

Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore RR.  
President St. Station (Pennsylvania RR.  
President St Station)  
President St. and Fleet St.  
Baltimore  
Maryland

HAER No. MD-8

HAER  
MD,  
4-BALT,  
25-

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS  
PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

MD-8

PHILADELPHIA, WILMINGTON & BALTIMORE RR., PRESIDENT ST. STATION  
(PENNSYLVANIA RR., PRESIDENT ST. STATION)

HAER  
MD,  
4-BALT,  
25-

Date: 1849-1850

Location: President and Fleet Sts. Baltimore, Maryland.

Owner: Originally, Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore RR.  
As of 1974, Penn Central Transportation Company.

Significance: As of 1974, the President St. Station was one of the oldest large city railroad terminals still standing in the United States. The station quite possibly contains one of the earliest uses of the Howe truss for an arched roof in the United States.

Transmitted by: Dan Clement, 1983. With historical data drawn from The National Register of Historic Places Nomination form.

The Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore (P,W & B) Railroad was formed in 1838 by the merger of three railroad companies; The Baltimore and Port Deposit, The Wilmington and Susquehanna, and The Philadelphia and Delaware County Railroads. Before the merger, making the trip from Baltimore to Philadelphia required transferring from one line to another. With the incorporation of the P,W & B the the ride could be made all in one coach.

The first years of the P,W & B saw increasing ridership but also increasing debt. The workmanship and materials used in construction of the three original railroads was far from adequate. The new company found itself with a debt almost equal to that of its capital stock. In 1847, with interest rates on two previous mortgages amounting to well over 200,000 dollars, the company's stockholders agreed to subscribe to new stock in order to pay off the company's debts. The holders of the first mortgage agreed to consolidate its loans and extend the time of payment, while the holders of the second mortgage agreed to an exchange of bonds for stock. This new arrangement freed the company from their debts and allowed them to embark on a building and improvement program.

One of the first orders of business for the company was the improvement of the track and associated facilities. Up until now the railroad's southern terminus at Baltimore was a rented portion of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad's Camden St., Station. The P,W & B realized that in order to establish themselves as a viable transportation firm

they would need a station of their own within the city. The company allotted \$13,000 for the construction of a station on land previously deeded to them by the City of Baltimore for that purpose.

Construction of the station started in 1849 and was finished in 1850. Built in the Greek Revival style, the enclosed structure (236' long by 66' wide) consisted of a station with company offices above and a train shed directly off the station. The station and offices filled a space at the western end of the building measuring 28' X 66'. The train shed filled the remainder of the structure and measured 208' x 66'. The train shed was one of the first in the country to be built in the form of a barrel vault, utilizing a series of arched Howe roof trusses. Although the train shed is no longer standing, the same trussing system can still be seen in the station's roofing system. In 1852, a freight house was built to the south of the existing station alleviating the congestion of passenger and freight traffic coming into the same shed.

The usefulness of the station was shortlived. In 1873 the Union Tunnel was completed and all passenger traffic was rerouted to Union Station (now Pennsylvania Station). With passenger traffic eliminated from the station at President St. the P, W & B converted it to a freight station. The Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad also proved to be shortlived. In 1881, the Pennsylvania Railroad Company bought the P, W & B by outbidding a syndicate that included the Baltimore and Ohio and The Jersey Central Railroad.

The President St. Station continued to function as a freight station under the ownership of the Pennsylvania Railroad. In 1913 the station's trainshed was demolished and a new one was erected in its place. The new shed was shorter than the original and used a structural system consisting of twelve timber Warren trusses. A central monitor ran down the length of the shed and was supported on a second Warren truss running perpendicular to and on top of the main transverse trusses supporting the shed roof.

This new shed handled freight through the middle of the 20th century. As of 1974, the station and shed were leased to E M General Contractors, Inc.

ADDENDUM TO:  
PHILADELPHIA, WILMINGTON & BALTIMORE RAILROAD,  
PRESIDENT STREET STATION  
(Pennsylvania Railroad, President Street Station)  
President & Fleet Streets  
Baltimore  
Independent City  
Maryland

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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National Park Service  
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**PHILADELPHIA, WILMINGTON & BALTIMORE RAILROAD,**  
**PRESIDENT STREET STATION**  
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The following pages are an addendum to a 4-page report that was previously transmitted to the Library of Congress.

**ILLUSTRATED APPENDIX**

This illustrated appendix contains scans of previously untransmitted large-format photographs taken in the attic of the President Street Station by William Edmund Barrett in 1976. The negatives are not available. The addendum was transmitted by Christopher H. Marston in 2016.



Figure 1. Perspective view of ca. 1850 Howe arched roof truss in attic of President Street Station.



Figure 2. Perspective view of Howe roof truss in station attic.



Figure 3. Interior elevation of Howe roof truss.



Figure 4. Detail of Howe roof truss.



Figure 5. Detail of Howe roof truss in corner of station attic.