

MISSOURI PACIFIC-TEXAS PACIFIC RAILROAD STATION
Tenth and Jackson Street
Alexandria
Rapides Parish
Louisiana

HABS No. LA-1178

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Building Survey
National Park Service
Southeast Region
Department of the Interior
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

MISSOURI PACIFIC-TEXAS PACIFIC RAILROAD STATION HABS No. IA-1178

Location: Tenth and Jackson Street

Present Owner: City of Alexandria

Significance: This passenger station is closely related to the history of Alexandria's growth as a commercial, religious and transportation center. A discussion of this phenomenon is, thus, necessary.

In 1882 the Texas and Pacific Railroad Co. received the franchise for the Texas to New Orleans line of the New Orleans Pacific Railroad Co. and on September 11 of that year, the first regular service between New Orleans and Shreveport was established. This service was followed by five other lines connecting Alexandria to various locals in Louisiana, Texas and Arkansas. With the establishment of these lines, the lumber industry in central Louisiana, which was basically a "sleeping giant", gained considerable momentum, bringing Alexandria to the brink of its so called "golden age". Many Northern lumbermen came to Alexandria to capitalize on this new wealth in wood.

By the last decade of the century, visible signs of this new railroad-based economy began to appear: 1888 saw the opening of the town's first bank since the Civil War and the first large lumber mill was established by two Pennsylvania natives---Mr. Joseph A. Bentley of Hotel Bentley fame and Mr. Zimmerman.

With all this railroad activity, the need for a new passenger station was popularly recognized. The LA Railroad Commission ordered the Texas and Pacific and the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway companies to build a brick, stone or concrete depot. Ultimately, the depot was built and opened on December 3, 1909. At one point in the cities' history 28 passenger trains reached Alexandria in any given 24 hour period. Because of the railroad facilities, the Catholic See City was moved from Natchitoches to Alexandria in 1910. The Second World War, with the many troop installations around the area, only added to the train depot's necessary contribution to the city, its economy and its social status.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date(s) erected:
1908-1909
2. Architect:
H. Longstaff
3. Original and subsequent owners:
-Missouri-Pacific Railroad Company, St. Louis, MO.
-City of Alexandria
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers:
-J.L. Powell, St. Louis-general contractor
-U.P. Hudson, Alexandria, superintendent of construction
-Evans Brothers, Alex., electrical work
-G.W. Zoder, Alex., Plumbing
-R.W. Moore, supervising engineer for Missouri-Pacific

5. Original plans and construction:

The original plans for the building which were executed between 1908-1909 called for the best materials, the most commodious surroundings and the most lavish details both within and without. The building is one story, rectangular shaped, detached brick and stone structure. It contains 10 distinct bays, excluding the covered passageway which separates the passenger service area from the baggage and express area.

The interior of the station was made of curly pine.

Stylistically, the building is eclectic, but it does have elements which are reminiscent of the Jacobean-Revival style of architecture.

The station has a red tiled hipped roof and two chimneys.

6. Alterations/Additions:

The Missouri-Pacific railroad station virtually remained in its original condition from its opening in 1909 to its closure in the mid 1960s, except for some minor upgrading and renovations which did not have a major overall impact on the architectural or historical significance of the structure. At some point after 1909, it was the intention of the railroads to erect a train shed over the tracks to protect the coaches and passengers in bad weather.

PART II ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character:
Eclectic, but basically Jacobean-Revival style which was and remains the best and only example of this style in Central Louisiana.
2. Condition of fabric:
Good, but in a deteriorating state.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Over-all dimensions:
The entire length of the building is 186 feet and the width is 44 feet.
2. Foundations:
The foundation for the station commenced on May 2, 1908. Edward Crebo of Kansas City supervised the laying of the foundation. The concrete foundation measured 1830 x 5 feet.
3. Walls:
The exterior walls are of stoel gray pressed brick with white glazed terra-cotta trimming.
4. Structural system, framing:
Trimming was in white terra-cotta. The building has copper gutters and finishings.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads:
The station has two impressive "turrets" over the door openings trimmed in white terra-cotta and covered with stoel gray pressed brick.
A train shed covered the tracks on the western side of the structure.
6. Chimneys:
The station is complete with two chimneys made of stoel gray pressed brick and trimmed in white terra-cotta.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors:
The original doors were glass. They are presently boarded up. The doors were double in construction. Stone lintels override the doors.
 - b. Windows and shutters:
The station's windows are rectangular; further details of the originals are undetermined, as they are now boarded up. Stone lintels override the windows as well.

