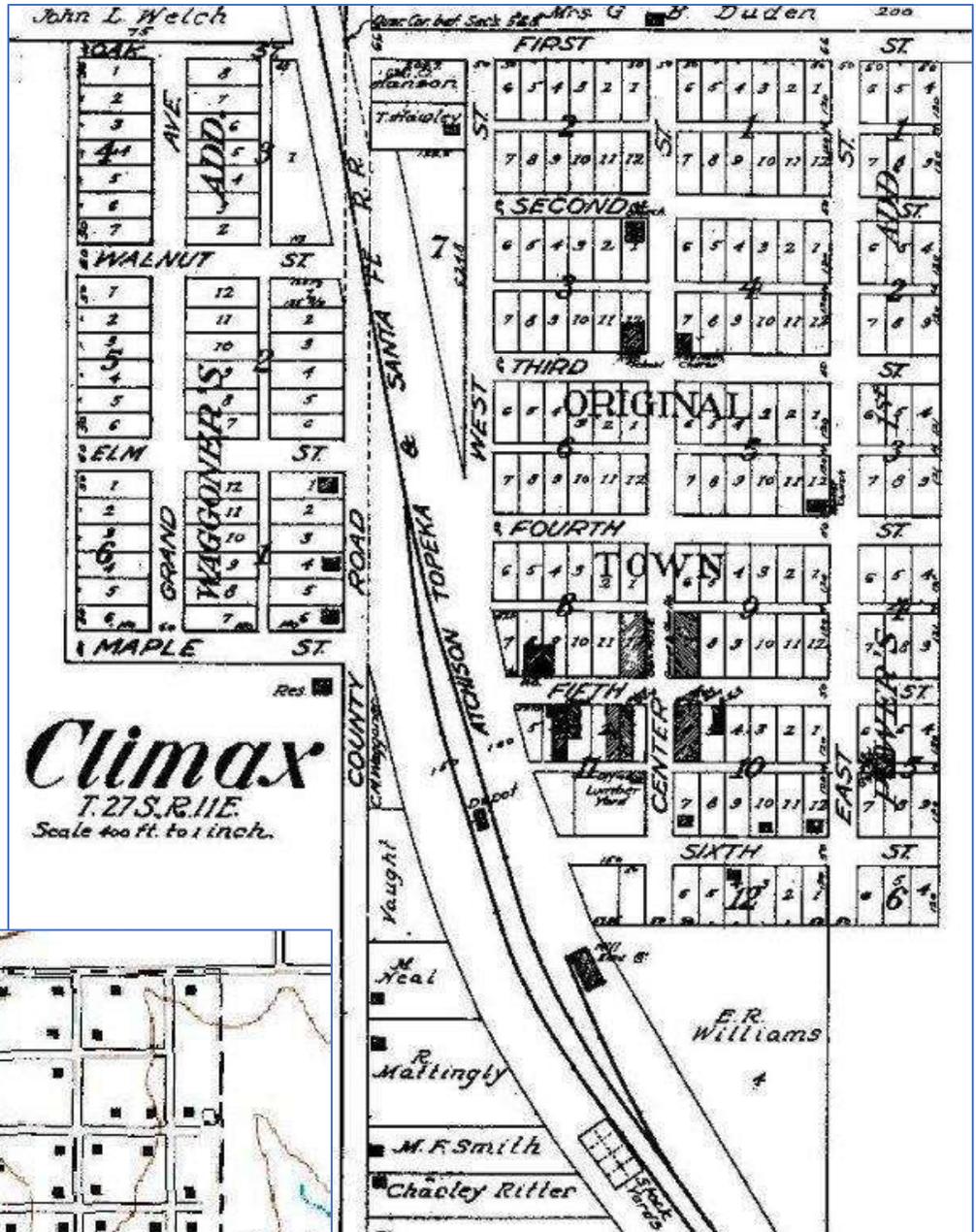


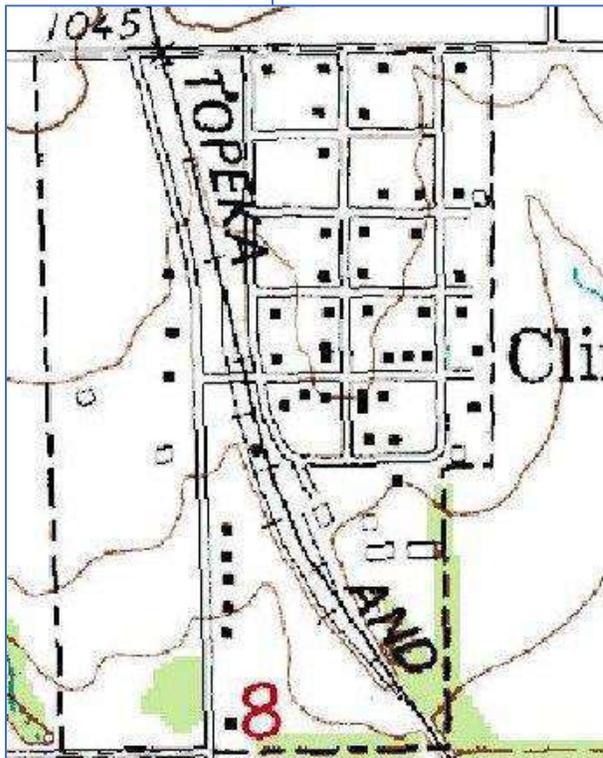
The Howard Kansas Branch
By Steve Sandifer

Howard Branch:
Climax

Climax, 1903 and 1990.



Climax
T. 27 S., R. 11 E.
Scale 400 ft. to 1 inch.



The Howard Kansas Branch

By Steve Sandifer

Climax had the House track and the elevator Spur switch on South End. Climax was the childhood home of James Burke, so many photos appear in his books.

Climax had two trains a day: 95 and 96. 96 left Emporia and terminated in Moline. 95 had a busier schedule, starting at Moline and moving north to Madison Jct. where it then traveled to Virgil before returning to Madison and terminating in Emporia. They met somewhere along the branch, often at Climax or Eureka. After December 1948, the service became a turn with one engine making the round trip.

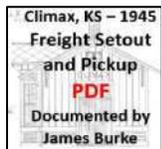
In 1945, 12-year-old Jimmy Burke lived in Climax. Climax was a thriving community of 100 people (depending on where you stopped counting) and boasted two grocery (general) stores, a hardware store, blacksmith's shop, two filling stations, a creamery, barber shop (25¢), post office, grade school and high school, and three churches.

