

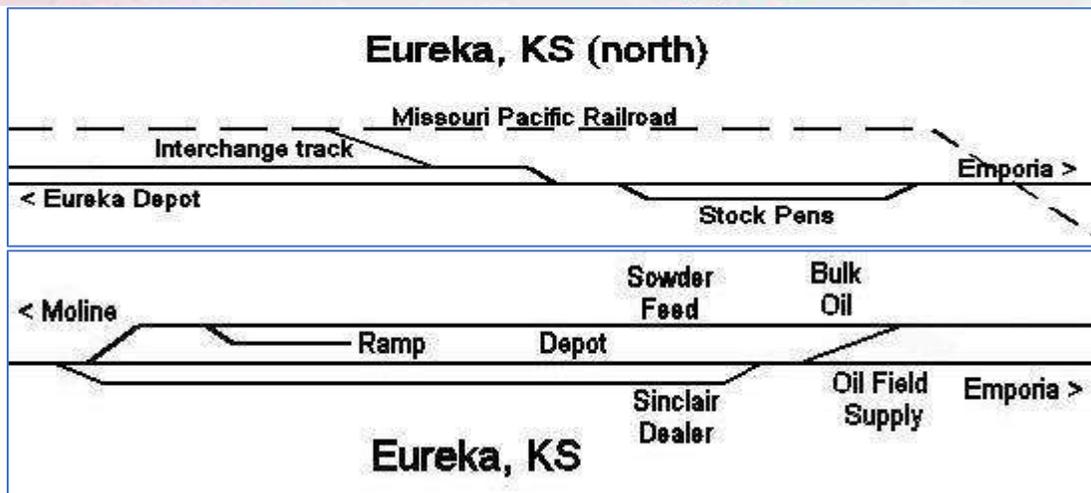
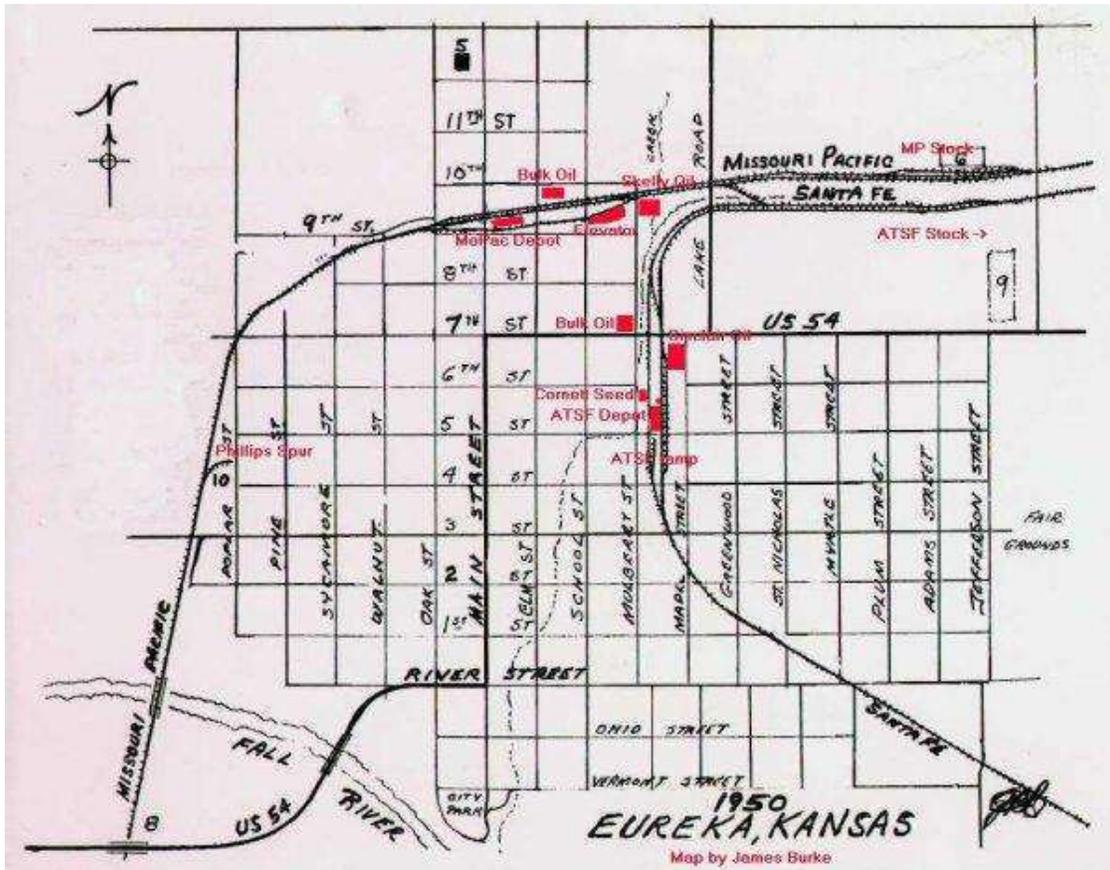
The Howard Kansas Branch
By Steve Sandifer

Howard Branch: Eureka



USG image, 1991, courtesy of TerraServer, with former ATSF line in the middle.

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"Eureka was the county seat of Greenwood County and the largest town on the Howard Branch (2914 in 2000). At Eureka the engines could take water and they nearly always did. There was a large and rather modern brick depot, a sizable grain elevator, a house track serving the depot and elevator, a short passing track (two blocks long), a long passing track (nearly half a mile long!), a loading dock served by a spur off the house track, a warehouse served by a spur off the short passing track, and a stock track a mile northeast of the depot. Eureka was a train order office in addition to the Station Agent and a telegraph operator. There was a freight truck and a six-man section crew put-putted out daily." (James Burke, *Iron Horse and I*)

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Howard Branch: Eureka, KS Depot

Revised 2/3/2013



The first depot was built in 1879 and was 20'x80'x14' with 144' platform. The current depot, built in 1917, is a Non-Standard Santa Fe County Seat Depot measuring 153.5-foot-long, 25 ft 3 inches wide in lobby area. The baggage area is 22 ft 3 inches. An HO model is 22' x 4".

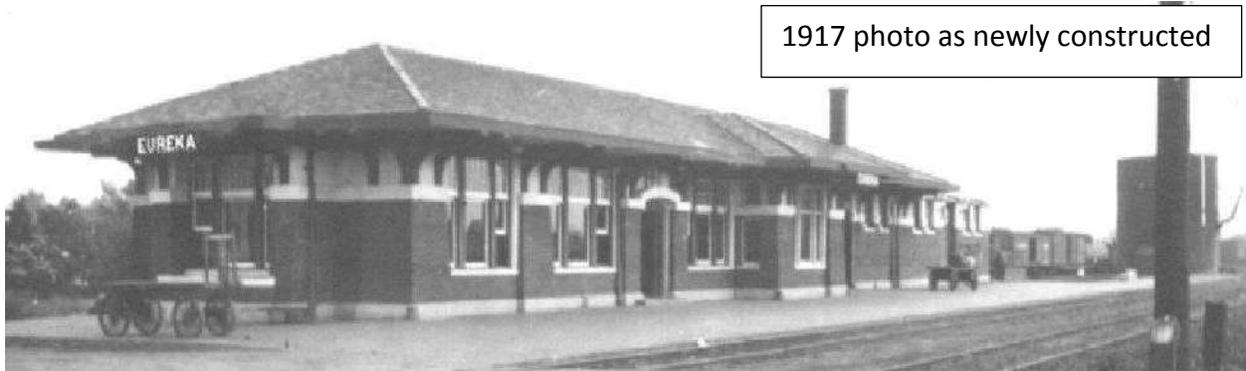


The depot became the property of Eureka when the rails were lifted. They sold it to Richie Oil. It is now owned by the Invena Corporation. Matt Wilson is the Principal Consultant and is very proud of the restoration process that is being done with the depot. He is sparing no expense to restore the exterior to as-built appearance, and it will qualify for the Registry of Historic Buildings. The interior has the Santa Fe flavor but is modernized with updated electrical and information technology wiring.

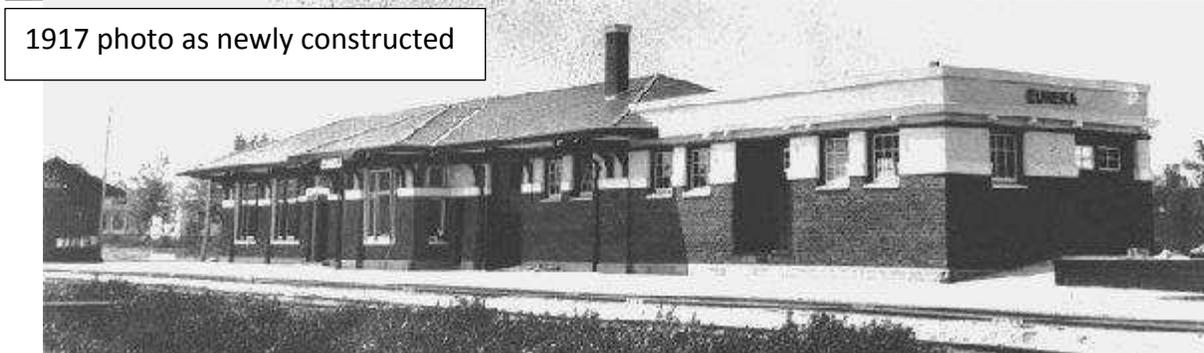
On January 11, 2013, the depot was added to the National Register of Historic Places. The listing says, "The Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe (ATSF) Depot in Eureka was built in 1917 during a period of economic boom in south-central Kansas after the discovery of oil in Greenwood and Butler counties. This second-generation station was located on the Howard Branch, a 75-mile section of the ATSF line that connected Emporia in Lyon County to the north with Moline to the south in Elk County. It functioned as a combination depot that served both railway passengers and freight customers. The depot's passenger service ended in the mid-1950s, and its freight business ended in 1971. The Prairie and Craftsman-style station is a one-story brick and stucco building trimmed with decorative wood corbels and has a tile roof. It was designed by ATSF architect E. A. Harrison and chief engineer C.F.W. Felt – both of Chicago. Harrison designed many impressive buildings while working for the railroad, several of which are listed in the

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National Register of Historic Places. The only other Kansas depot designed by Harrison that is listed in the National Register is in Newton. The Eureka ATSF depot was nominated for its local significance in the areas of transportation and architecture."



1917 photo as newly constructed

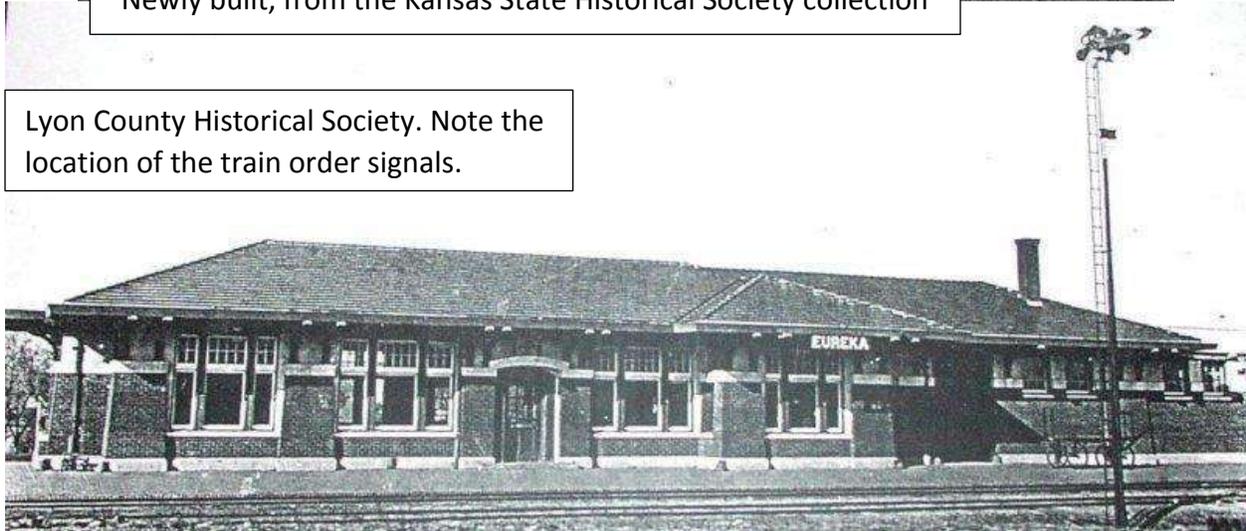


1917 photo as newly constructed



Newly built, from the Kansas State Historical Society collection

Lyon County Historical Society. Note the location of the train order signals.