8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering:

The station has a red Spanish roll tile roof.
 - b. Cornice, eaves:

The roof timbers extend over the walls in a bungalow fashion creating a very low effect for the building. Rather than being a detriment, it has a great benefit, cutting out the glare, and making the waiting rooms more comfortable especially in the warm weather.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:
 - a. Describe by floors:

The interior of the station consisted of a ticket office, two waiting rooms and a ladies' and gentlemen's lounging rooms. A baggage room is also included.
2. Stairways:

None present.
3. Flooring:

The floors of the waiting rooms are of concrete with a finish of granatoid.
4. Wall and ceiling finish:

The walls in the main waiting room are of curly, high polished pine.
The ceiling in the main waiting room is of curly pine also, but it is set off in panels.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors:

Doors lead from the waiting room into a very elaborate "retiring" room for ladies.
 - b. Windows:

Windows were rectangular glass. They are presently boarded up.
6. Decorative features and trim:

Polished curly pine trims the ceiling and walls. Floors were covered with a finish of granatoid.
7. Hardware:

Hardware is of concrete and curly pine from area forests.
8. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:
The structure was steamed heated. No air conditioning was available.
- b. Lighting:
Alexandria had received electric power in 1895, so the station had electric lighting, but it was purely utilitarian, not elaborate.
- c. Plumbing:
Also, in 1895 the city received a water system, thus the station was fully equipped with running water and toilet facilities.
- d. Dimensions of interior:
The white waiting room was 36 x 34 feet. Doors led from the waiting room into a retiring room for the ladies which was 17.5 x 14 feet in size. The adjoining toilet facilities were 12.5 x 8.5 feet in size. The men's room was similar in size and layout, except that the anteroom was called the "smoking room", instead of the "retiring room". The black ("colored") waiting room was 36 x 34 feet. The adjacent men's and ladies' washrooms were 17 x 14 feet in size, including the adjoining toilet facilities.
The ticket office was 14 x 19 feet. This room projected toward the track side of the building.
In the north end of the building, separated from the passenger department by a 20 foot open space, but under the same roof, was where the baggage room and express room was located. The baggage room had a concrete floor and was 26 x 34 feet. The express room had a concrete floor. It was 26 feet square. There was over \$1500.00 worth of copper gutters, and copper finishings on the building.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation:
The station is located between Jackson and Elliot Streets on what was the original western boundary for the city as laid out by Alexander Fulton, the cities' founder. Because of the importance the railroad played in the commerce of Alexandria, the area around the station became, around 1910, a booming "city-within-a-city" with several hotels of minor grade, pubs and restaurants springing up almost overnight. This area still exists today, but it is in very poor repair. The station had a garden-type setting surrounding the 10th Street side where, even today, pine, magnolia and cedar trees may be found. The importance as well as the popularity of this area cannot be over-emphasized.

2. Historic landscape-design:

Besides the formal gardens on the 10th Street side of the station, the paving pattern of the surrounding walkway around the station was laid in a herringbone pattern.

Vitrified paved bricked platform 700 feet long from Jackson Street past the station and down into yards existed at the time of the station's completion. It can be said that the landscape framed and complemented the building, giving it a European flavor.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings:

Already submitted.

B. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

- 1907, 1908 Annual Reports of the Railroad Commission, Baton Rouge.
- 1977, Rapides Parish Planning Board Survey of Rapides Parish Resources and facilities.
- 1979, National Register of Historic Places Inventory--Nomination Form, Prepared by Eileen Burden.
- 1979-Present, Historical Vertical Files, Joe A. Ticheli, compiler.

2. Secondary and published sources:

- 1976, Eakin, Sue (Ed.) Rapides Parish History; A sourcebook.
- 1959, Eskew, Harry G. & Elizabeth. Alexandria, Way Down in Dixie, Southern Printing Co., New Orleans

C. Interviews:

-1979, Walter Fussner, Missouri-Pacific Railroad Company, St. Louis.

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Historical Association of
Central Louisiana
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