The railroad track was very simple: mainline, house track which served the stockyard, and a spur to the grain elevator. James Burke was the unofficial yardmaster and he kept an account of every car that was spotted in Climax during the first 10 months of 1945. **That record is attached.** This invaluable account shows the high level of rail activity in small towns in 1945.

There were 236 cars spotted in Climax in those 10 months. 246 trains, or 45% of the trains that went through, had some work to do in Climax. 75% of the traffic came out of Emporia. Only 44% returned north, and most of this (30% of all cars) were headed to Small.

At the right is a small snapshot showing set outs and pick ups at Climax. The full chart is available as a separate file in both PDF and MS Excel formats.

Click on the icons below to view these files.



| Trk | S/O date | RR | Number | Type | Class | S/O engine | P/U engine | P/U date | Notes |
|------|----------|------|--------|----------------|-------|------------|------------|----------|-------|
| EI | 4-Jan | C&NW | 47796 | Box (corn) | | 1025 S | 1825 S | 5-Jan | 8 |
| EI * | 10-Jan | ATSF | 123251 | Box (corn) | BX-10 | 1825 N | 1025 S | 12-Jan | 8 |
| Hse | 12-Jan | B&O | 151189 | Gondola (coal) | | 1018 N | 1018 S | 15-Jan | 1 |
| EI | 18-Jan | B&O | 272157 | Box (corn) | | 1025 S | 1018 S | 19-Jan | 8 |

Most came from the north on 96, and elevator traffic was easily spotted as a trailing move. Cars coming in on 95 from Moline were either 1) placed on the house track and using a run around move spotted at the elevator, 2) run into the south end of the house track using a flying switch (the house track was longer than the elevator track, making this move safer), or 3) left on the house track for 96 to spot later. 96 usually had more time to work the line and more capacity. By the time 95 got out of Moline they were late and loaded. The engines and crew used for 95

The Howard Kansas Branch

By Steve Sandifer

frequently had to work Crusher before they could leave for Emporia. Burke remembers the house track as 90# rail, while the elevator had 60# rail.

All loads leaving the elevator went south on 96 to Moline. From there they could go east to Chanute and Kansas City, west or south through Arkansas City and Wellington, or return north to Emporia on 95.

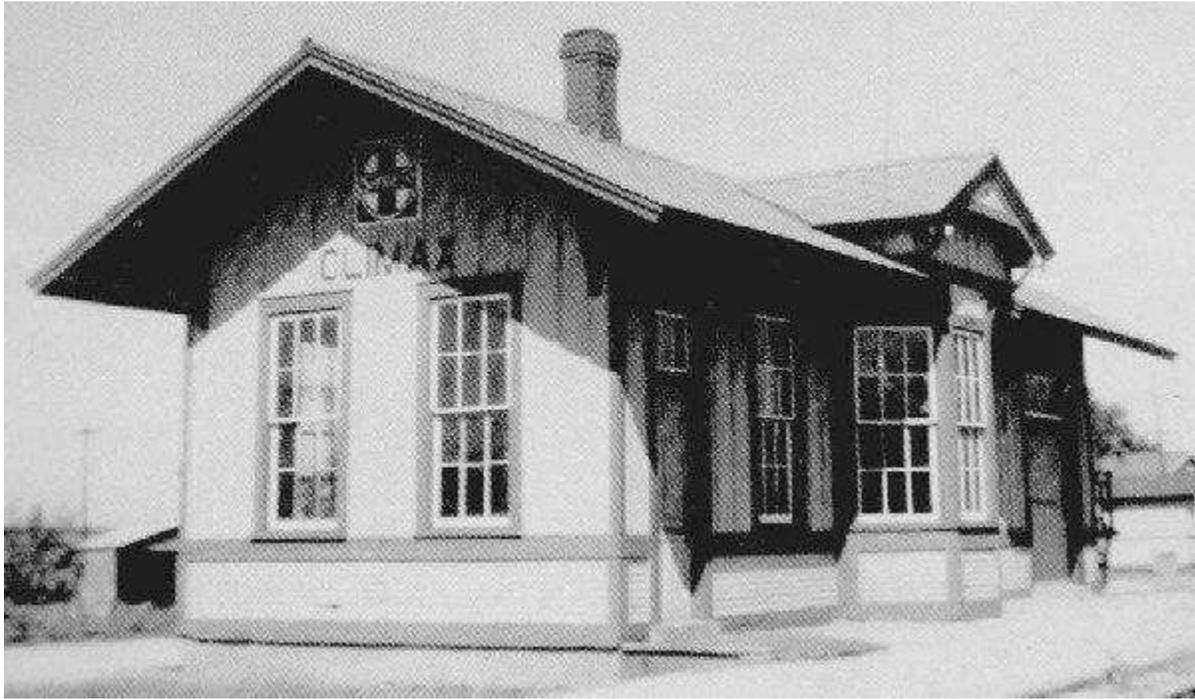
Of the 236 cars, 112 or 47% were ATSF cars. The balance came from 40 different lines. The C&O, MILW, B&O, and PRR were the most common in order, providing 10, 9, or 8 cars each. Western lines were sparsely represented.

Auto box and regular boxcars made up 147 of the cars, or 62%. Gondolas were next with 33 cars, 30 of which were ATSF. Coal was delivered in 4 of the off-line gondolas. Stock cars made up 30 of the deliveries, 29 of which were ATSF. 6 ATSF reefers and 18 cars in MOW service make up the balance.

"Other than cattle and coal, Climax didn't receive much. Miscellaneous merchandise came by Santa Fe Trailways truck that came down from Emporia a couple of times a week. Towns like Eureka that had farm implement stores off-loaded carloads of farm machinery occasionally, but Climax had no such stores or off-loading dock. The meat reefer unloaded LCL meat one day each week and returned to Emporia the next day. But times had changed. When my Dad arrived in Climax in 1903, the family unloaded a carload of household goods at the old pre-1912 Climax Depot." Burke.

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By Steve Sandifer

Depot



James Burke photo, looking northwesterly. Circa 1946.

The climax depot was an ATSF Branchline Standard #2. These can be found in *Santa Fe System Standards, Vol. 2*. Plans and photos can also be found in Frank Ellington's, *Santa Fe Depots of the Plains*. The depot was purchased and has been moved near Cedar Point, KS, but has not been restored as of 2012. It was to be part of a theme park which was never developed.

The stock pens were on the house track and had 7 car capacity, 4 pens and a pump.

Additional depot photos appear below.