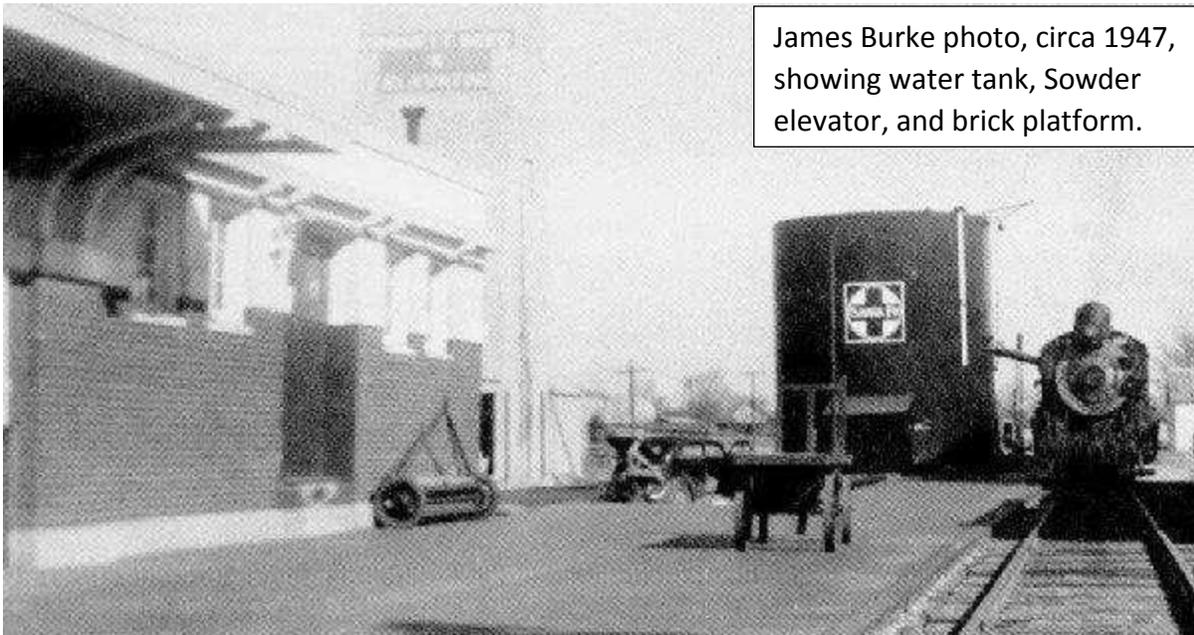


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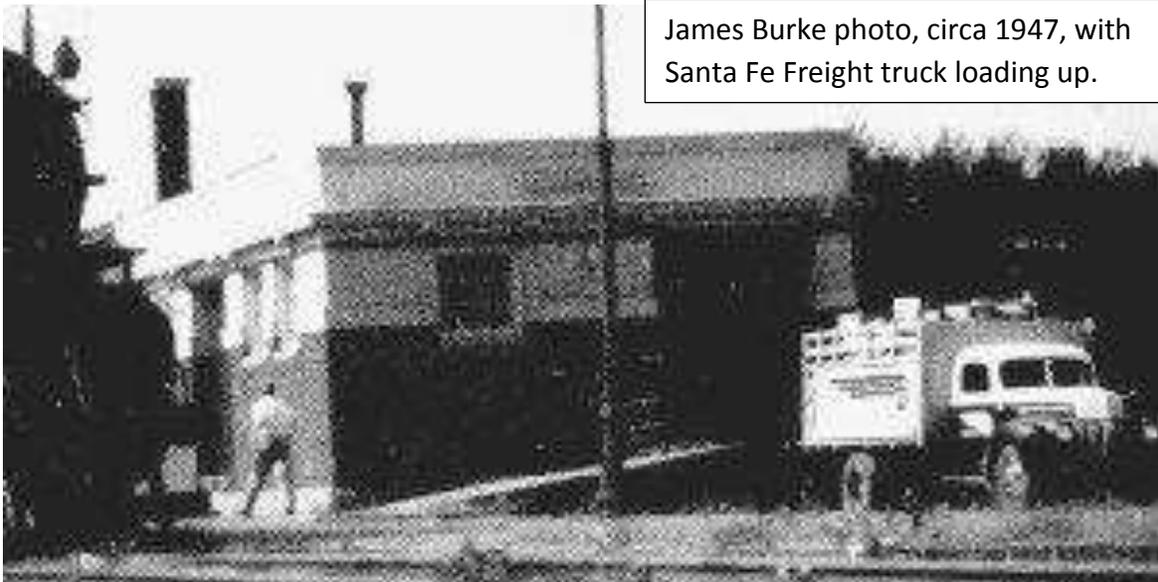
The back side, with Sowder elevator in the distance



James Burke photo, circa 1947, showing water tank, Sowder elevator, and brick platform.



James Burke photo, circa 1947, with Santa Fe Freight truck loading up.



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Howard Branch: Eureka Depot, Restoration All photos by J. Stephen Sandifer, November 2004

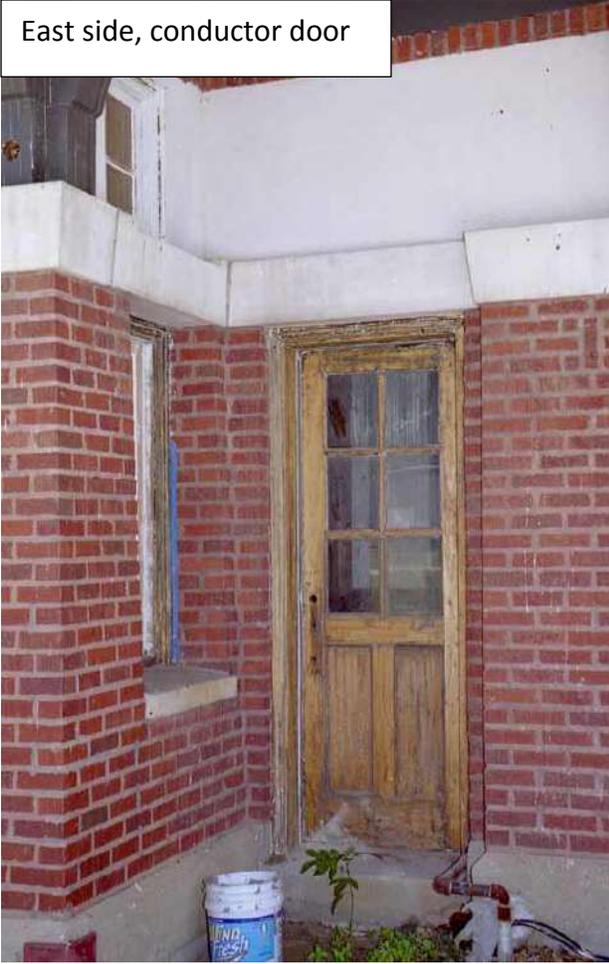
The depot when restoration began



East side, agent office

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East side, conductor door



West side, waiting room entrance

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East side, main track



East side, freight office

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West side, eaves



2011 finished restoration



2011 finished restoration

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2011 finished restoration

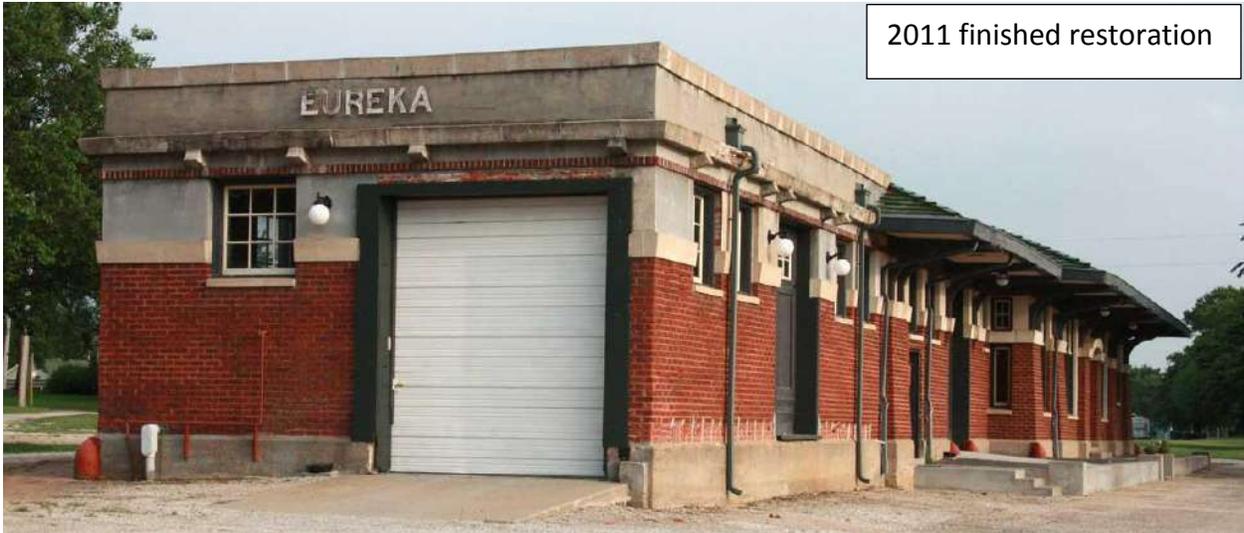


2011 finished restoration

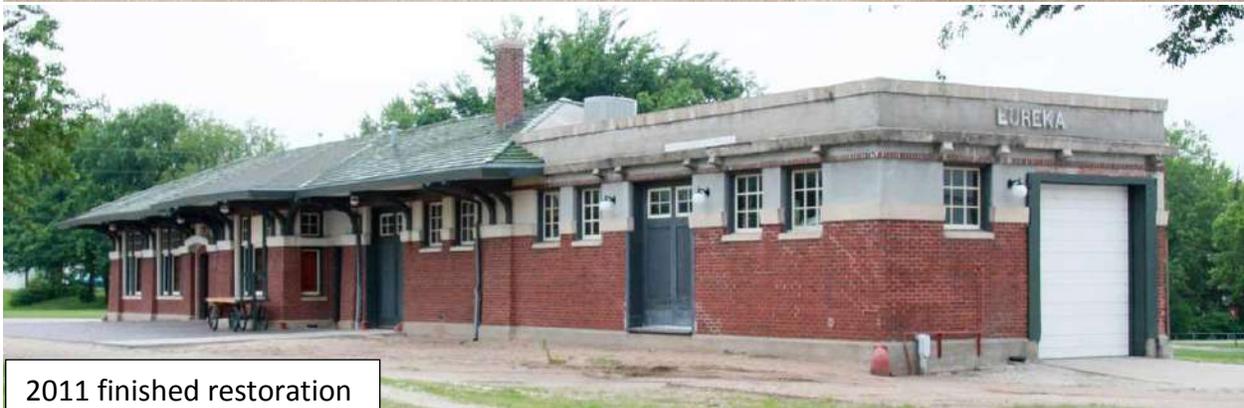
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2011 finished restoration



2011 finished restoration



2011 finished restoration

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Waiting room, looking to ticket window and agent's office.



Waiting room, looking to the women's section and restroom.

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Women's waiting area, now a conference room



Ticket window from Agent's office

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Window detail



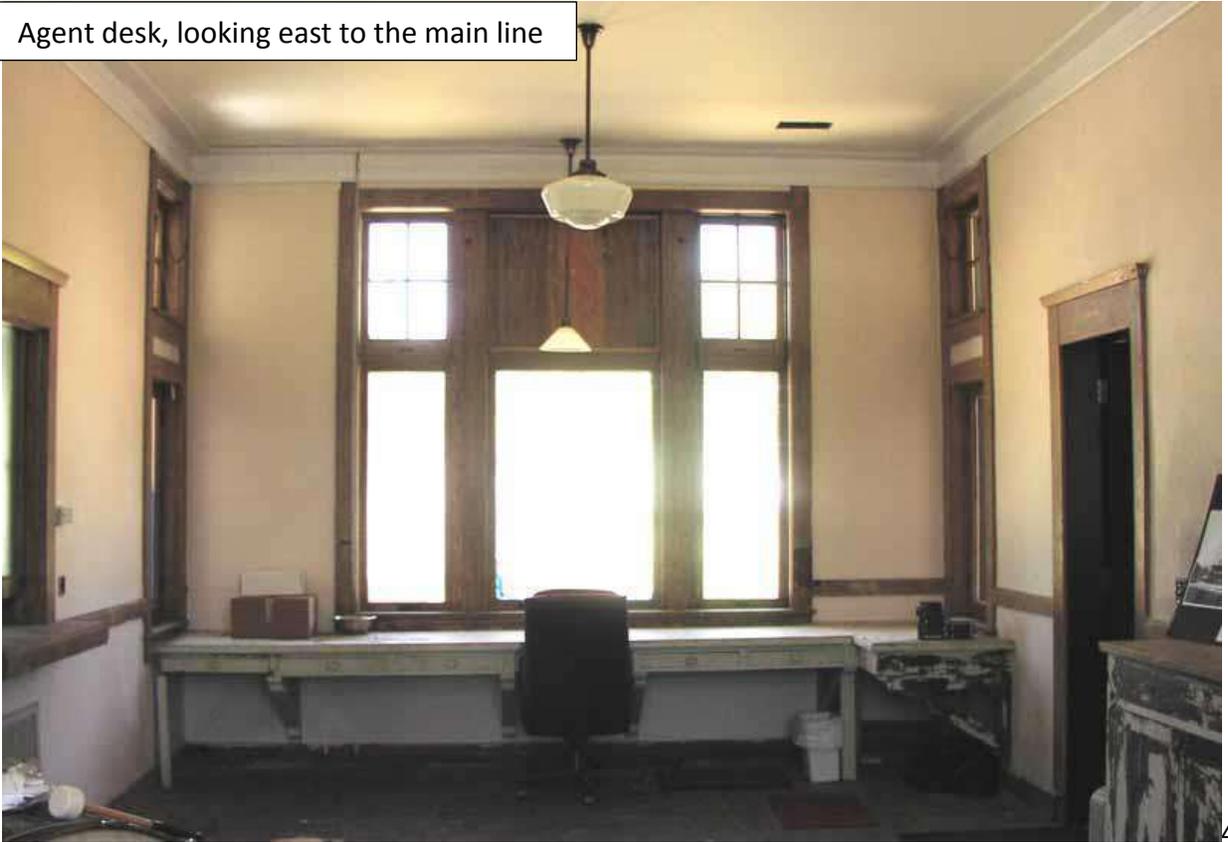
Agent's view north



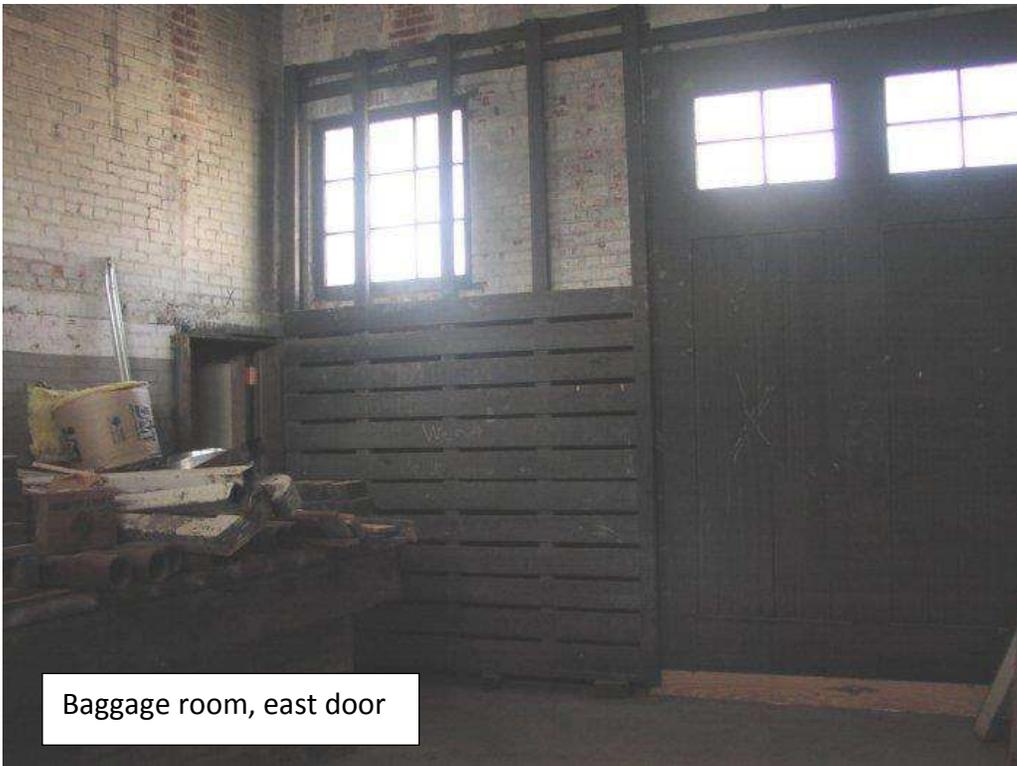
Coal room

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Agent desk, looking east to the main line



