ceiling the chimney rotates into a square in plan. The chimney has poor flashings, and leaks have created large holes in the roof sheathing. Brick from the upper portion of the chimney were blown off in a storm in the spring of 1991, breaking numerous roof tiles.

7. Doorways and Doors

The Brassfield Depot has four exterior doors; one opening is original, and the other three are alterations.

The 36" wide four-panel passenger waiting room door on the east elevation is the only original opening based on examination of the door and frame. The lockset and hinges are neatly installed in the mortar, the trim lacks any evidence of modification, and the door and its hardware matches the two original interior doors in configuration and detail. In addition, double-studs are located on either side of the door and a relieving truss is present overhead. Screw holes in the exterior trim probably indicate the installation of a screen door at some point in the past.

Physical evidence indicates that originally two large freight doors opened onto the loading platforms from the baggage room. One of these doors is visible in the photograph of the Rice Station Depot. (See Appendix A, Exhibit A.3) Both of the freight doors have been infilled, necessitated by the installation of new partitions to subdivide the baggage room. This is indicated by the siding joints at the door jambs which are in vertical alignment from the base of the wall to the next to last siding course, identifying the former opening. In addition, both large doors have a relieving truss overhead, identical to the framing used above other original openings. The east door, facing the tracks, has been replaced with two smaller doors and a crude transom. Both of these later door openings are finished with simple 1x4 trim which does not match the original profile. The doors are missing. The west freight door has been replaced with a single door and a small window. Like the two doors on the east elevation, this opening has mis-matched trim and hardware, and the door is missing.

8. Windows and Shutters

Of the eleven wood double-hung windows, nine are original and two are later additions. The original windows are located in the passenger waiting room and agent's office. They have milled trim at the head and are taller than the later windows. On all nine, the exterior trim at the head is just one siding course below the soffit.

The two smaller windows in the baggage room are much simpler in profile, lacking the milled trim. Patched and damaged siding surrounding both windows indicates that they were installed later, probably in conjunction with the other alterations to the baggage room.

All of the windows are in very poor condition. Only two windows, the narrow original units on either side of the bay window, have both sashes and glazing in place. Most of the other windows are missing

the sashes entirely, and fragments of sash frames are scattered around the base of the building. No window hardware remains, although many of the sash weights are still in the jamb cavities.

Cursory examination of the windows indicates that the sashes were originally painted red, in a shade very similar to the roof tile.

9. Roof Shape and Covering

The roof of the Brassfield Depot is by far its most prominent and memorable feature. It has a hip roof, with a pitch of seven in twelve, which is covered with red flat clay tile, each approximately six inches in width with an exposure of seven inches. The roof tile are of two types; on the east and south faces the tile have a ribbed back, while on the north and west faces the tile are smooth on all surfaces. All of the ridge tiles are of the same type. It is possible that the tile on the west and north faces have been replaced since these two faces would have receive the harshest weathering, although there is no discernible difference in color or texture between any of the tiles to indicate a different manufacturer. It is also possible that all of the tile were manufactured by the same supplier, using the same clay, but perhaps at different times or by using different presses.

The clay tile are nailed to the roof sheathing through holes formed in the tile at the upper edge, using two nails per tile. The use of wide sheathing boards instead of purlins implies that the depot was probably built using a different roofing material which required more uniform support, and that the tile were added later.

The majority of the individual roof tile are in very good condition, despite decades of exposure. As mentioned previously, it is the longevity of the tile which has prevented even further decay of the wooden portions of the building below. Unfortunately, the roof has not received any maintenance and its ability to shed water has steadily deteriorated. A large number of tile have been broken by falling bricks, hail, and other factors; these tile have not been replaced, creating leaks. In addition, many of the nails used to fasten the tile to the roof sheathing have rusted away, allowing the tile to slide off of the roof.

Clay tile was a popular roofing material for railroad structures due to its resistance to fire caused by burning cinders from the locomotives; clay was also plentiful in central Kentucky. Although many tiles were checked during fieldwork, and no identifying marks were found, the tile were probably manufactured by the Lexington Tile Roof Company, which had its factory at Searcy, Kentucky, less than five miles from Brassfield.²⁷ A report by the Kentucky Geological Survey describes the factory's manufacturing process in detail.

"The chief clay used...is obtained directly north of the factory. At the pit about half a foot of soil is stripped off at the top, and the underlaying clay layer, five feet thick, is taken out. [T]he clay is dug, removed to the soak pit, and left over night. The next day the clay is shoveled into the disintegrator, where any stones present in the clay are crushed until the fragments are reduced to a diameter of one sixteenth of an inch or less. From the disintegrator the clay is carried along a belt to the mill. Here the clay is pushed out of the tile mill, through the dies, where the proper thickness and width is given to the stream of clay which issues forth. From the tile mill the issuing stream of clay is carried forward by the machine to the cut-off table, where the clay, which already has the proper width and thickness, is cut off into the desired lengths. From the cut-off table the blanks or plates of clay, the future shingles, are carried forward and picked off by boys who haul them to the shingle press.