Overview, looking south, from Iron Horse and I, by James Burke. Circa 1946

**The Howard Kansas Branch
By Steve Sandifer**

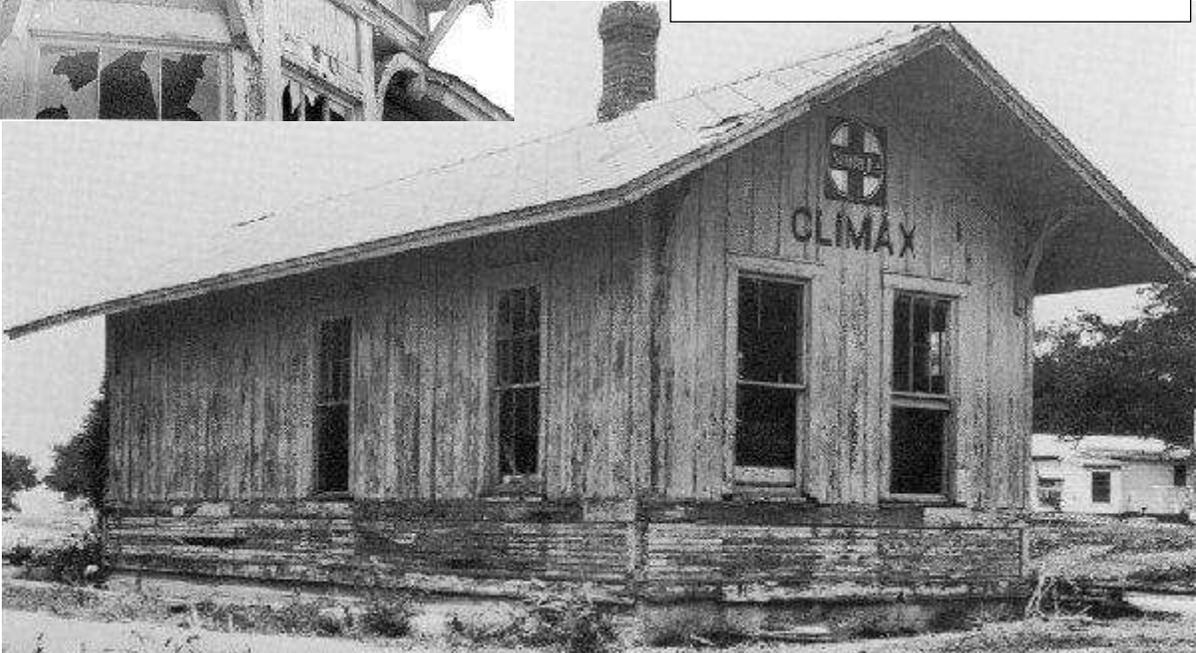


Photo by Frank Ellington, July 14, 1973. Looking southwesterly. From *Santa Fe Depots of the Plains*.



Photo by Frank Ellington, July 14, 1973. From *Santa Fe Depots of the Plains*.

Photo by Frank Ellington, July 14, 1973. Looking north easterly. From *Santa Fe Depots of the Plains*.



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#1075 with train 95, summer of 1946, looking north. James Burke Photo

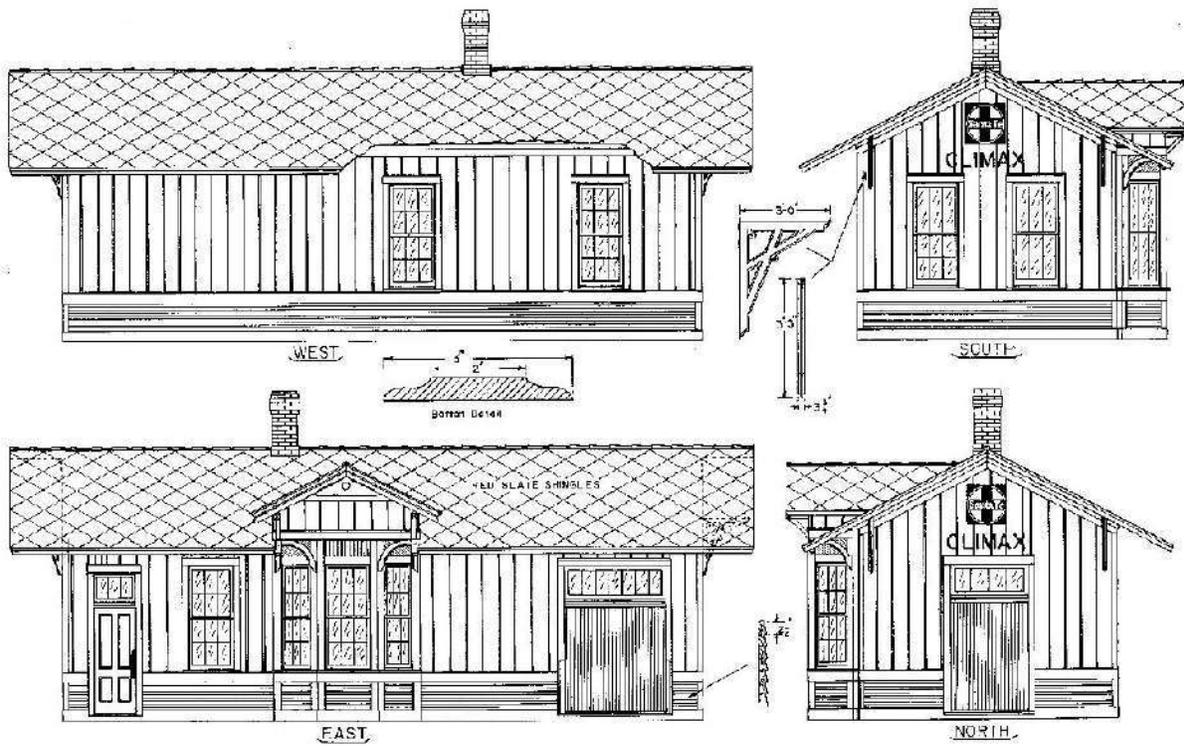


Looking north from atop a boxcar, probably for the elevator. Gondolas of limestone are on the main track. James Burke photo.

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Northwest Corner, James Burke photo.



Elevations by Frank Ellington. From *Santa Fe Depots of the Plains*.