4



Baggage room, east door

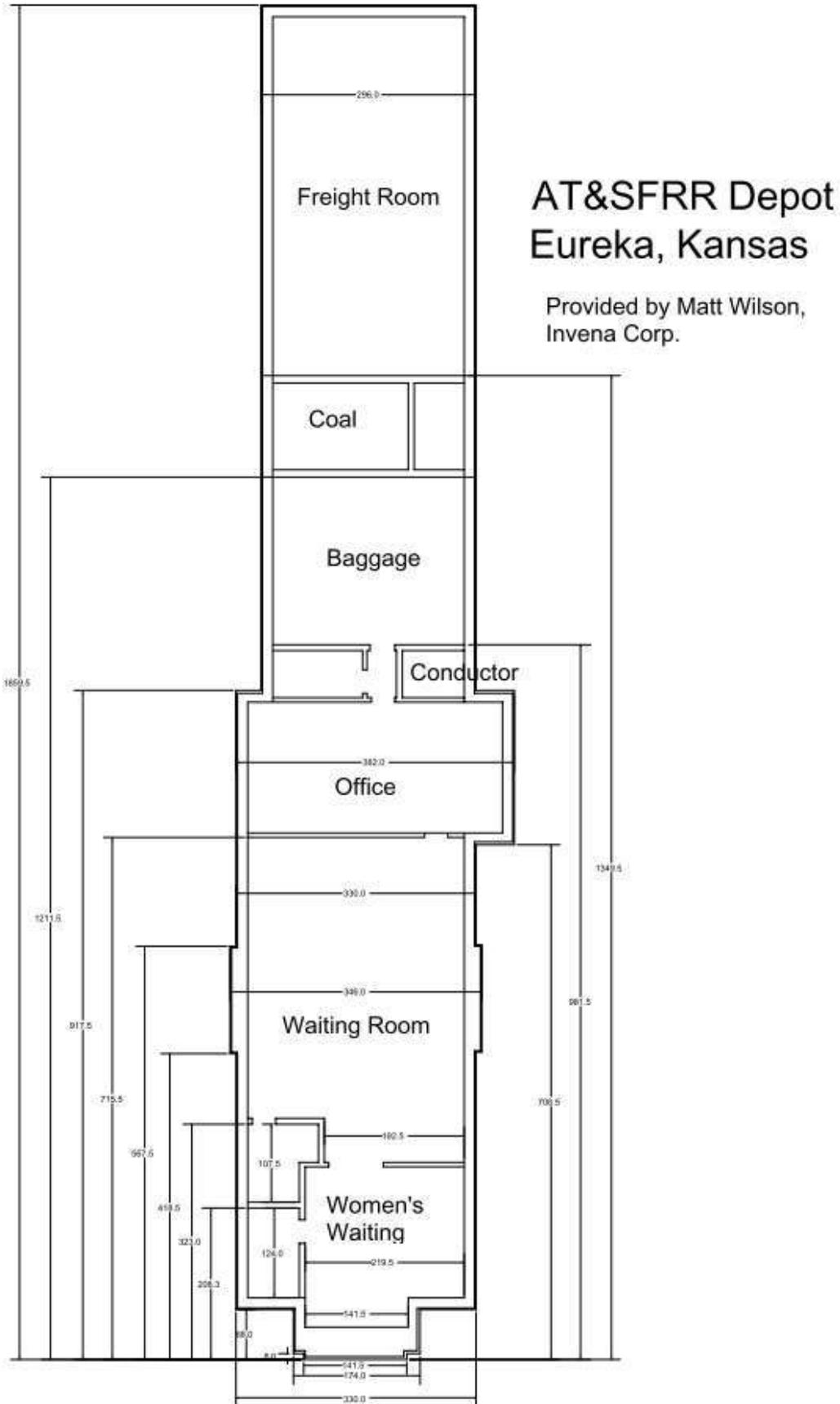
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Baggage room, west door.



Freight room

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Rod Riley reported that the wooden loading dock was used in the early 70s to unload farm machinery coming from manufacturers and to load scrap in gondolas for movement elsewhere.

Howard Branch: Eureka Water Tank

The water tank stood adjacent to the tracks and was of standard ATSF design. After water thirsty steam ceased, the tank was converted to a silo and a conical roof added. In the summer of 2001, it remained as a rusting hulk. *Santa Fe System Standards, Vol. 3*, by Kachina Press contains plans for ATSF water tanks.

Photo circa 1947, James Burke

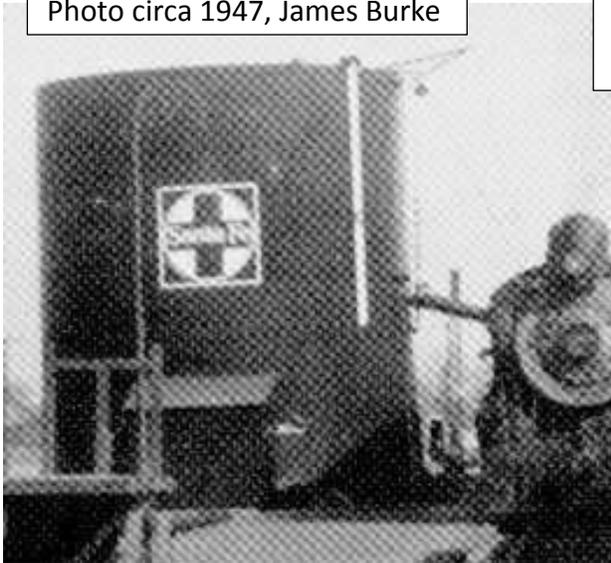
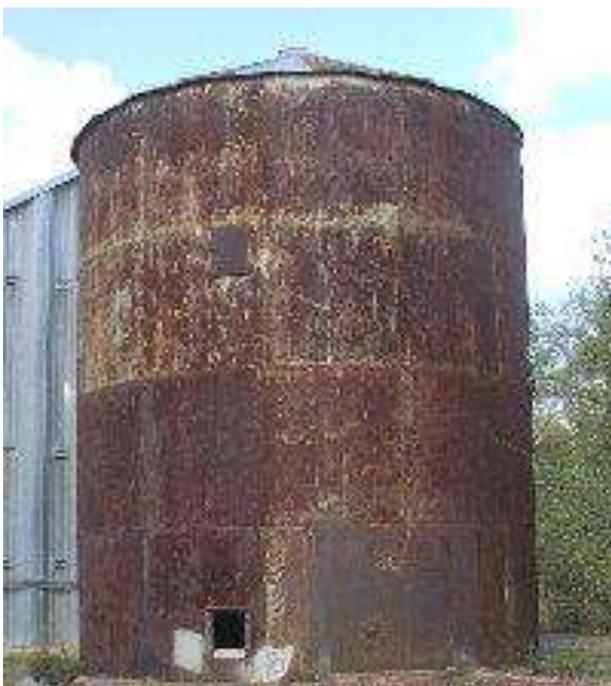
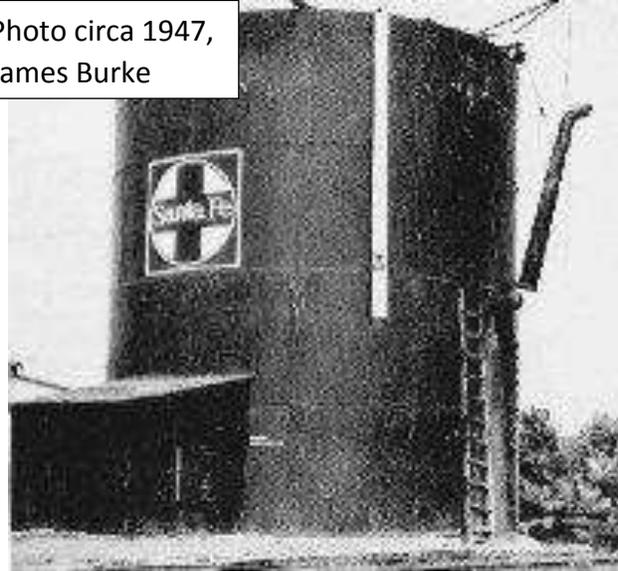
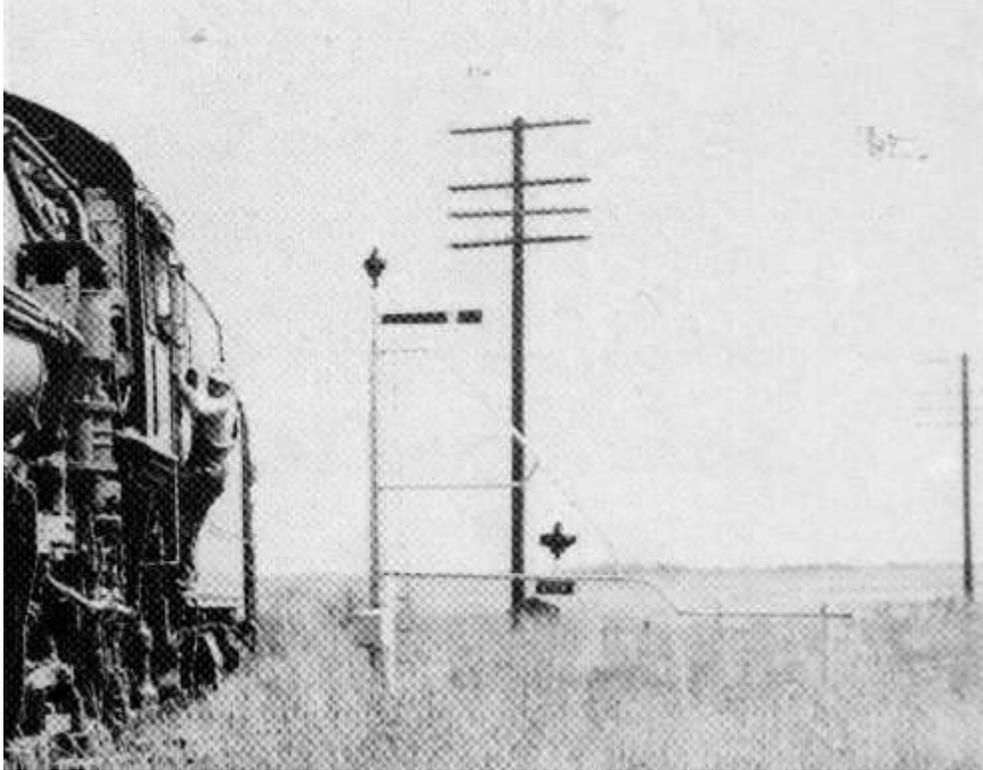


Photo circa 1947,
James Burke

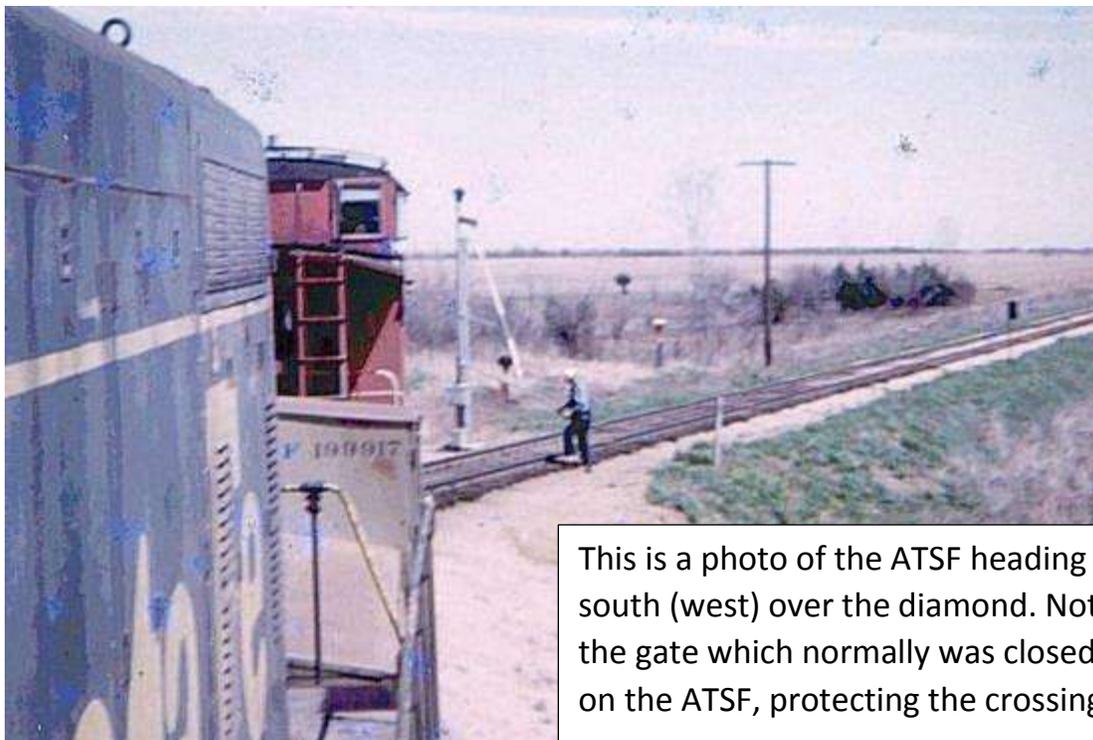


November 2001. Now unused, it became a grain storage building with a conical roof added after the steam era. Photo by J. Stephen Sandifer

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James Burke photo



This is a photo of the ATSF heading south (west) over the diamond. Note the gate which normally was closed on the ATSF, protecting the crossing.