From the cut-off table the clay plates are taken to the press, where they are pressed into shingles. In this machine, the upper die is stationary, and there are three lower dies, all of which are movable, only one die being used at a time. One of the clay plates is inserted into the machine and pressed. The lower die with the pressed shingle on it is then lifted up. A pallet or small board slightly larger than the shingle is placed on the shingle. Then die, shingle and pallet together are turned over and the die lifted off, the pressed shingle remaining on the pallet. In the meantime another clay plate has been inserted in the machine and pressed into the shape of a shingle, and is ready to be taken out and placed on a pallet. The shingles, still

²⁷ Kentucky Geological Survey, Clays in Several Parts of Kentucky, p. 172.

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resting on the pallet, are carried off to the drying shed. The capacity of such a press is 4,000 shingles in one day of ten hours, ten men being employed in various ways.

The shingles are allowed to dry on the pallets for periods varying from two to five days, depending upon the weather. They are then skinned or trimmed. Trimming consists in rubbing off the rough edges of the clay shingles with the back of a course knife. Then the shingles are stacked up and taken to the kiln. Here they are set up on edge, eight shingles in each set, with firebricks between the sets. These firebricks are a little higher than the shingles, and so take the weight of the upper tiers of shingles from the tiers stacked up below.

The shingles are heated for twenty-four hours, the fresh steam or water-smoke being let out at the top. No great heat is used during this time, the object being merely to drive off the water still present in the shingles. Then the heat is raised gradually for forty-eight hours until the shingles become white hot. Then the ovens are closed down, the firing ceases, the fire-doors are cemented shut with clay, and for three days the kiln is allowed to cool slowly.²⁸

This report was made in 1905 and refers to the shingles as "...having been made at this factory for about two years."²⁹ This also suggests that the clay tile were a replacement roof material, perhaps installed after the Brassfield Depot was purchased by the Louisville & Atlantic Railroad in 1904.

10. Roof Cornice, Gutters, Eaves

On all four elevations, the roof overhangs the exterior wall to offer a limited amount of shelter for the platforms below. The overhang is supported by top-chord extensions on the roof trusses which are braced horizontally to the exterior walls, instead of using exposed ornamental brackets which were so common on depots. The soffit is finished with beaded car-siding, which is attached to the underside of the horizontal braces.

At the roof edge is an integral gutter, supported by the horizontal roof overhang braces. The gutter is pitched towards each corner of the depot by varying the depth of the cuts in the horizontal braces which form the trough. The gutter is lined with galvanized sheet metal, which has been patched in several places with an additional layer of sheet metal. At each corner of the building was a downspout, three of which are missing. The remaining downspout, at the southwest corner, has "Diechman Trademark" embossed on the uppermost elbow.

Poor maintenance has allowed the gutters linings to rust and disintegrate, and leaking water has rotted the fascia boards and soffit below.

11. Dormers, Cupolas, Towers

None present.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor Plans

The Brassfield Depot is rectangular in plan with three main interior spaces, the passenger waiting room, the agent's office, and the baggage room. The baggage room is further divided into three smaller rooms; the east room, the west room, and the north room.

The passenger waiting room is the southern-most room, extending across the entire width of the building. Railroad patrons entered the waiting room through the exterior door on the east elevation. On the north wall is a door to the agent's office and a small ticket window. The three exterior walls all have windows for ventilation and view.

The agent's office is centrally located within the depot and also extends across the entire width of the building. Its location is indicated on the exterior by the bay window. In addition to the openings to the passenger waiting room, the agent's office has two doors to the baggage room on the north wall. In addition to the bay window on the east wall, the office has a single window directly opposite on the west wall.

The baggage room is located on the north end of the building. It originally extended across the width of the depot, from the agent's office to the north exterior wall, but interior partitions were added to

²⁸ Kentucky Geological Survey, Clays in Several Parts of Kentucky, pp. 172-174.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

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sub-divide the space. Closest to the agent's office, at the south end of the baggage room, are two small rooms separated by a partition. The east room has a door to the agent's office, an exterior door, and a door to the north room. The west room also has a door to the agent's office and an exterior door, but lacks a door to the north room, although physical evidence suggests that a door may have existed and been subsequently infilled. The north room extends across the entire width of the building and encompasses approximately half of the original baggage room. It has one exterior door on the east wall, and two small windows, one on the north wall and one on the west wall.