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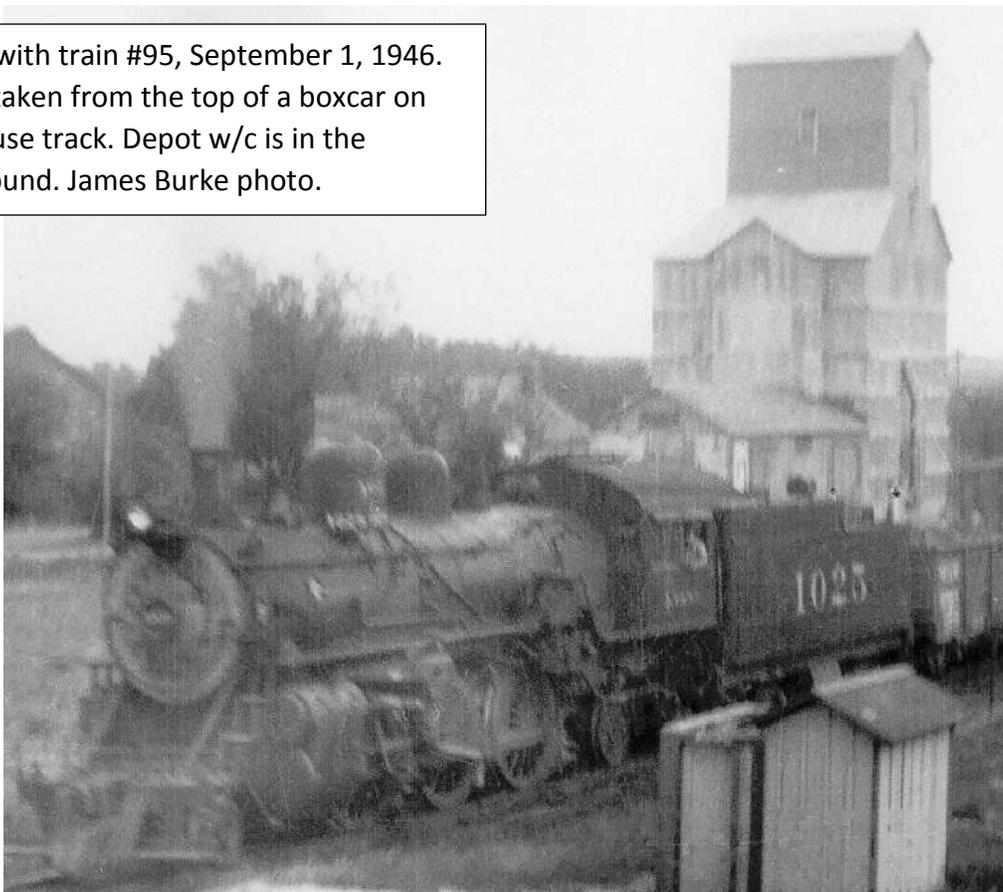
Elevator



The Climax grain elevator was a landmark; only about 20' remains due to a destructive fire in October 2001. It was originally the Arnold and Colyer Grain Company. It was purchased by Sowder in the 1950s, the same folks who owned the elevator on the Santa Fe tracks in Eureka. It could accept covered hoppers. Most loads moved on the 96 to Moline.

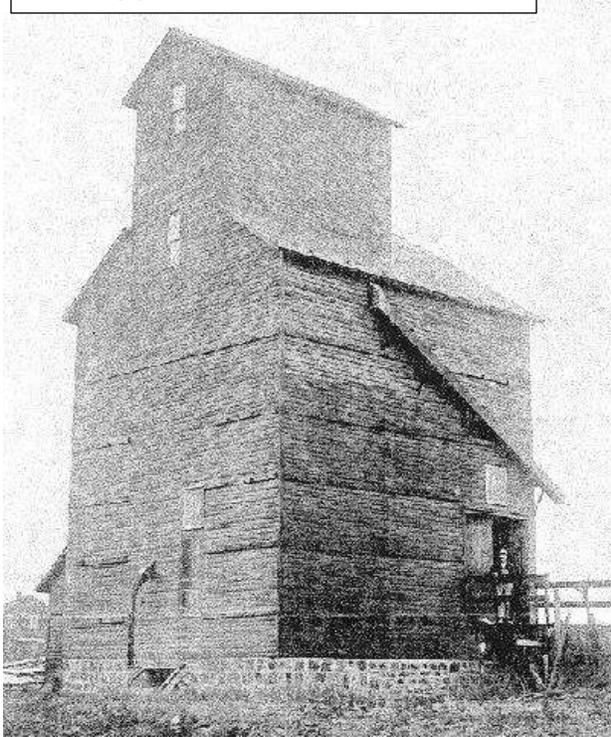
This elevator was 28' wide and stood 50' high. In its later days, the exterior was covered with vertical corrugated sheet metal in 2' wide panels. The horizontal stay bolt ridges were 5 feet apart.

#1025 with train #95, September 1, 1946.
Photo taken from the top of a boxcar on
the house track. Depot w/c is in the
foreground. James Burke photo.



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Photo provided by the Greenwood Co. Historical Society. Early 20th century photo.



James Burke Photo from the
Iron Horse and I, circa 1946.

The elevator was 25' wide at the track and 26' deep. The sheathing was corrugated metal with 1.25" corrugation spacing and 26" wide panels. The bands around it were 4'10" apart. The bands were 6" high and 4" deep, sheathed with sheet metal, and the bolts which go through the structure were spaced 3' apart. The doorway at the hopper was 10' wide and 11' high. The elevator burned down in October 2001.

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February 1976 photo by James Burke