Rod Riley Photo, circa 1973

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Howard Branch: Eureka Industries

Elevator



Image from the 1953 phone book.

The old, odd-looking grain elevator just north of the Eureka depot was built after 1917. Photos in Burke's book show it as Cornett Feed and Seed Elevator. In 1951 it became the J. E. Sowder Seed and Elevator Co. This elevator could handle box cars only. After the demise of steam, the elevator purchased the water tank and converted it to an elevator. Sowder went out of business in 1987.

The main tower of the elevator was 20' wide and 22' deep. The corrugated metal exterior is arranged in bands that are 32" apart. The straight portion rises 36' before angling in for an additional 32', making it 68' tall on the rail side. The elevator was built on the bank of a creek, so the creekside is built up.

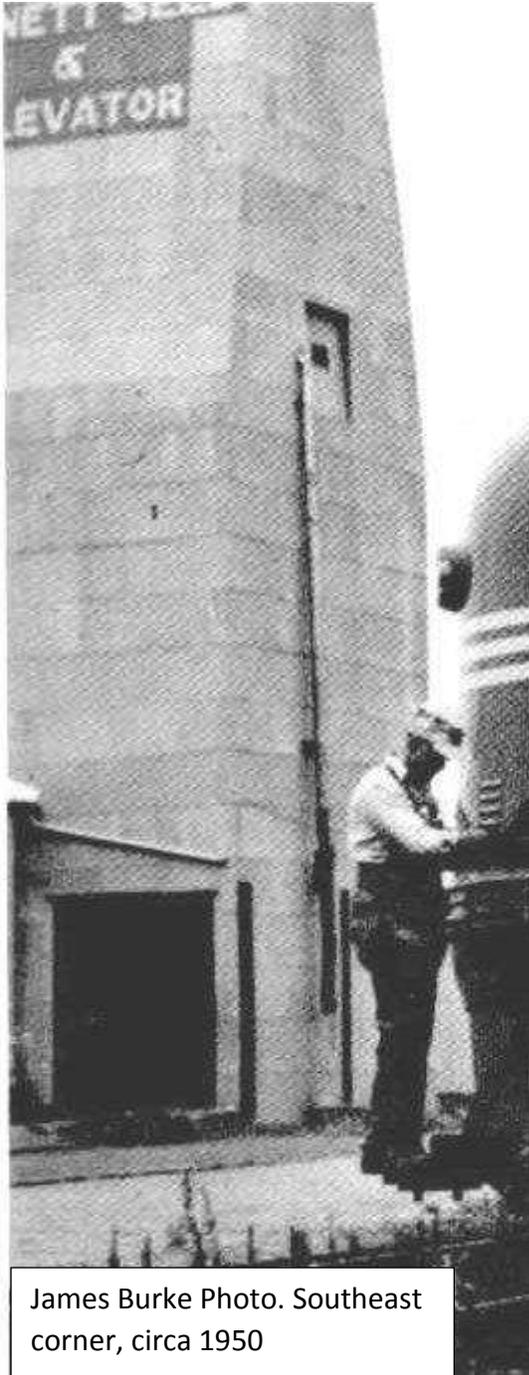
Behind it is the unique dust collector and incinerator. It is made of brick and is 12' in diameter and stands about 26' tall. A ground level door measuring 37" wide and 29" high was provided.

The elevator has been demolished. Another elevator was on the MoPac track.

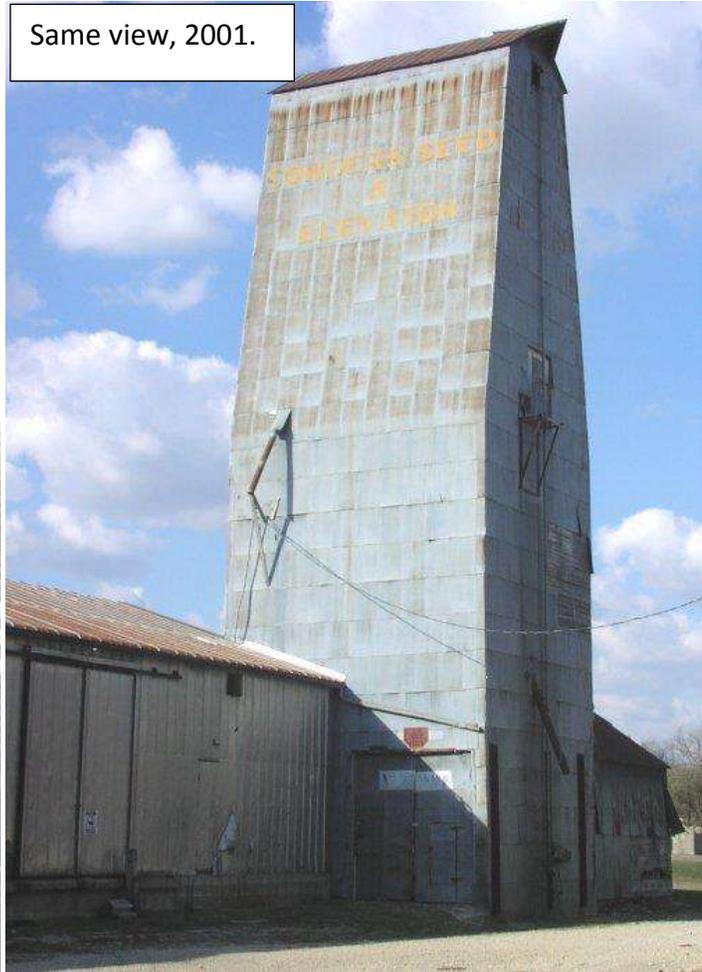
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Howard Branch: Cornett / Sowder's Elevator

All photos by J. Stephen Sandifer, November 2001, unless otherwise noted. Revised 11/30/01



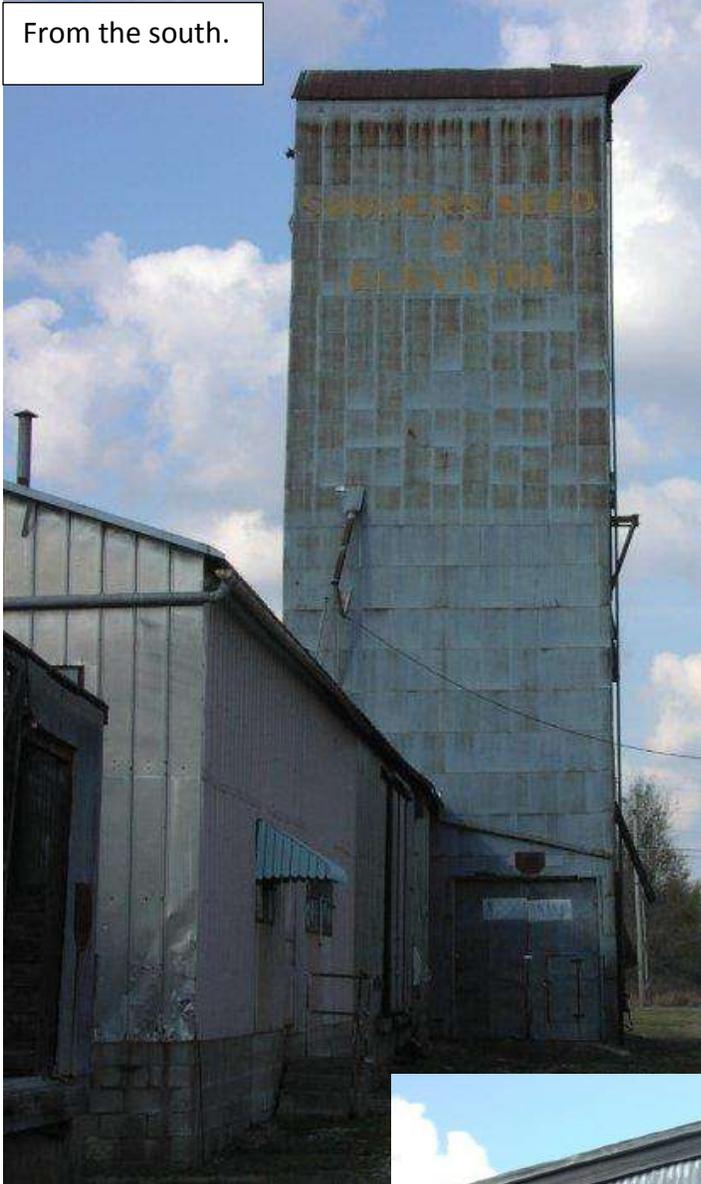
James Burke Photo. Southeast corner, circa 1950



Same view, 2001.

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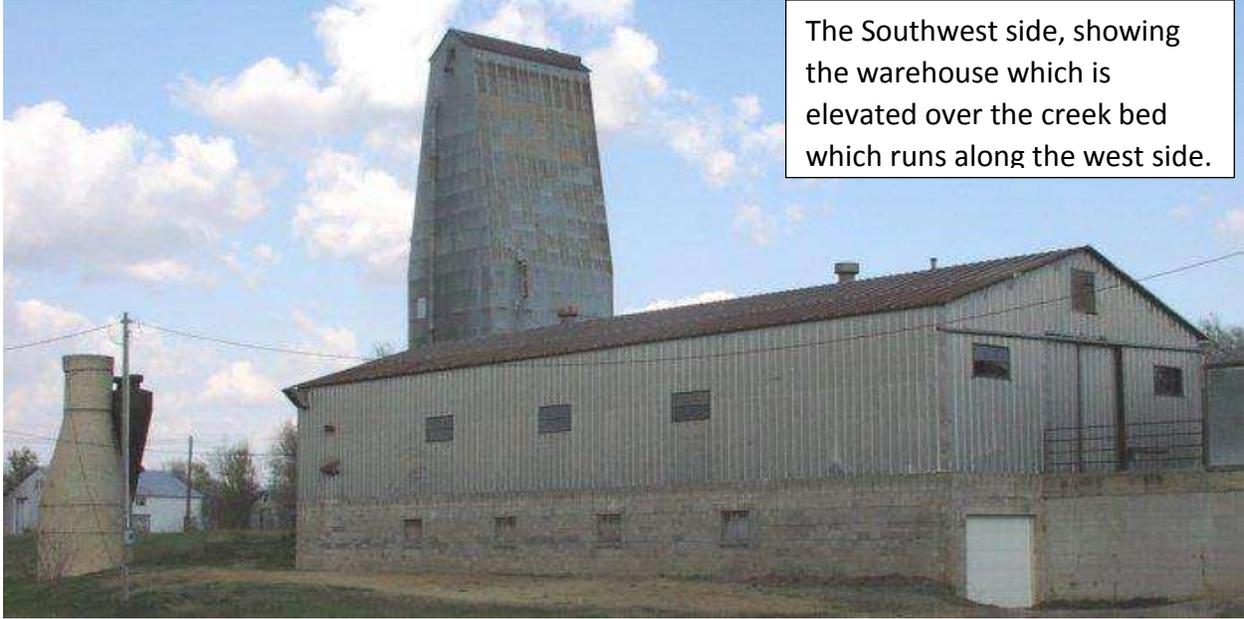
From the south.