2. Stairways

None present.

3. Flooring

In the passenger waiting room and the agent's office, tongue-in-groove oak flooring is nailed directly to the floor joists, without any type of sub-flooring. The floor boards are approximately 3 1/4 inches in width and run in a north-south direction in the passenger waiting room and in an east-west direction in the agent's office. The passenger waiting room floor has relatively few joints, while the floor in the agent's office is made up of a number of short pieces. Evidently the long sections of flooring were used in the most visible area, the passenger waiting room, and the scraps were installed in the agent's office.

The floor in the baggage room is much heavier to support the weight of the freight. Heavy planks, approximately seven inches wide and two inches thick, run in a north-south direction. They are also nailed directly to the floor joists without any sub-flooring.

All of the flooring is heavily worn, particularly the thresholds. The flooring has numerous holes caused by rodent infestation, decay, and impacts from heavy objects. Some of these holes have been patched with scraps of sheet metal. Particularly noticeable in all of the interior rooms is the sloping of the floor caused by settlement.

4. Wall and Ceiling Finishes

All of the interior walls of the Brassfield Depot are finished in beaded pine car-siding, the same material used on the exterior for the soffits. It is installed horizontally, nailed directly to the studs, and has a painted finish.

On the passenger waiting room walls, the car-siding runs from floor to ceiling with quarter-round at the intersection of floor and wall, and wall and ceiling. The door and window casing is nailed to the surface of the car-siding. The ceiling is finished in car-siding to match the walls, nailed directly to the bottom chord of the roof trusses. The walls and ceiling are buff-colored with dark brown trim. A "baseboard" is implied by a band of dark brown which runs around the room at the base of the wall.

The agent's office is finished in the same manner as the passenger waiting room with car-siding on the walls from floor to ceiling and car-siding on the ceiling. The walls are painted light blue with dark brown trim and a "baseboard" band like the passenger waiting room. Physical evidence suggests that the room was originally painted light yellow with white trim.

In the baggage room, the car-siding begins above a 1x base board and extends to the ceiling. Like the other rooms, the car-siding is installed horizontally with a painted finish. The ceiling is finished with ribbed, metal panels nailed to the bottom chord of the roof trusses. The panels are oriented north-south, perpendicular to the roof trusses. All of the wall and ceiling finishes in the original baggage room extend behind the new partitions.

The interior partitions added in the baggage room have finishes which match the original materials in profile and dimension. The top course of car-siding on the new partitions is scribed to the fit the sagging of the original ceiling, indicating that the time interval between the initial construction of the depot and the alterations was long enough for some settlement to occur.

All of the wall and ceiling finishes in the baggage room have several coats of paint in various colors, but physical evidence suggests that the walls were originally painted light gray with white trim.

15. Doorways and Doors

There are four interior doors, two are original and two are later additions.

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The four-panel door between the passenger waiting room and the agent's office is 36" wide and matches the original exterior door in the passenger waiting room in profile and detail. The door frame has trim which also matches the original exterior door and there is no evidence of modification, although the door has been nailed shut. The lockset and hinges are neatly installed in the jambs.

The second original door opening is between the agent's office and the east room in the baggage room. It also has trim and hardware which is identical to the original passenger waiting room doors. The door itself is missing.

The two added doors are smaller in size, and vary in style, configuration, and hardware placement. Both doors appear to have been salvaged from another building. The four-panel door between the agent's office and the west room in the baggage room does not have any casing and it is obvious that the opening has been cut in the original wall finishes. The door between the east room and the north room in the baggage rooms also lacks casing. It is likely that this door was originally installed between the agent's office and the baggage room, but was relocated.

6. Windows

A ticket window is located on the north wall of the passenger waiting room. A cavity is located overhead in the wall so a single-hung sash could be raised when the ticket window was open for business; the sash is missing. The trim matches the other original windows.

7. Decorative Features and Trim

Decorative trim is used sparingly throughout the building and all of the interior trim is simple in profile. The original window openings have a plain stool, milled casing, and corner blocks at the upper corners. The original door openings have plinths at the base of the doors, casing which matches the windows, and corner blocks at the upper corners. The depot does not have any baseboard or crown molding, instead quarter round is used at joints between floors and walls and walls and ceilings. The trim at the altered openings and added partitions is even cruder, often simply 1x4 lumber is used for casing.

8. Hardware

Much of the original hardware is missing from the Brassfield Depot and the remaining pieces are in very poor condition. Most of the door hinges, locks, and strikes are heavily encrusted with rust and their original appearance and finish is impossible to discern.