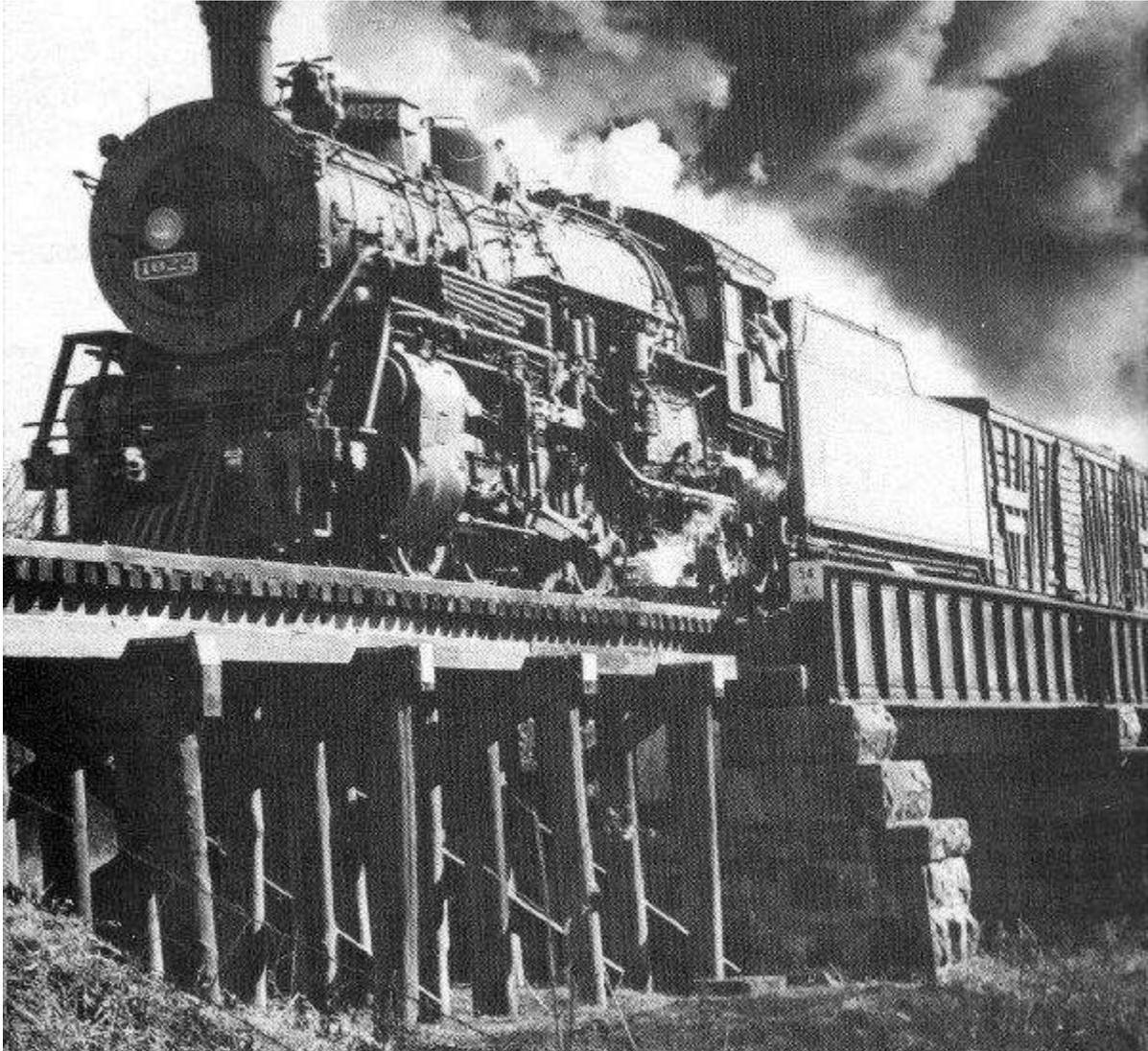
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February 1976 photo by James Burke

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Just north of Climax was one of the scenic spots as the track crossed the Honey Creek Bridge.



James Burke Photo

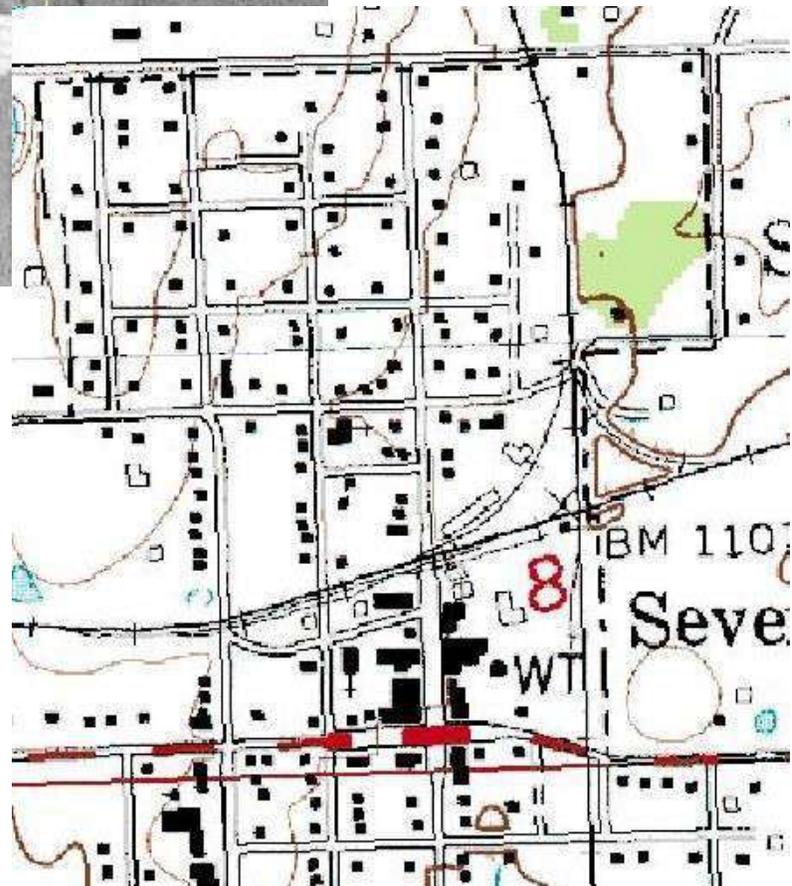
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Howard Branch: Severy

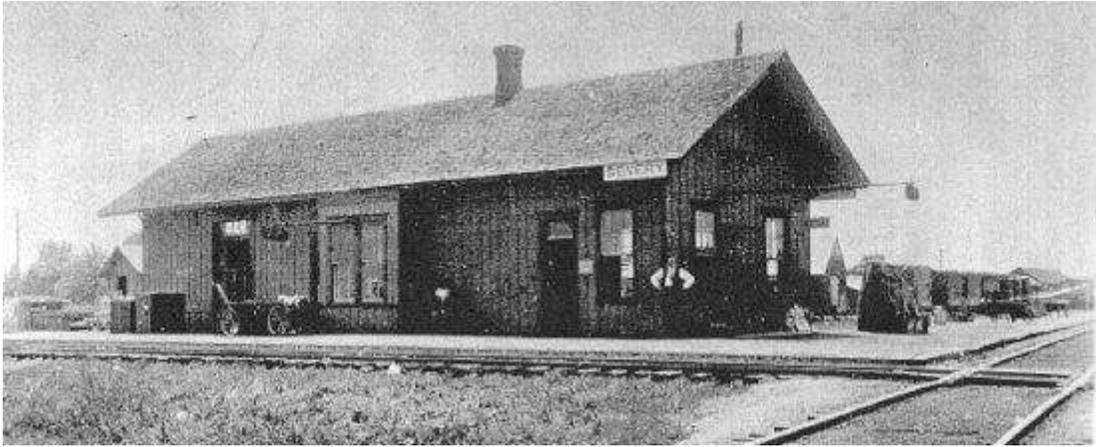


Severy was the location of a crossing of the Frisco with the Santa Fe. The Frisco line ran from Wichita to Monnett. The population in 2000 was 334.