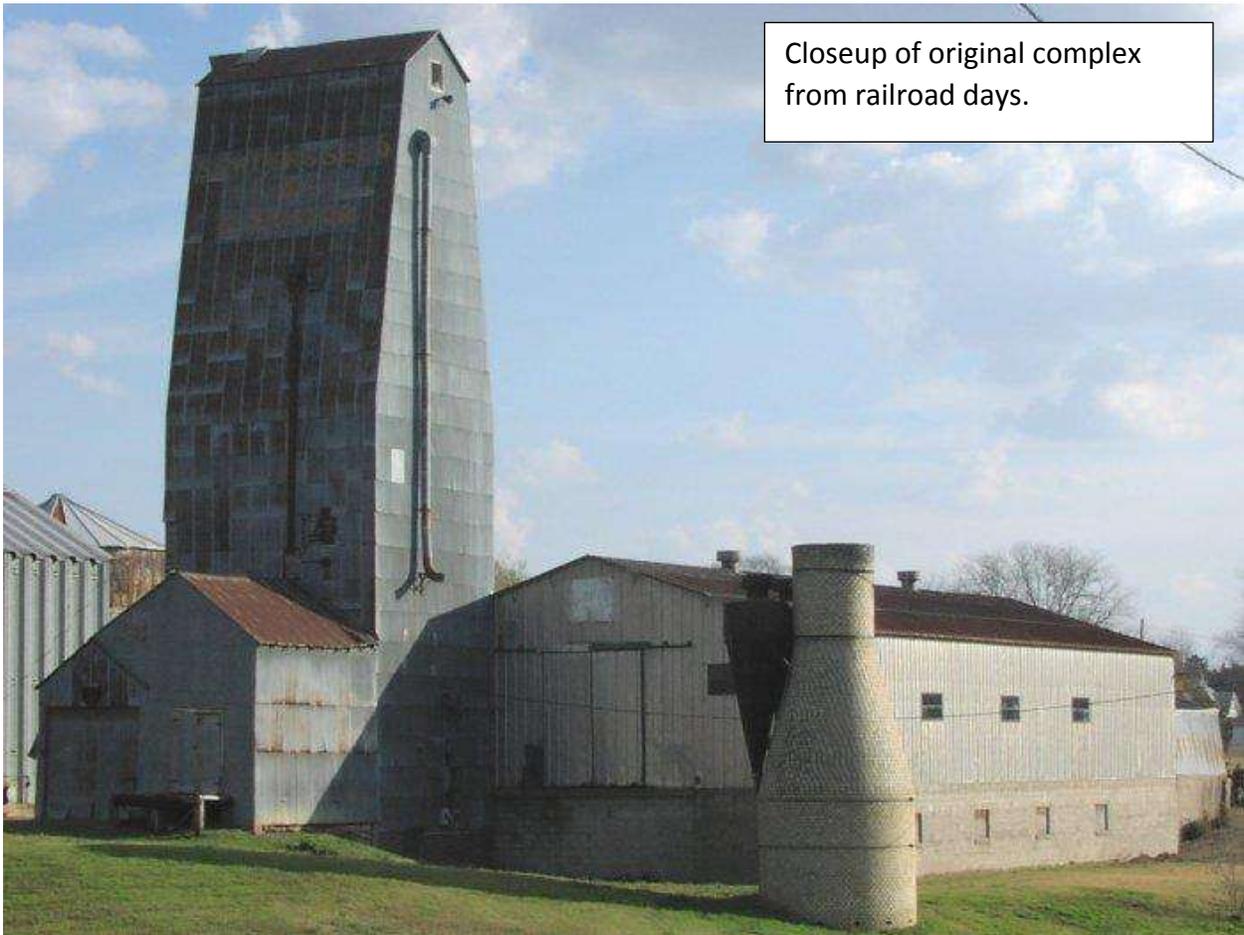
Sign over the south door of the warehouse.



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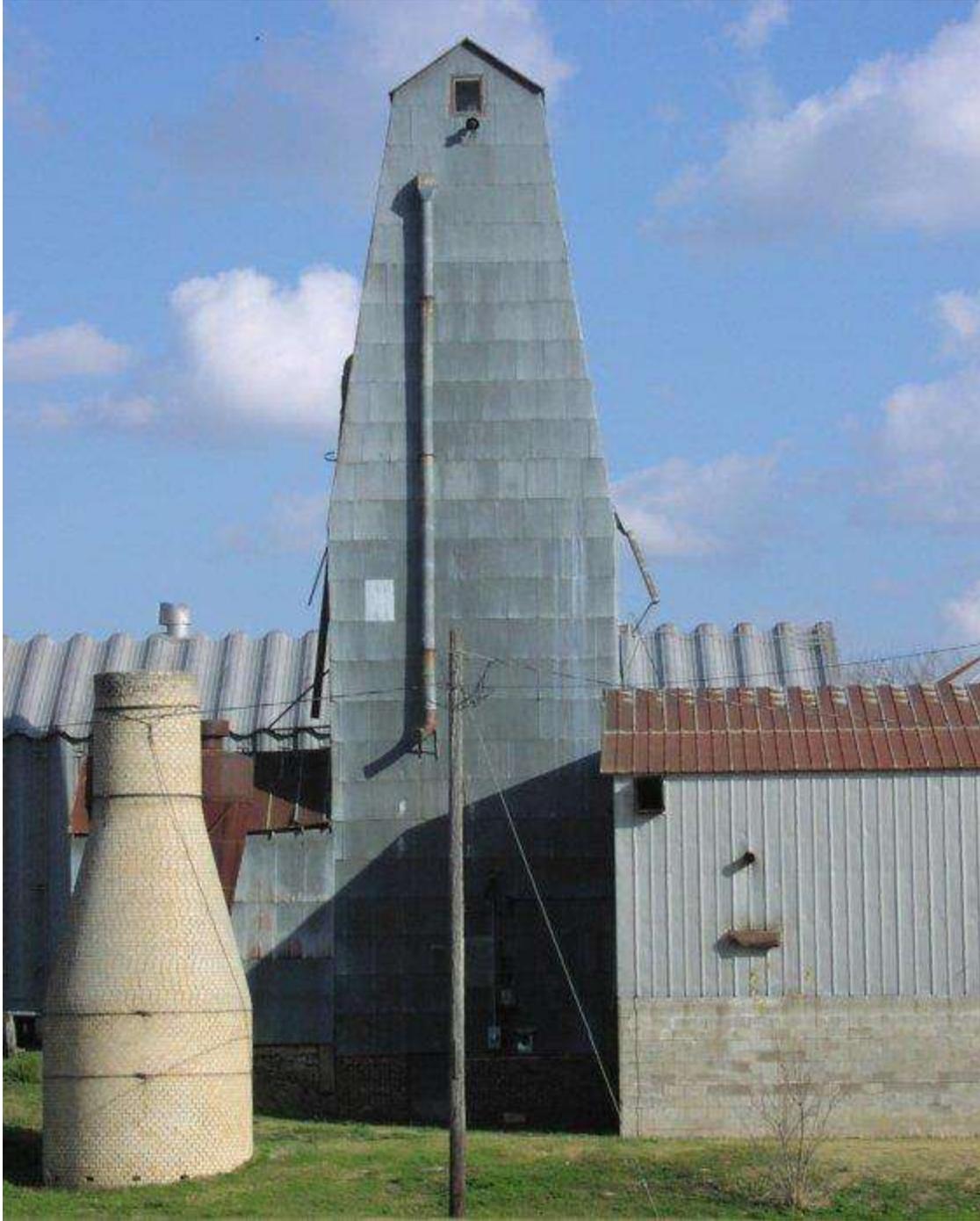


The Southwest side, showing the warehouse which is elevated over the creek bed which runs along the west side.



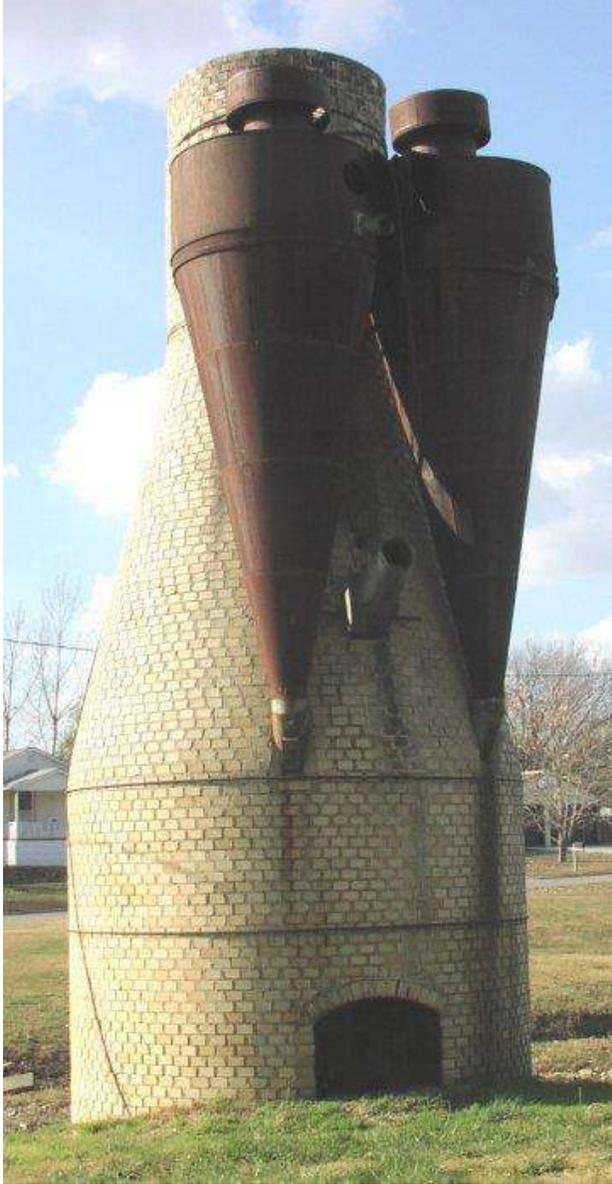
Closeup of original complex from railroad days.

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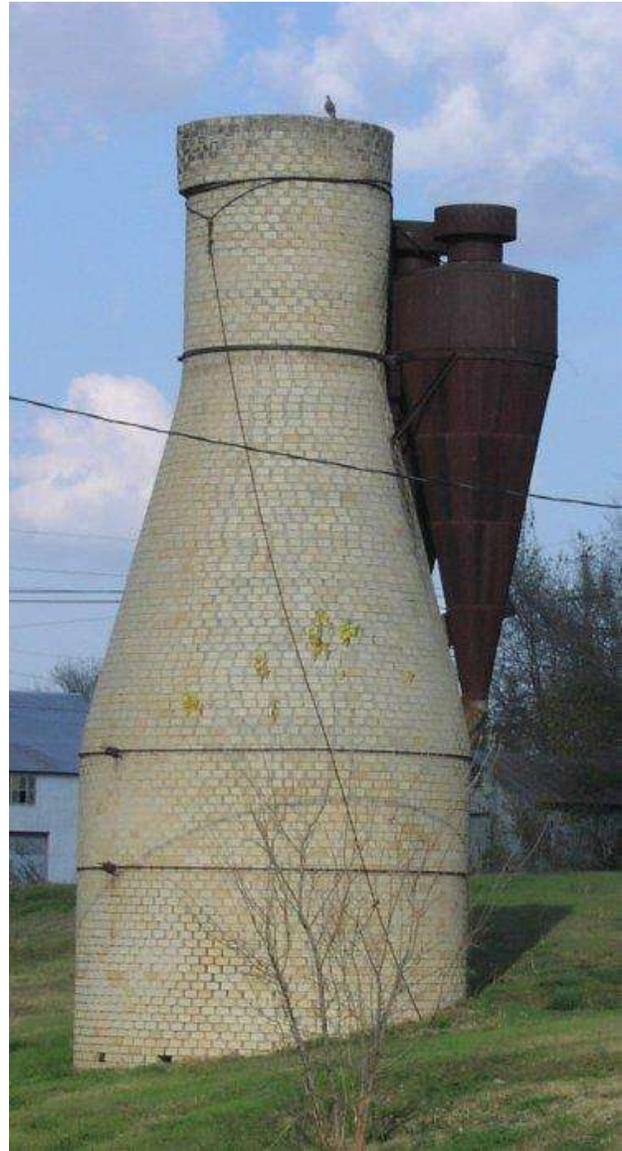


The west side of the elevator. Note the dust collector.

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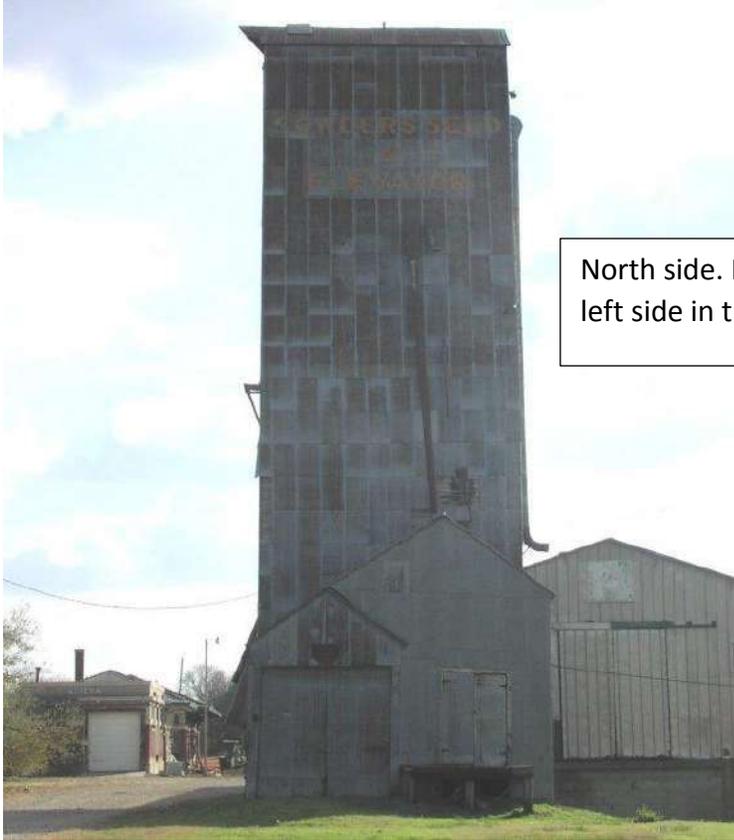