The exterior passenger waiting room door has one pair of hinges, a latch strike plate, and a notch in the casing indicating a surface-mounted lock of some type. The only remaining hardware on the other two exterior doors is the half of each hinge mounted to the jambs.

The interior passenger waiting room door has all of its hardware in place; one pair of hinges, a surface-mounted latch with white porcelain knobs and a skeleton-key lock, and a surface-mounted cylinder lock with "Bluegrass" embossed on the face. The original interior door between the agent's office and the baggage room has the half of each hinge mounted to the jamb, a latch strike plate, and a strike plate for a surface-mounted lock. The door between the agent's office and the west room has one pair of hinges, a latch strike plate, and a surface-mounted latch with white porcelain knobs. The door between the east room and the north baggage room has one pair of hinges and a latch strike plate.

All of the windows are missing their hardware, except for sash weights, which are still in place in most openings.

9. Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilating Equipment

Heating for the depot was provided by stoves originally located in the waiting room and agent's office, and later added in the freight room. None of the stoves remain, although the wood-burning stove currently in the adjacent store supposedly came from the Brassfield Depot, but there is no evidence to support or refute this claim. High ceilings and tall windows were the only source of ventilation during the summer months.

There is no physical evidence that any other type of air conditioning or ventilating equipment was ever installed in the Brassfield Depot.

10. Lighting and Utilities

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There is no physical evidence that electricity was ever installed in the depot. Most likely oil or kerosene lanterns were the source of light.

Several small porcelain insulators were found on the exterior, presumably for telegraph or telephone lines used for communicating between stations.

11. Plumbing

There is no physical evidence that any type of plumbing was ever installed in the depot. Most likely outhouses were provided for the use of customers and employees.

12. Furnishings

No furnishings of any type were present when the fieldwork was conducted, although the post office boxes currently in the adjacent store supposedly came from the Brassfield Depot, but there is not any evidence to support or refute this claim.

The floors in the passenger waiting room and the agent's office were carefully examined for indications of furniture placement, but the floors are so heavily weathered that any such indications have long since disappeared. It is likely that free-standing benches were provided for the railroad's patrons in the passenger waiting room. The agent's office would have contained a variety of business furniture including a desk, files, and cubicles and racks for tickets, forms, train orders, and mail.

D. Site

1. General Setting and Orientation

The Richmond, Nicholasville, Irvine & Beattyville Railroad curves to the east and south between Richmond and Irvine along several creeks which provide convenient valleys for the railroad to follow. Brassfield is located on the high point between the Muddy Creek and Drowning Creek watersheds. To the northwest is rolling farmland, typical of central Kentucky, and to the southeast are the knobs which surround the bluegrass area.

The Brassfield depot is located on the west side of the tracks, which ran roughly north-south, and the original railroad bed is still visible in both directions from the depot. Louisville & Nashville Railroad route surveys and timetables indicate that over 1,000 feet of sidings were located at Brassfield.³⁰ The depot is oriented with the long axis running north-south, parallel to the tracks. The passenger waiting room, with its large windows, is located on the south end of the building to maximize use of the available sunlight.

The depot is located north of the county road and is accessed by a gravel drive which gradually descends from the road to the building, paralleling the right-of-way. The drive is heavily rutted, suggesting years of heavy traffic.

At the intersection of the drive and the county road is the Brassfield general store, also owned by the Comb's family. The store faces south, towards the county road. A livestock-loading pen is also located at the intersection of the drive and county road, its age is unknown.

Directly adjacent to the store, the abandoned route passes through a rock cut, with the county road crossing overhead. Originally a bridge was used for the crossing, but over the years the rock cut below the bridge was filled with refuse and debris, and eventually the county filled the remainder and a new road was paved directly across the fill.

2. Historic Landscape Design

The area surrounding the Brassfield Depot has been extensively reworked for agricultural purposes and the original landscaping is completely obliterated.

3. Outbuildings

No outbuildings remain. During fieldwork a search was made for the location of the privy, but a pond has been built directly behind the depot, the most likely location.

Robert Combs recalls large pens on both sides of the track for holding livestock and coal is widely scattered to the north of the depot, suggesting the location of a coaling station for the locomotives.

³⁰ President's Correspondence Files. Lists of Stations and Names of Agents, No. 527, p. 39.

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IV. Sources of Information

A. Original Drawings

No original drawings have been located.

Route surveys completed by the Louisville & Nashville Railroad during the period 1909-1932, which show profile, gradient, and dimension, are the only original drawings located that specifically relate to the route originally constructed by the Richmond, Nicholasville, Irvine & Beattyville Railroad.