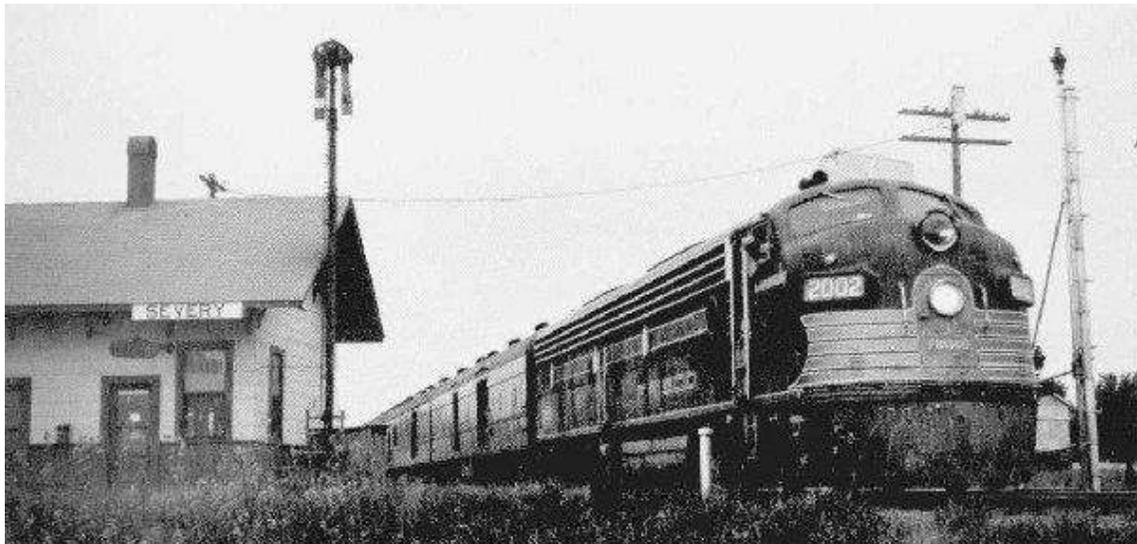
"Severy had a spur switch which opened on the North end South of Frisco Gate and Depot. The Frisco connection was North of the Gate. We did set out three or four cars of rock or lime at a time for several trips a few times. Also seemed like a car or two of Walnut logs got loaded here. The Frisco interchange track was rarely used." Rod Riley, concerning the early 1970s.



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Kansas Historical Society collection, FK2.G7/5.74



1951 photo by James Burke.

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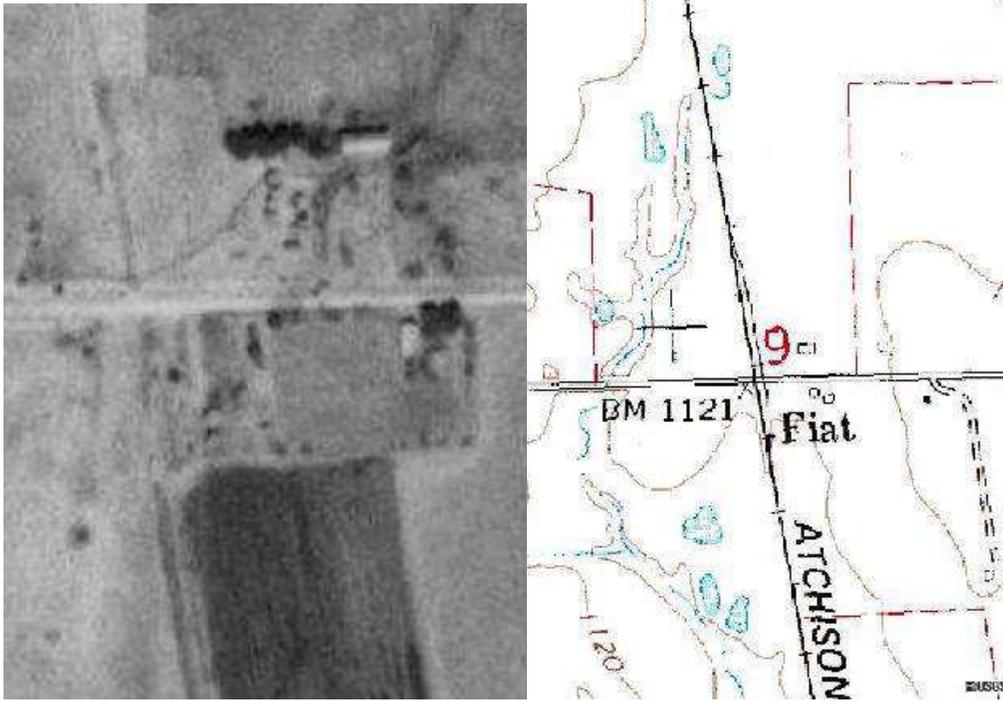
From the Kansas State Historical Society, FK2.G7/S74

The ATSF depot was located at the southwest quadrant of the diamond. It still stands but is unoccupied today and, of course, both railroads are gone. It was the property of the Frisco, but both railroads used it. Note the gate which normally was closed over the ATSF. South of the ATSF Depot was a section house and a stock track and yard.

The Severy stock pens had a 7-car capacity, 4 pens, pump, and a 5-ton scale.

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Howard Branch: Fiat



TerraServer image.