Dust collector/burner, southeast side

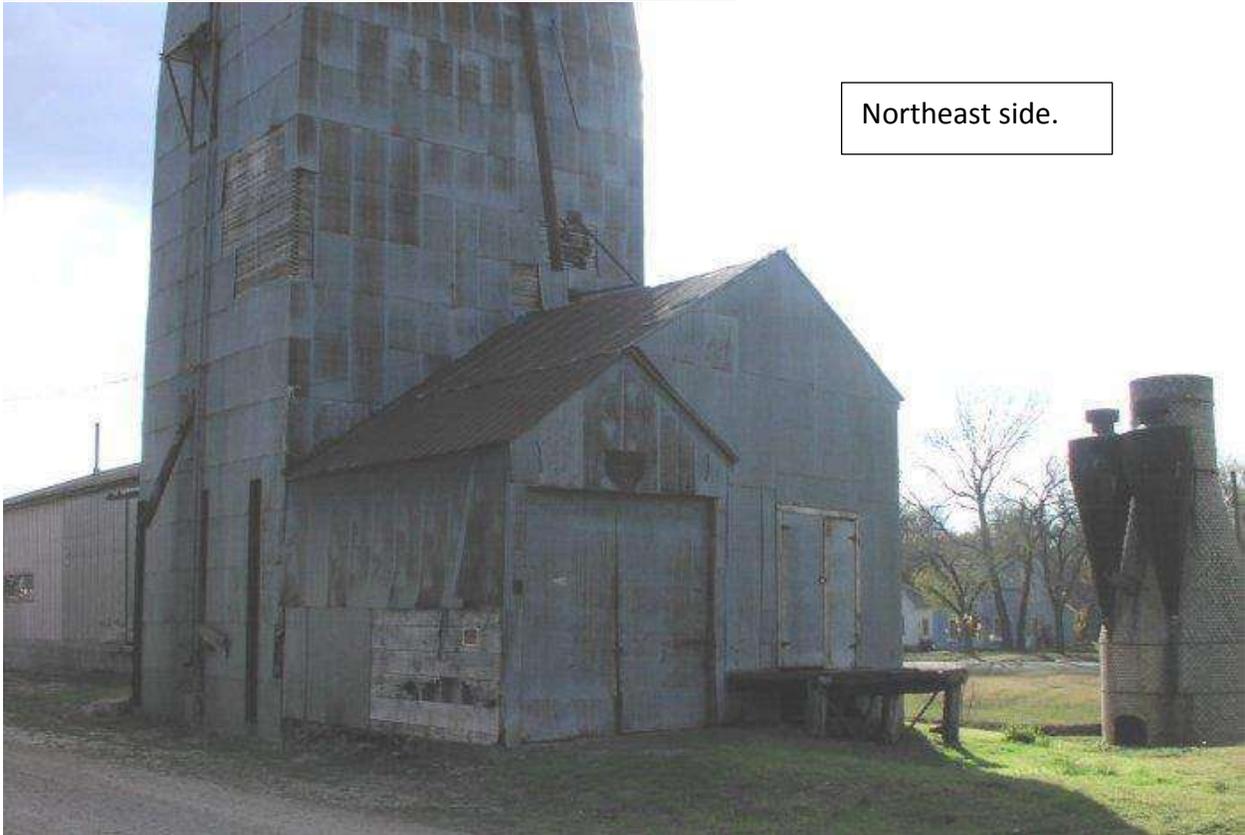


Dust collector/burner, south side

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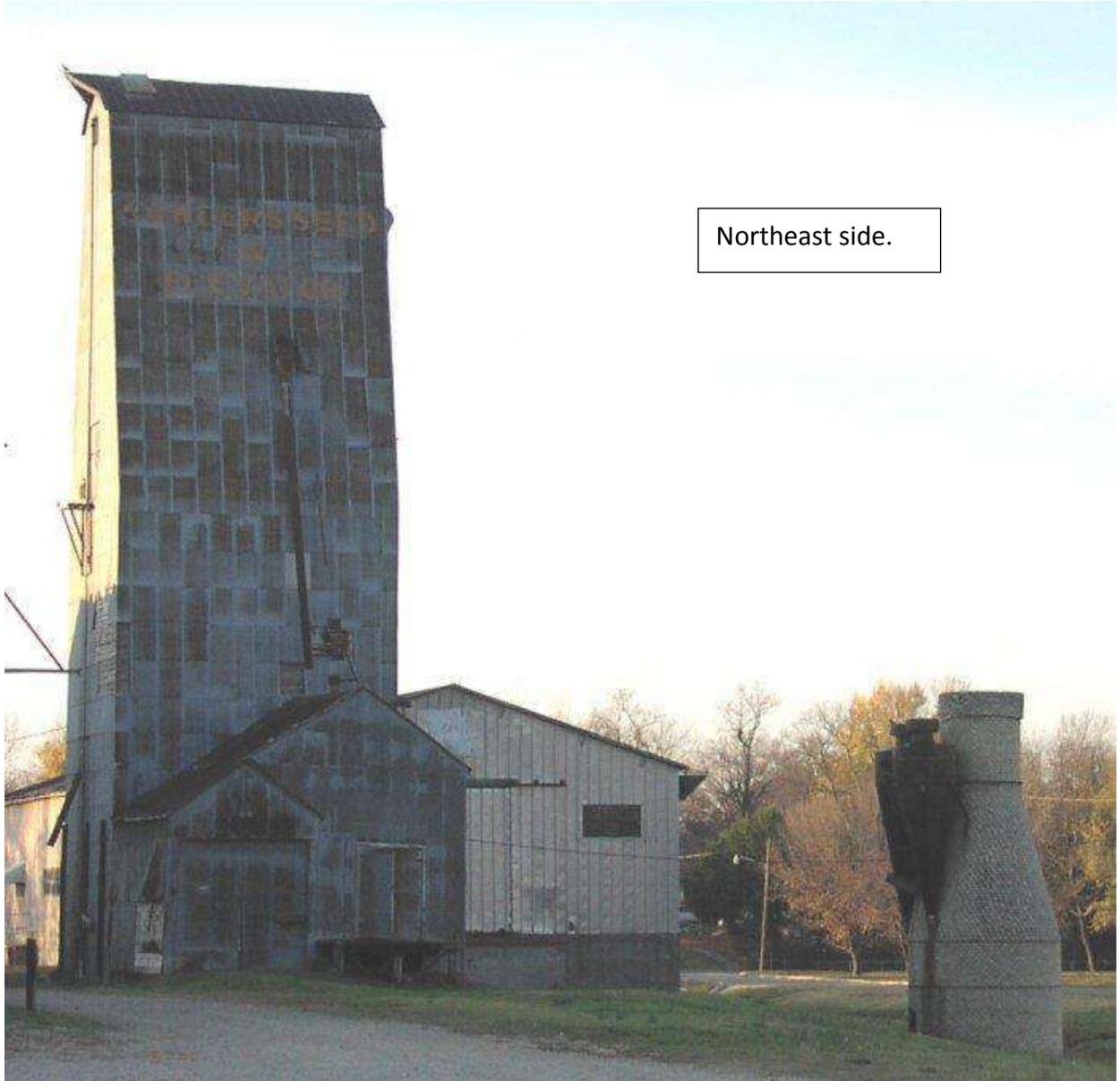


North side. Note depot on the left side in the distance.



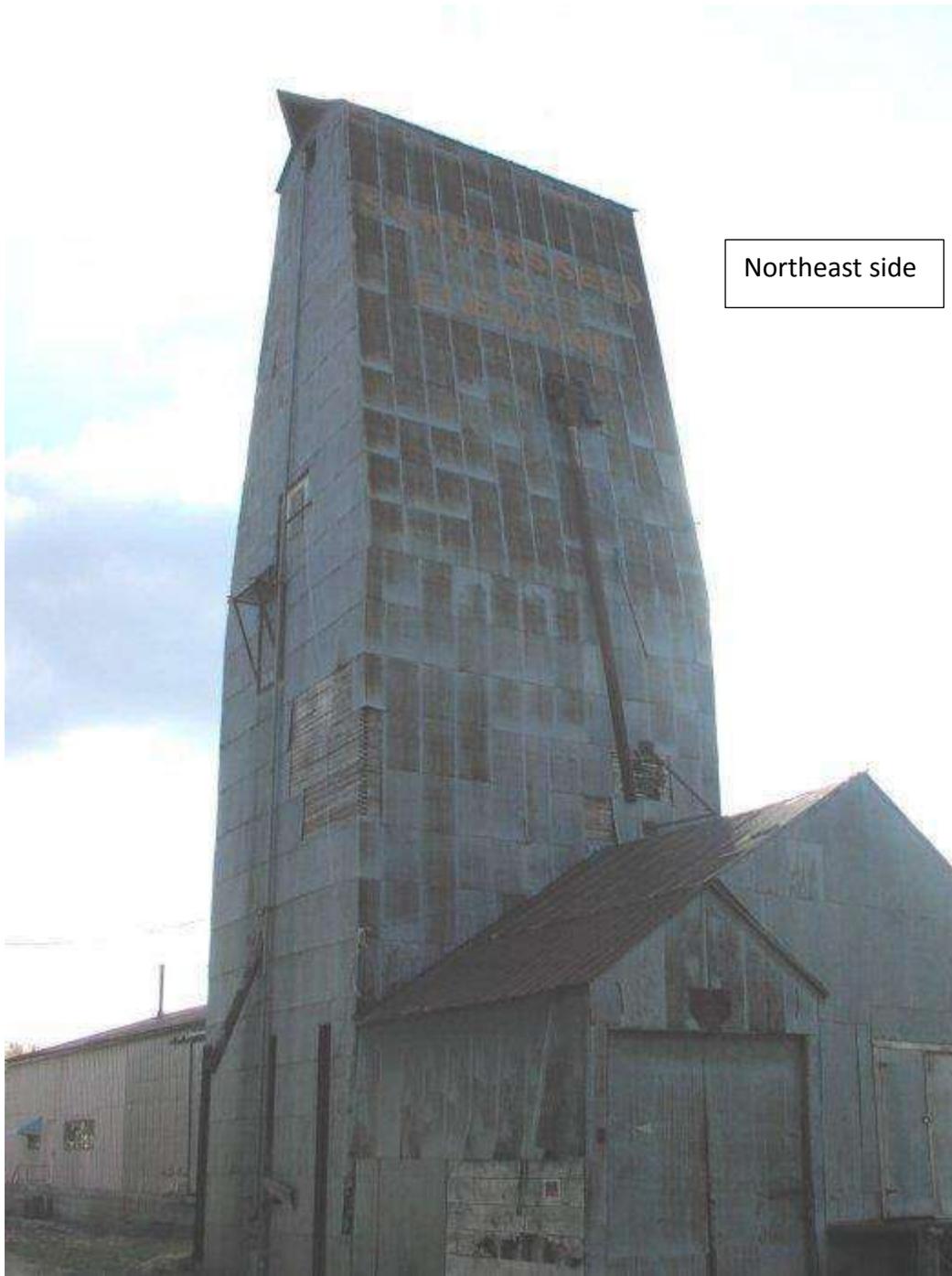
Northeast side.

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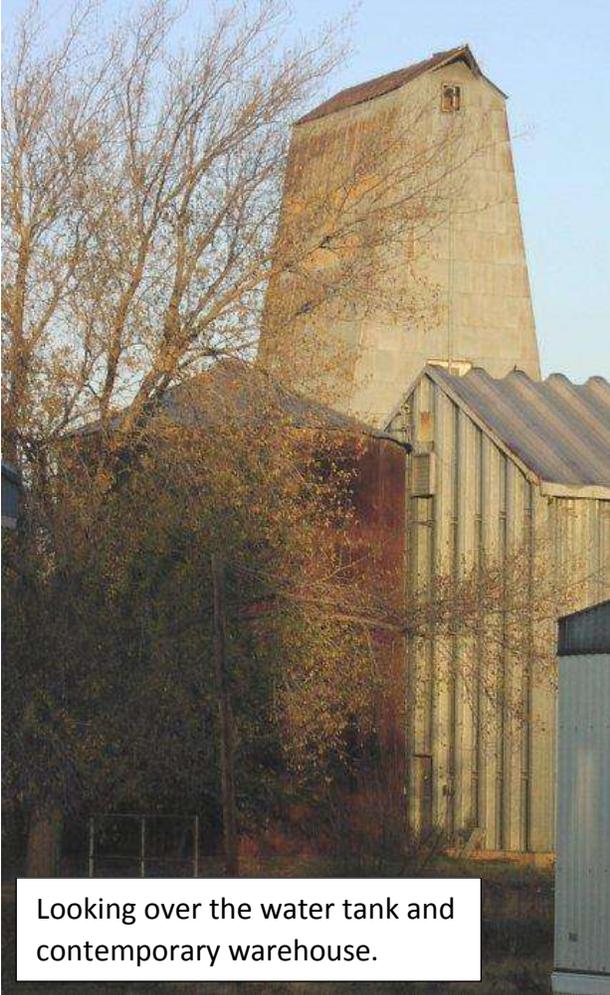
Northeast side.

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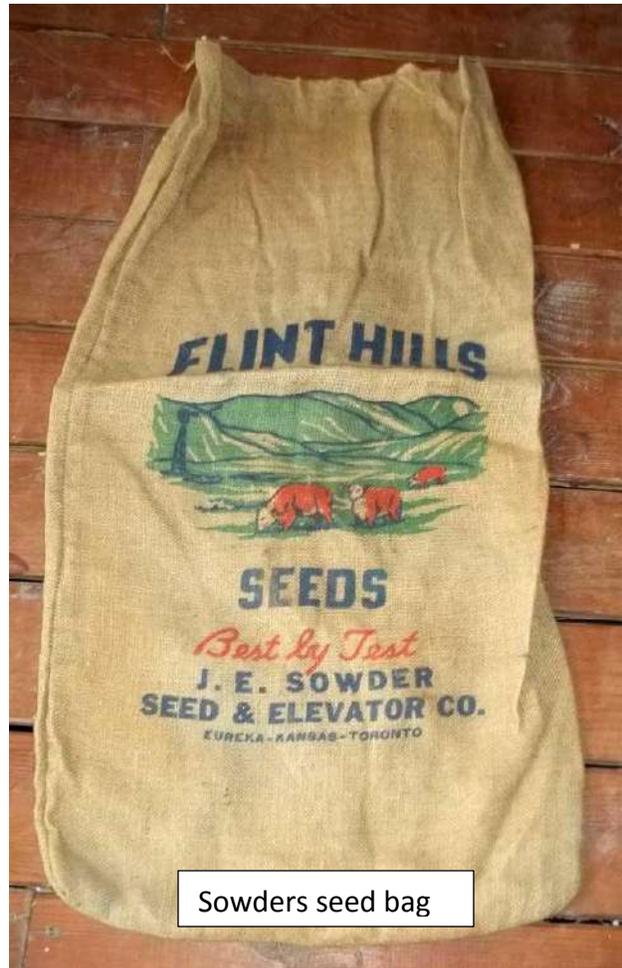


Northeast side

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Looking over the water tank and contemporary warehouse.