All of the original architect's or engineer's drawings used for construction of the Brassfield Depot would have been transferred to the Louisville & Nashville Railroad at the time of purchase in 1909. Apparently none of this information is extant today. Archivists at the University of Louisville Ekstrom Library, which has the largest Louisville & Nashville manuscript collection, state that many of the older corporate documents inherited by the Louisville & Nashville were lost during the Louisville flood in 1937.

Sanborn fire insurance maps are unavailable for the community of Brassfield.

B. Early Views

No early views have been located.

Numerous photographs of the route are available, but unfortunately almost all of these images are of bridges, rolling stock, or scenery, and not of buildings. Historical photographs of the Nicholasville, Rice Station, and Valley View depots are the only views of structures which have been located.

C. Interviews

No interviews were conducted.

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E. Likely Sources Uninvestigated

Genealogical records located at Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond, Kentucky, the University of Kentucky in Lexington, Kentucky, and Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana may provide anecdotal accounts of the impact the railroad had on the everyday lives of local citizens.

In addition, a relatively small number of local historical societies and railroad enthusiasts clubs were contacted during fieldwork, and this may be an avenue for further research.

F. Supplemental Material

Appendix A includes copies of selected historical photographs, and Appendix B includes photocopies of selected source materials.

V. Project Information

A. Preparation and Participation

Barry J. Newton, Associate Professor of Architecture, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas.

Project oversight, scope of work definition.

Eric J. Zabilka, Architecture student, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas.

Project supervision and administration, scope of work definition, fieldnote drawing and measuring (conducted in 1992 and 1993), field photography (conducted in 1992 and 1993), field research (conducted in 1992, 1993, and 1994), preliminary drawings (completed in 1993), final drawings (completed in 1994), and data pages (completed in 1995).

Kurt A. Brunner, Architecture student, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas.

Field measuring (conducted in 1992).

Steven W. Harrington, Architecture student, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas.

Field measuring (conducted in 1992).

Keri J. Winslow, Architecture student, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas.

Field measuring (conducted in 1992).

B. Acknowledgments

The Brassfield recording project, a multi-year effort sponsored in part by the University of Kansas Honors College through an Undergraduate Research Award, was conducted during the summers of 1992, 1993, and 1994. The research and measured drawings were executed under the direction of Barry Newton, Associate Professor of Architecture, by Eric J. Zabilka. Fieldwork was conducted with the cooperation of Robert S. Combs, property owner, and with the assistance of Kurt A. Brunner, Steven W. Harrington, and Keri J. Winslow. Additional assistance was provided by William J. Macintire, Survey Coordinator, Kentucky Heritage Council. The University of Kansas School of Architecture provided the necessary facilities and equipment.

C. Project Purpose

With the Brassfield depot threatened by demolition, and with intervention strategies such as restoration, relocation, or salvage impossible due to a lack of funding, it was decided to record the structure prior to its loss. It was also recognized that the advanced state of deterioration posed serious challenges to recording. The warpage of the structure would require additional fieldwork to accurately draw the curvature and rotation of each plane, and details of windows, doors, and trim profiles would be difficult, if not impossible to draw, because so many parts of the depot were missing or heavily weathered. With these challenges in mind, the scope of work for the current recording project included fieldwork and measured drawings produced to the standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey, with an emphasis on drawings which communicated the overall form, size, materiality, and condition of the depot. Data pages were used to describe details and relationships not shown on the measured drawings. Because of budgetary limitations, archive photography and comprehensive research on the property were not included in the current project.

D. Recommendations

The most important issue to be addressed before making any recommendations is the future of the Brassfield depot. The depot serves as a poor corn crib, is an eyesore to many local residents, and is in need of extensive maintenance. Although the current owner has indicated a desire to eliminate the problems the building represents by demolition, he appears to be responsive to preservation efforts.

The remote location of the depot makes on-site restoration of questionable benefit. Access to the building would pose significant inconvenience to the property owners and it is unlikely that many people would visit the site simply to see an abandoned railroad depot. The original purpose for the depot's existence is gone, and an appropriate new use for the building is difficult to define.

Although relocating the structure is feasible, the benefit of undertaking this task is also questionable. Moving the building would completely negate the depot's context, which in its abandoned

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form is perhaps the depot's most striking feature. In addition, the majority of the architectural features which have a high salvage value such as stoves, doors, windows, hardware, and ornamental woodwork, have already been removed or have deteriorated to a point of uselessness. All that remains of any real salvage value is the lumber and the roof tiles.

Perhaps the most appropriate and noble course of action is no action; allow the structure to remain undisturbed until it collapses.