"Fiat was a stock track. Stock yards were gone in my day (1972) but we stored "860's" here. It was an interesting place, a farmer in an open shed next to the railroad and had a couple of Big Rumley Oil Pull tractors in the shed." Rod Riley

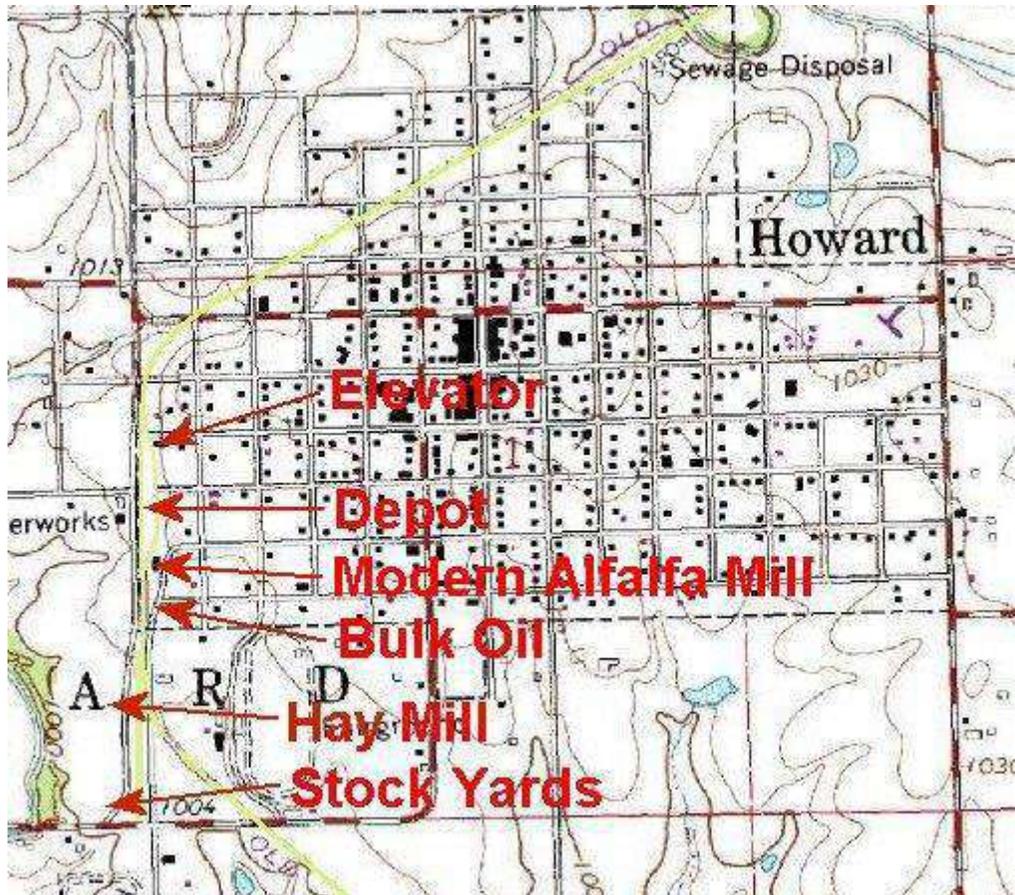
In its final years, empty tracks along the branch were used to store "860" box cars, cars which needed some attention in Topeka but for which there was no room in Topeka yards. These cars were accumulated along the branch with an occasional call for the train crew to pull one out and take it to Emporia for forwarding to Topeka for repairs.

The stockyard was the smallest on the branch: 3 car capacity, 1 pen. Once the cattle business left the rails, Fiat ceased to exist. There was no depot.

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Howard Branch: Howard

Updated 11-10-03



Looking north, elevator seen north of the depot.

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Looking southeast, Rod Riley photos, circa 1973.

Howard had a house track serving an elevator, the depot, a dock, in later years an alfalfa mill, and a bulk oil dealer. The main was east of the depot. A spur southeast of the depot entered from the north served the original hay mill and a stockyard. Burke believes that this was on the original right-of-way for the 3'-gauge line built in 1879. Occasional gondolas were loaded on the house track with logs. The docks served McClure Implement Co. with farm equipment from flats and boxcars and received hardware and feed store supplies. A tornado destroyed the old mill, but the elevator and modern alfalfa mill remain. The Howard stock pens had a 14-car capacity, 6 pens, hydrant, truck chute, and a 5-ton scale.

Howard had a population of 808 in 2000.

Two old ATSF cars, an Fe-K and Fe-25 are here.

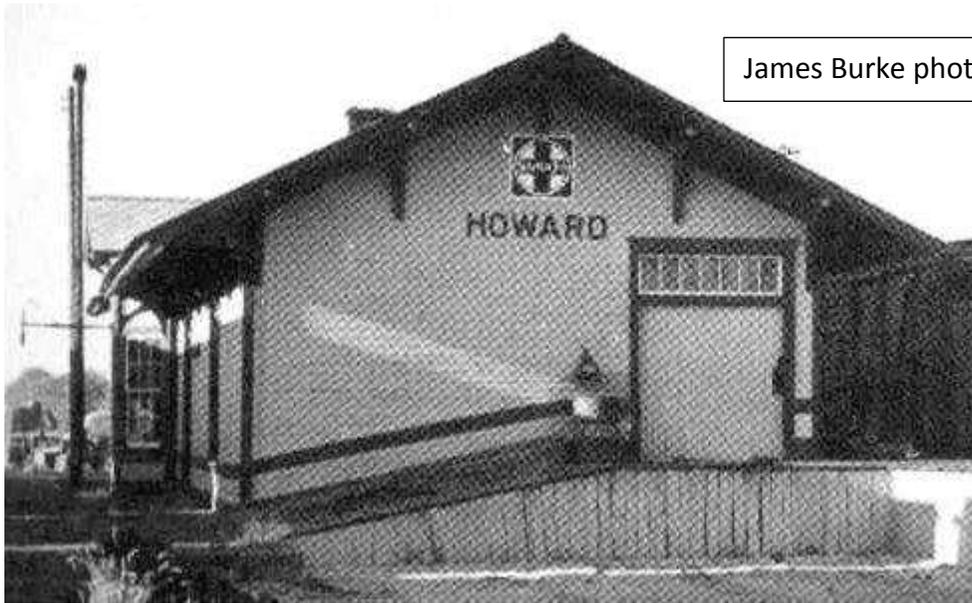
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Howard Branch: Howard: Depot

A company of the Kansas National Guard in front of the depot in 1893. From the Kansas Historical Society collection,



James Burke photo, 1949.