Sowders seed bag



The destruction in 2004, provided by Carma Wilson.



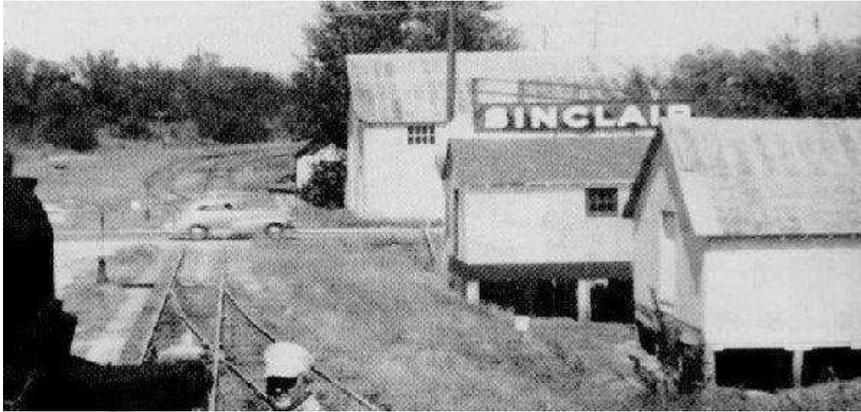
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Oil Distributors

Burke's photos show two bulk oil dealers around the Santa Fe.

Howard Branch: Sinclair Oil Dealer

The Sinclair agency was located just off the passing siding northeast of the depot. Earlier maps show the passing siding crossing 7th street and running by the warehouse door. Phil Braden was the dealer at one time. Rail service stopped before 1970. Only the warehouse and pump house remain in 2001.



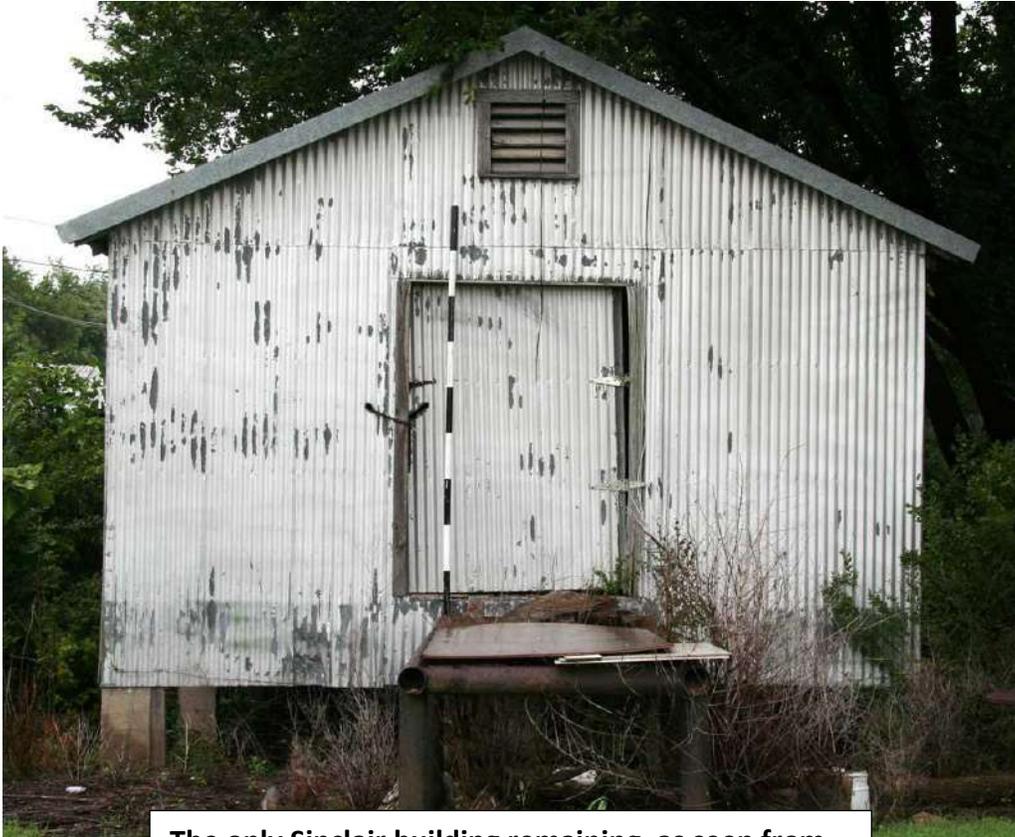
All photos by J. Stephen Sandifer, November 2001, unless otherwise noted.
Revised 11/30/01

James Burke Photo, 1950. Note the middle building on the right. It is the building in color below.

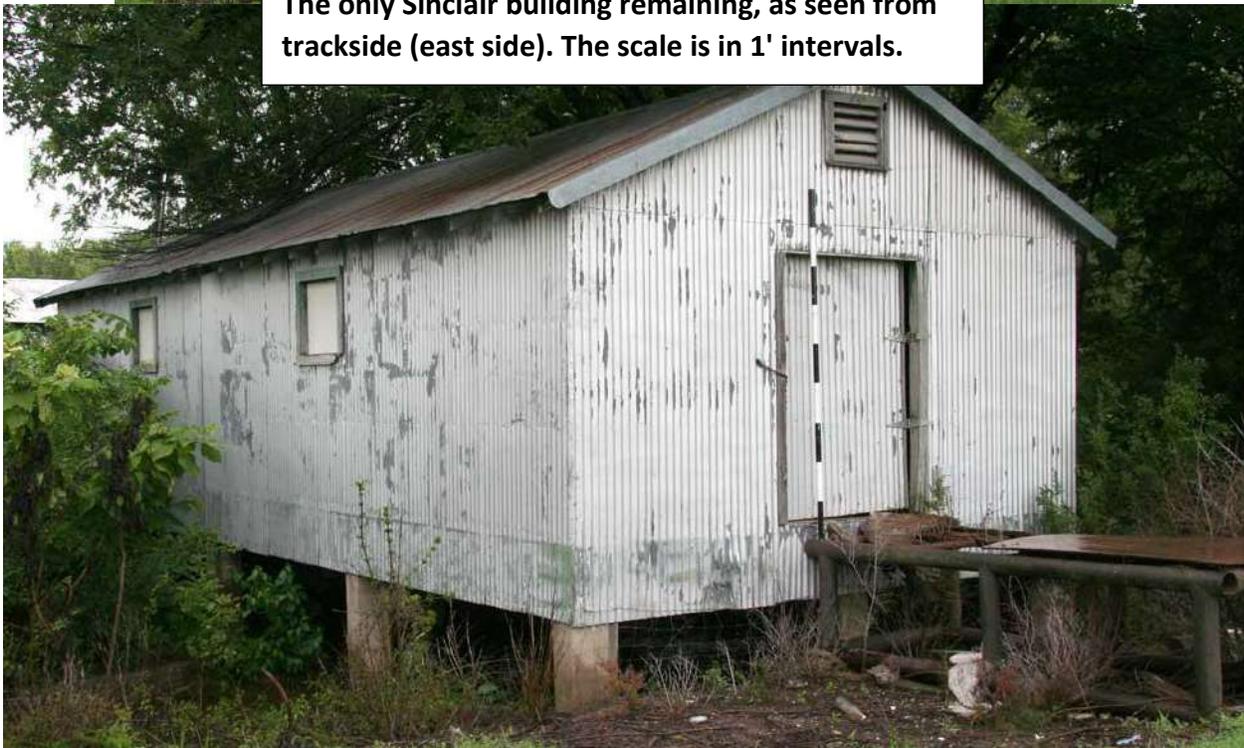


James Burke Photo, 1950.

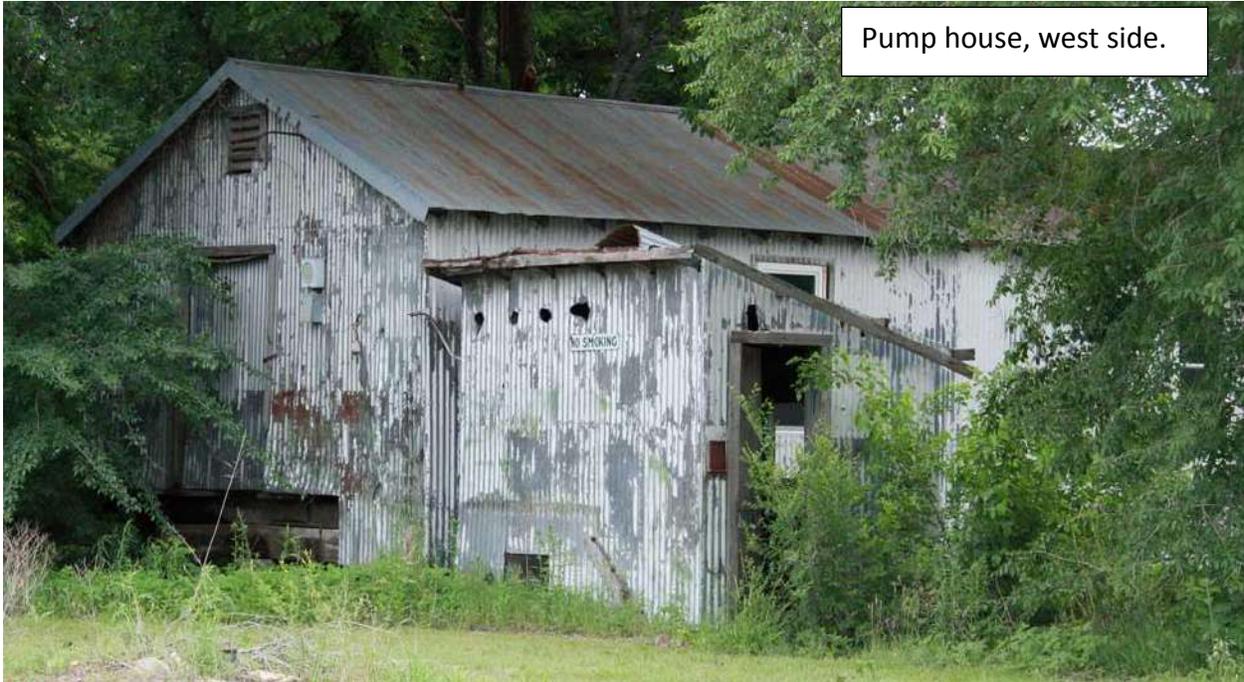
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The only Sinclair building remaining, as seen from trackside (east side). The scale is in 1' intervals.



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Pump house, west side.



Pump house, east side.

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A second distributor was north of the elevator on 7th Street just west of the tracks. Whether this dealer used rail delivery and its name is unclear at this writing. That dealer can be seen in the background of this 1946 Burke photo, taken from the top of a tender taking on water at the tank. In 2001 the tanks are gone but the supports and warehouse remain. Roscoe Morton, shown in the photo, reported that crude was also loaded at Eureka, though he does not remember the details of the location.



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Stock Pens

Eureka's Santa Fe stock pens had a 27-car capacity, 9 pens, hydrant, shed, and a 10-ton scale. They were gone by 1972 when Riley was on the line, but he reports a concrete dock stood at the location and occasionally they would spot a flat there for unloading shipments such as lumber.

Their location can be seen in this 1991 aerial image from TerraServer.



See *Santa Fe System Standards, Vol. 1*, by Kachina Press for ATSF Standard stock pen plans.

A final note for modelers, Burke reports that the ATSF track cut diagonally across lawns that were tended to the ends of the ties. Modelers will not want to overdo the ballast in Eureka.

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Howard Branch: Eureka, KS -Missouri Pacific

Eureka had another railroad, the Missouri Pacific. In its early days it was known as the Fort Scott and Wichita.

It had an interchange track to the ATSF, a stock pen, a large grain elevator, a depot, and three bulk oil dealers, and a wooden water tower by the depot. This line was much busier than the ATSF in Eureka and saw larger equipment.



TerraServer Image, 1991.

In 1947, there were two passenger trains a day on the MoPac, about 5:00 a.m. and 8:30 p.m. An additional 6 freights usually passed through town: 2 through freights, 2 extras, and one local each way.

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Depot



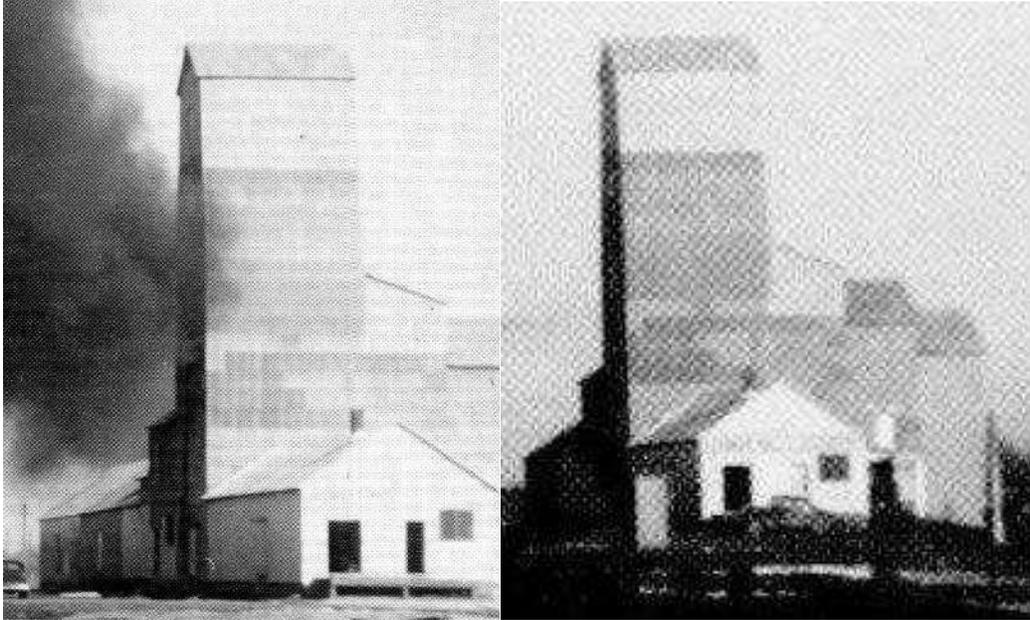
This 1949 Burke photo shows the brick MoPac station. Behind and to the right is the largest grain elevator in town and in the distance just to the left of the depot roof and under the platform light can be seen a bulk oil dealer. The *Empire That Missouri Pacific Serves* reports that "Eureka now is an important shipping point for the products of the surrounding area - oil, grain and livestock." The depot was demolished in March 1984.