If the depot is demolished, then additional field photographs should be taken during the demolition process. Numerous conditions, particularly construction details which are usually hidden by finishes, will be exposed and should be recorded. Areas of the depot inaccessible during fieldwork, specifically the crawlspace, should also be recorded.

If the depot is to remain undisturbed, tasks beyond the scope of the current recording project, including archive photography, documentary research, paint color analysis, wood species identification, and archaeological excavation beneath and around the depot, all offer opportunities for further study.

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Appendix A: Historical Photographs

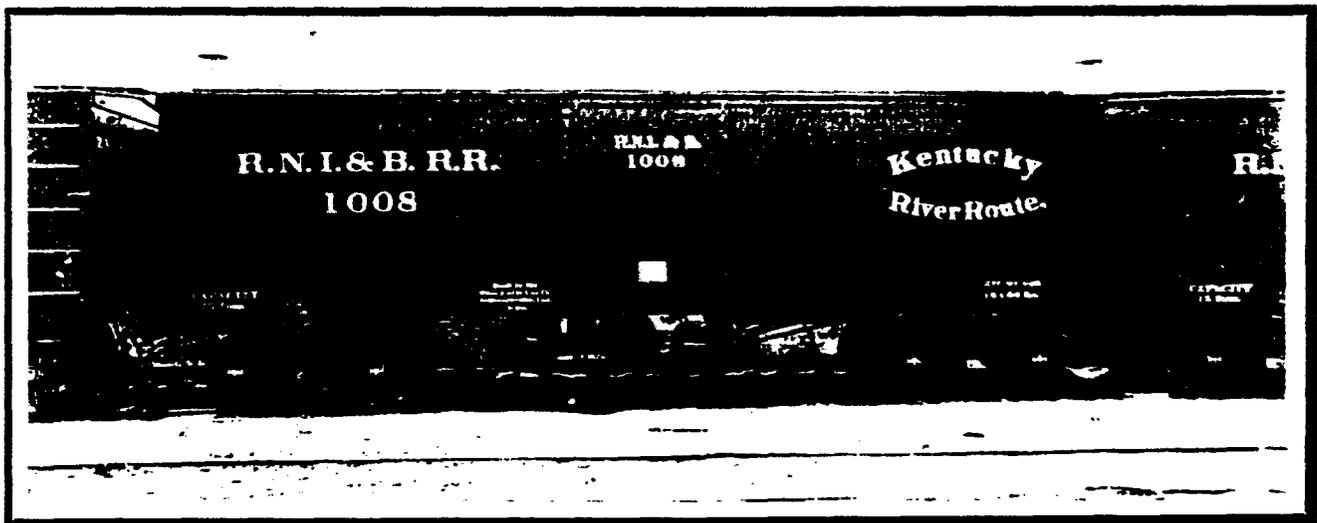
Brassfield Depot (Riney-B Depot)

Brassfield, Kentucky

HABS No. KY- 245

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Exhibit A.1: Builder's photograph taken in September, 1890 of Richmond, Nicholasville, Irvine & Beattyville Railroad boxcar #1008 at the Ohio Falls Car Company's manufacturing plant in Jeffersonville, Indiana.



Unknown photographer. Original print in the ACF Industries Photograph Archives, St. Charles, Missouri. Published in Sulzer, Ghost Railroads of Kentucky, and credited to Richard Hardin.

Brassfield Depot (Riney-B Depot)

Brassfield, Kentucky

HABS No. KY- 265

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Exhibit A.2: Builder's photograph taken in September, 1890 of Richmond, Nicholasville, Irvine & Beattyville Railroad stockcar #514 at the Ohio Falls Car Company 's manufacturing plant in Jeffersonville, Indiana.



Unknown photographer. Original print in the ACF Industries Photograph Archives, St. Charles, Missouri. Published in Sulzer, Ghost Railroads of Kentucky, and credited to Richard Hardin.

Brassfield Depot (Riney-B Depot)

Brassfield, Kentucky

HABS No. KY- 265

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Exhibit A.3: The Rice Station Depot following abandonment in 1932. The depot is virtually identical to the Brassfield and Valley View Depots.



Unknown photographer. Original print in the photograph collection, Bluegrass Railroad Museum, Versailles, Kentucky.

Brassfield Depot (Riney-B Depot)
Brassfield, Kentucky
HABS No. KY- 265
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Appendix B: Selected Sources

Brassfield Depot (Riney-B Depot)

Brassfield, Kentucky
HABS No. KY-265
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Exhibit B.1: Front Elevation, End Elevation, Cross Section, and Ground Plan of a "Class E" combination depot as constructed by the Minnesota & Northwestern Railroad and illustrated in 1893.

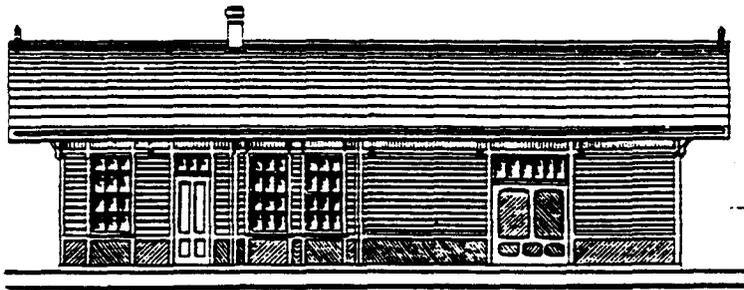


FIG. 425.—FRONT ELEVATION, CLASS "E."

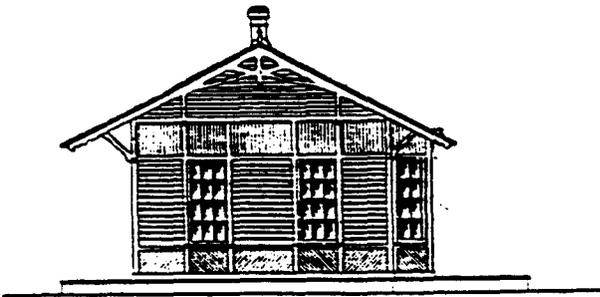


FIG. 426.—END ELEVATION, CLASS "E."

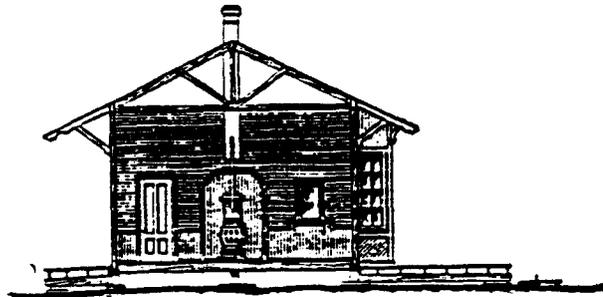


FIG. 427.—CROSS-SECTION, CLASS "E."

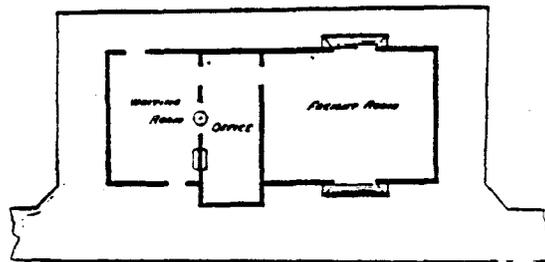
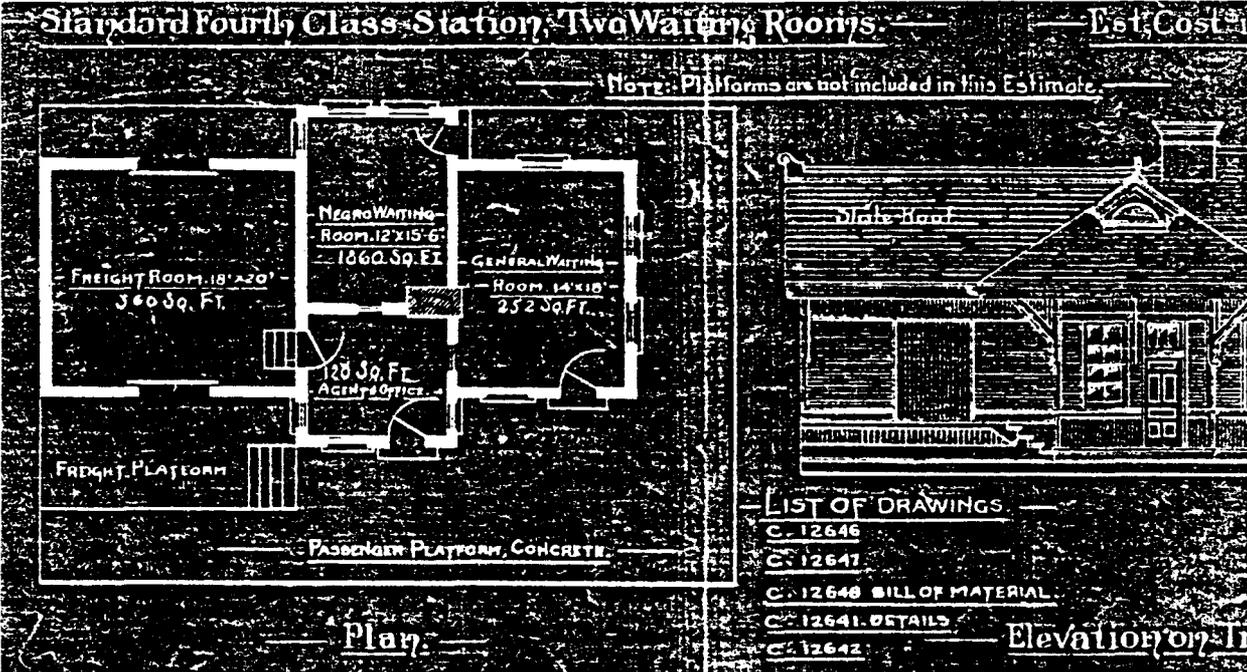