Burke reported that the MoPac stock track was 60-pound rail.

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Elevator

The largest grain elevator was the Eureka Mill and Elevator which became the Ranch Aid Elevator in 1970. Teichgraber operated it for a while and then in 1995 gifted to Kansas State. Marlin Allen bought it from them but went bankrupt. Bryan Marshall purchased the facilities from the court in 2001 to store his grain.



This mill could handle covered hoppers, and the Santa Fe often left cars from Emporia on the interchange for the MoPac to move to this elevator.

A seed house was added in 1954.

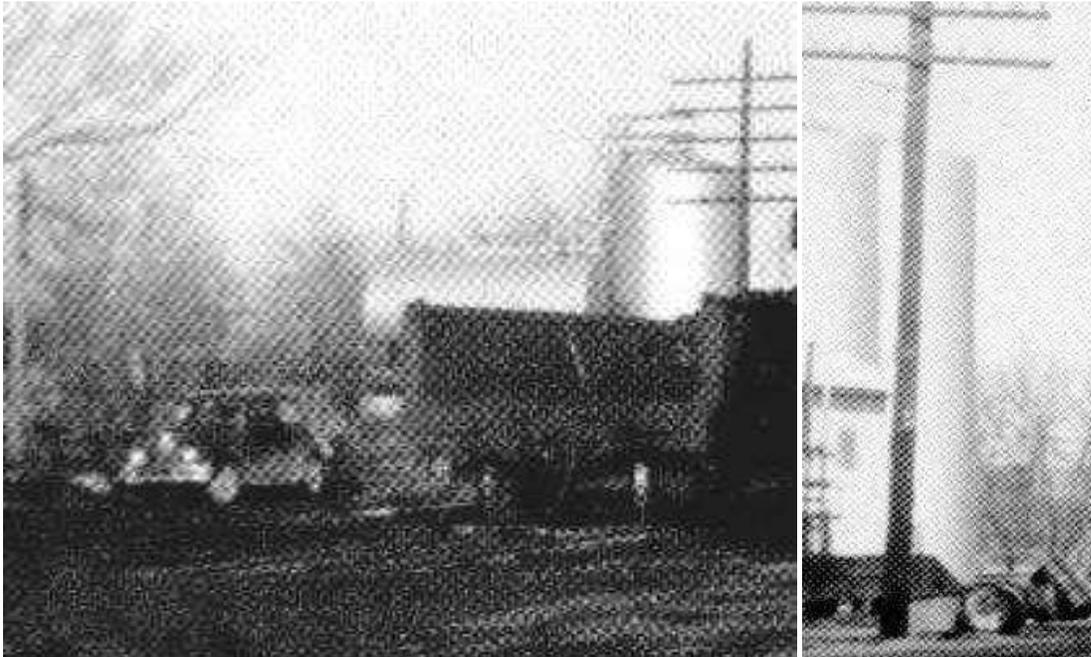
Photos by James Burke

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Oil Distributors

Three bulk oil dealers were served by the MoPac. Just east of the Eureka Elevator was the Skelly dealer, operated as the Parks Race Oil Company.

North of the depot was a second, shown in these Burke photos.



Yet a third was the Phillips dealer, C. R. McKay Oil Co, which had their own spur on the west side of town.



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Stock Pens

The MoPac stock pens were just north of the ATSF interchange.

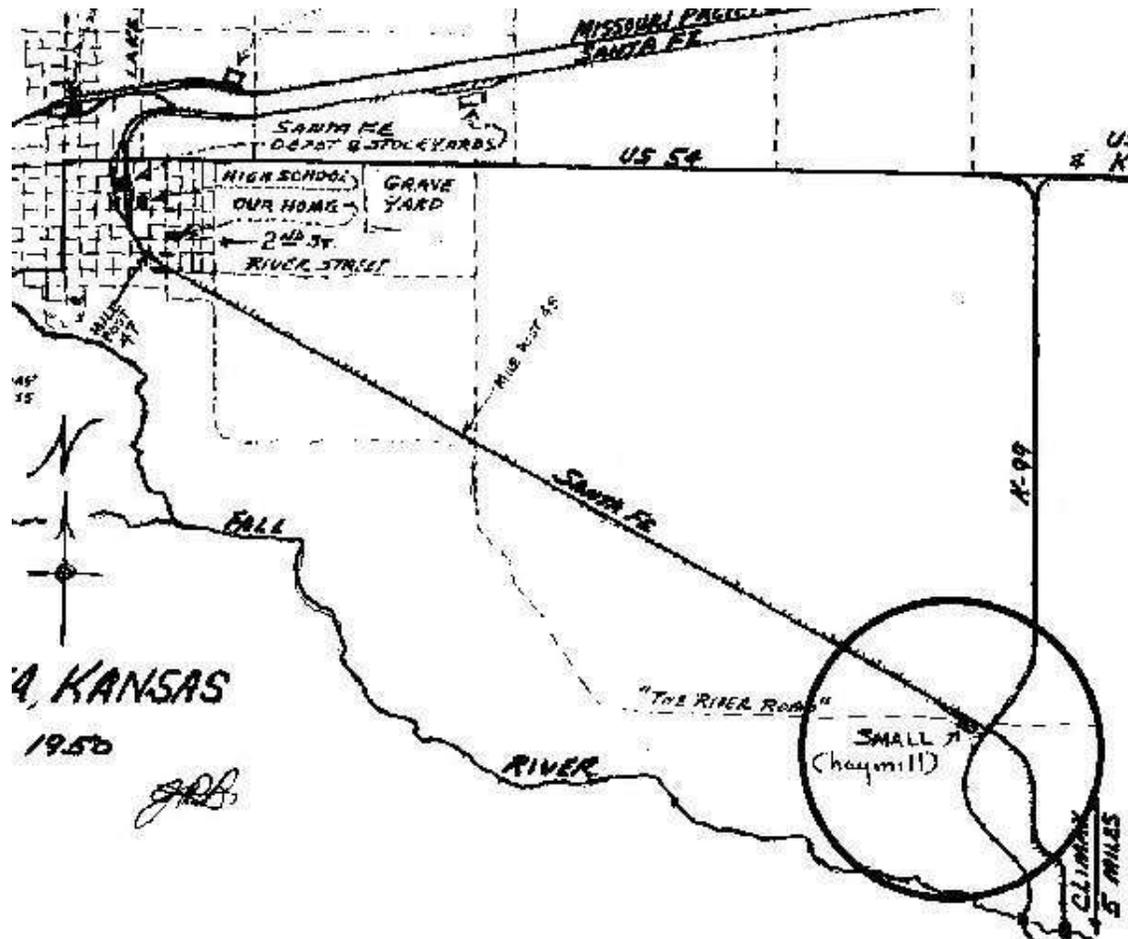
Interchange Traffic

James Burke reports that in the 50s, interchange traffic was very light - one or two cars a week or less, usually empties.

Thanks to the Greenwood County Historical Society, 120 West 4th Street, Eureka, KS 67045-1445, (316) 583-6682, for their assistance. Museum Hours are 9am - 4pm, Mon-Fri,
gwhistory@correct-connect.com

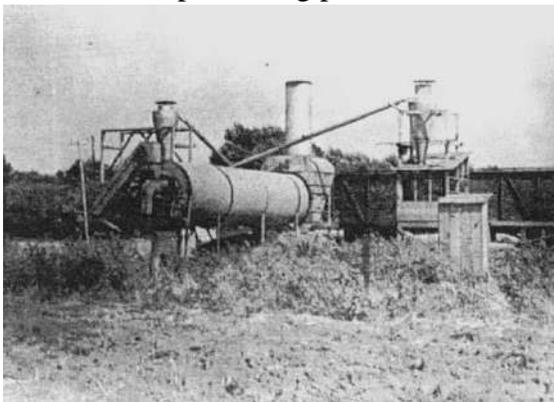
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Howard Branch: Small



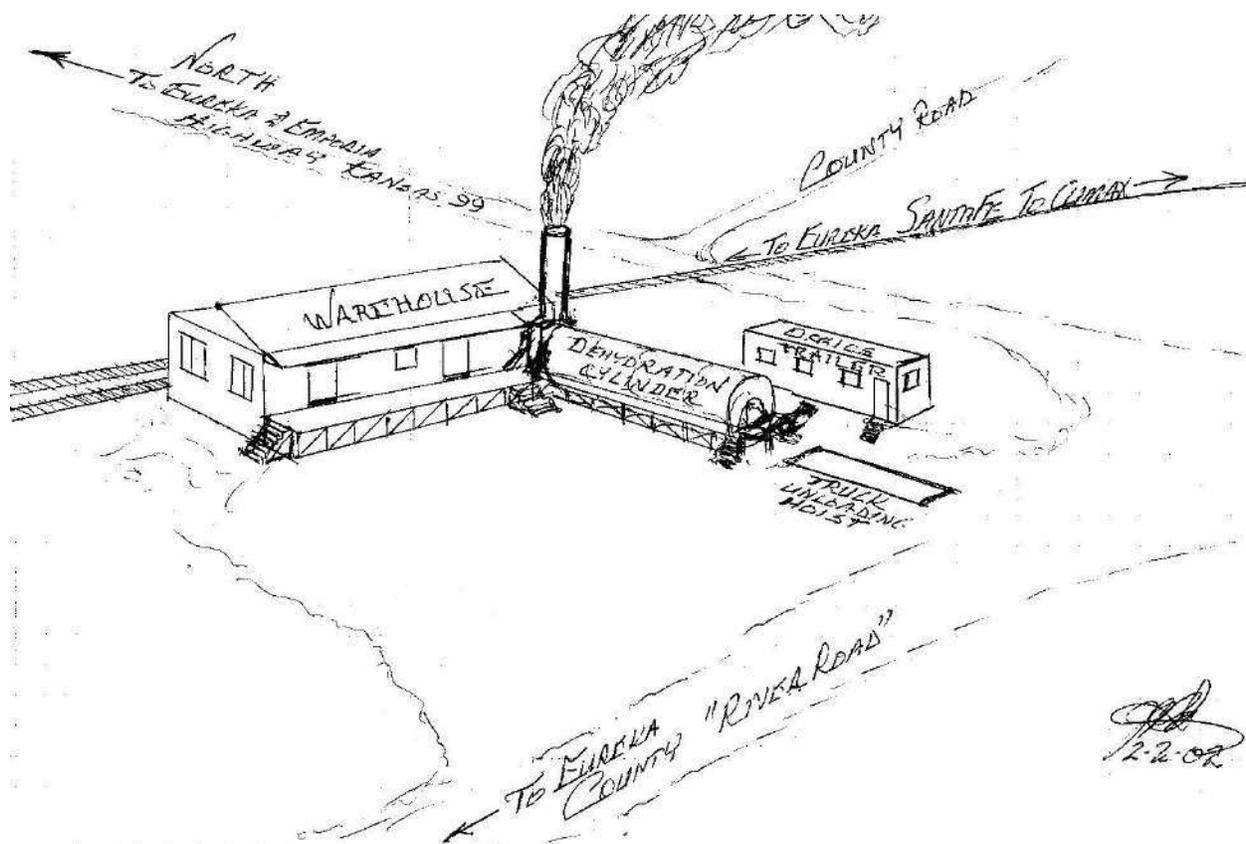
Small as a community did not exist. However, the Alfalfa Mill was owned by W. J. Small who had a number of these plants around Kansas and Nebraska. The railroad adopted Small as the location name.

In the early days, the mill consisted of a warehouse, office trailer, and a dehydration cylinder. In the late 50s a pelletizing process was installed which included some rather tall storage silos. The plant operated 24 hours a day. The field cutters blew the green alfalfa into trucks which were lifted bodily by the hoist at the plant and dumped into the fired rotating cylinder. The dehydrated meal at the other end of the cylinder was manually sacked and stacked in the warehouse or in boxcars on the spur or trucks at the dock.



An alfalfa dehydrator which was installed at Elmdale, KS, in 1945 is pictured from the Kansas State Library.

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James Burke drawing

James Burke reports, "A significant business on the branch in the 40s and 50s was the produce of two alfalfa mills - alfalfa meal - which was bagged and shipped in boxcars. One mill was at Small and the other at Howard. Small had a spur with the switch on the north end. The loads went north, and empties came from the north. 96 would set the empties out on Climax's house track and 95 would take them back to Small as needed."

Rod Riley writes, "Small had the Alfalfa Mill - a spur track with switch on the Emporia end. If we had to spot them an empty going south, we would drop it. If we had more than one, we'd shove it from Eureka. I also remember picking up 3 loads going south a couple of times and shoving them to Climax to get around them (5 miles). We usually worked this going North." (Circa 1970)

Railmodel Journal, Feb. 1999, had an article on modeling a modern alfalfa mill.

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Remnants of an alfalfa operation remain today, but the tracks and dehydrator are long gone.



See the detailed account of Climax for more information on rail movements into Small.