FIG. 428.—GROUND-PLAN, CLASS "E."

Berg, Walter G. Buildings and Structures of American Railroads. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1893.

Brassfield Depot (Riney-B Depot)
 Brassfield, Kentucky
 HABS No. KY-265
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Exhibit B.2: Plan and Elevation on Track of a Standard Fourth Class Station as constructed by the Louisville & Nashville Railroad in 1911.



Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company. President's Correspondence Files, Louisville & Nashville Standard Buildings C-19543.

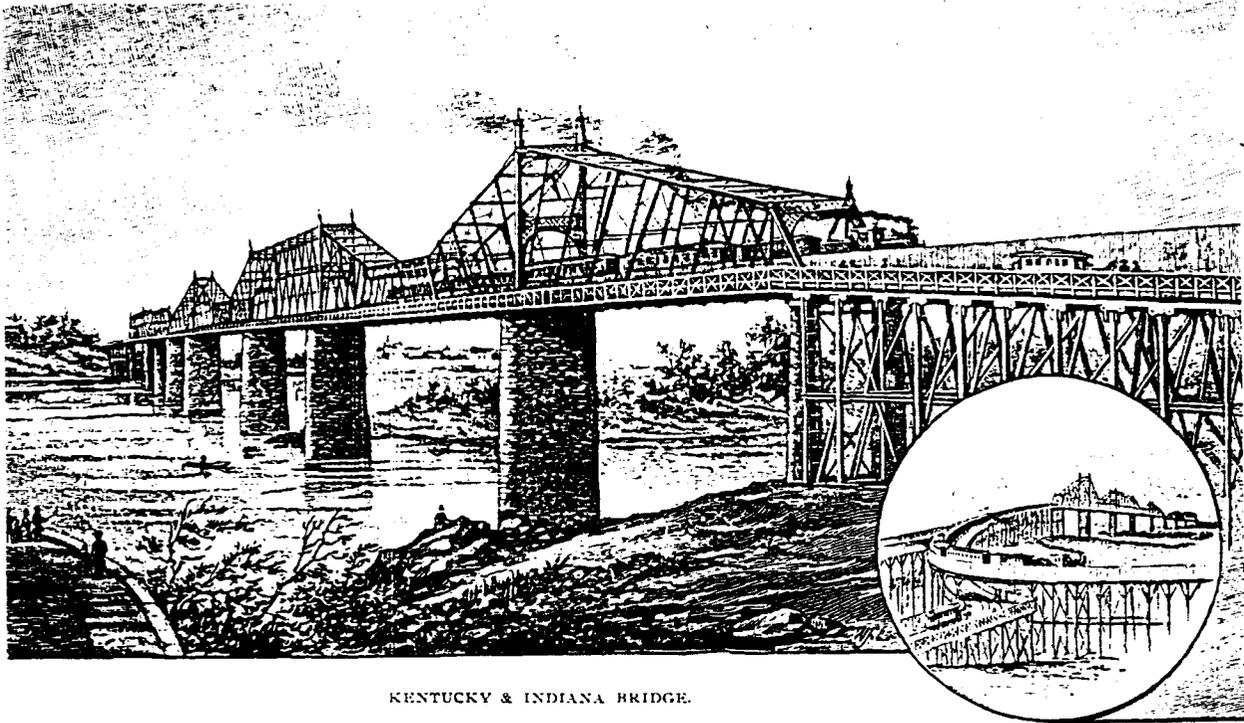
Brassfield Depot (Riney-B Depot)

Brassfield, Kentucky

HABS No. KY-265

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Exhibit B.3: Engravings of the Kentucky & Indiana Bridge, St. John Boyle, and Bennett H. Young, as published in 1887 during the crucial construction years of the Louisville Southern Railroad.



KENTUCKY & INDIANA BRIDGE.



ST. JOHN BOYLE.



BENNETT H. YOUNG.

Louisville Board of Trade. The City of Louisville and a Glimpse of Kentucky. Louisville: Courier-Journal Job Printing Co., 1887.