Kansas Historical Society collection, FK2.E2/H.74

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Howard Branch: Howard: Elevator



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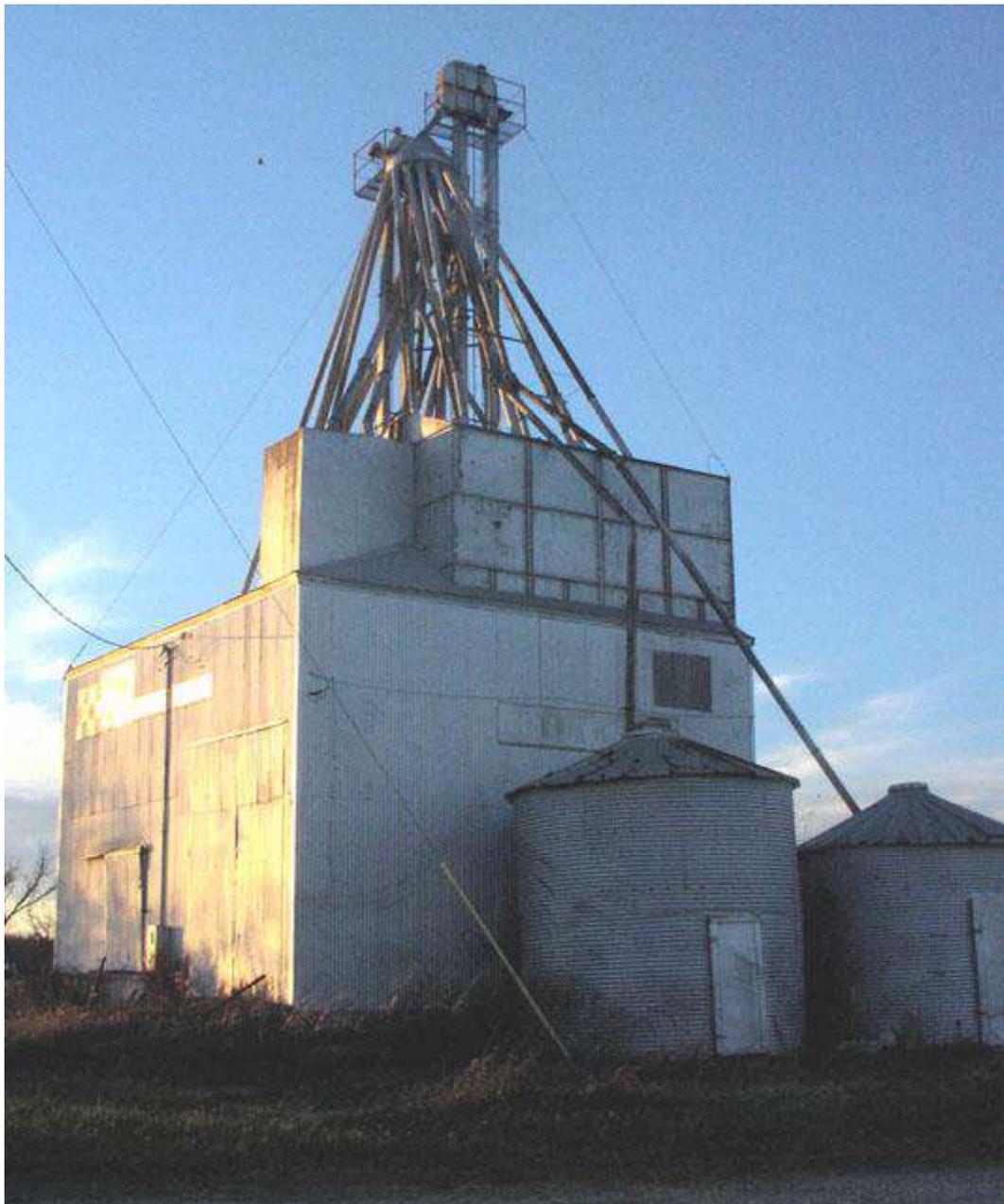


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Howard Branch: Howard: Alfalfa Mill



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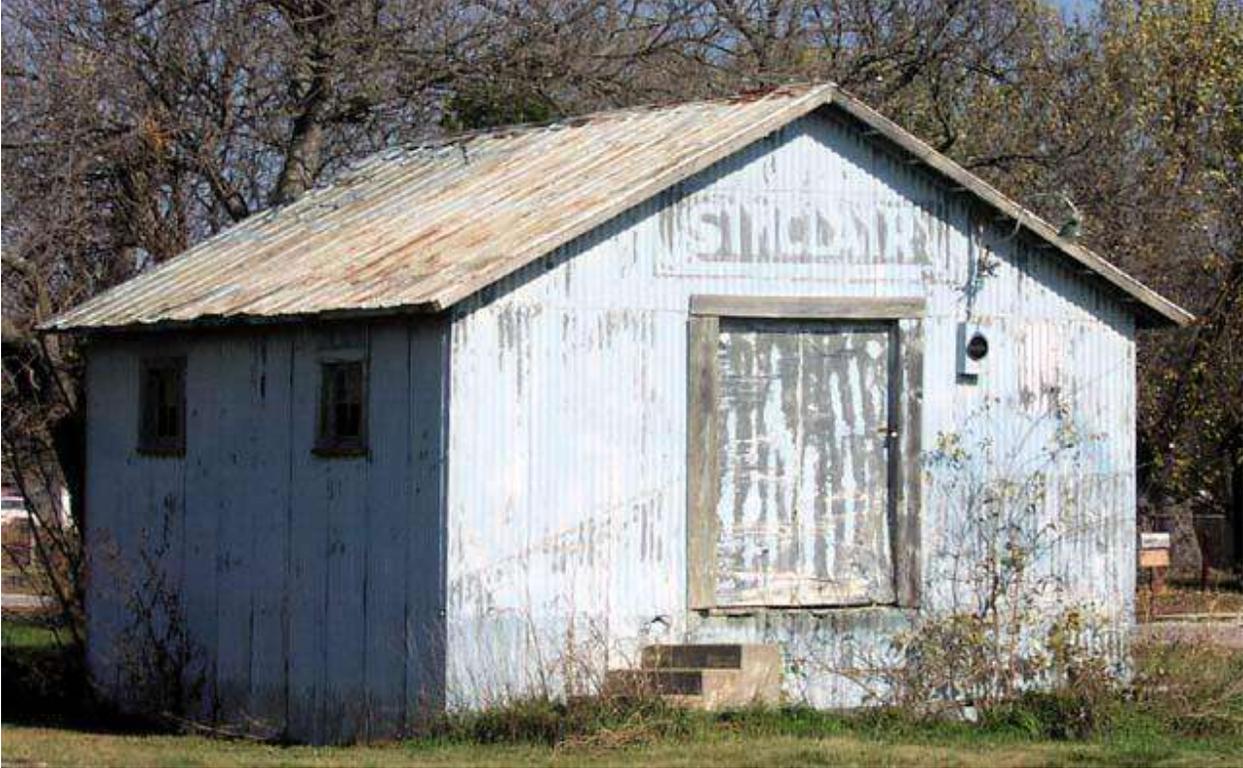
Scale House

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Howard Branch: Howard: Bulk Oil



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Howard Branch: Howard: Box Cars

Howard Kansas is the home of two ATSF box cars. To find them, just go to the old right-of-way where they served as storage buildings for formerly rail served industries.

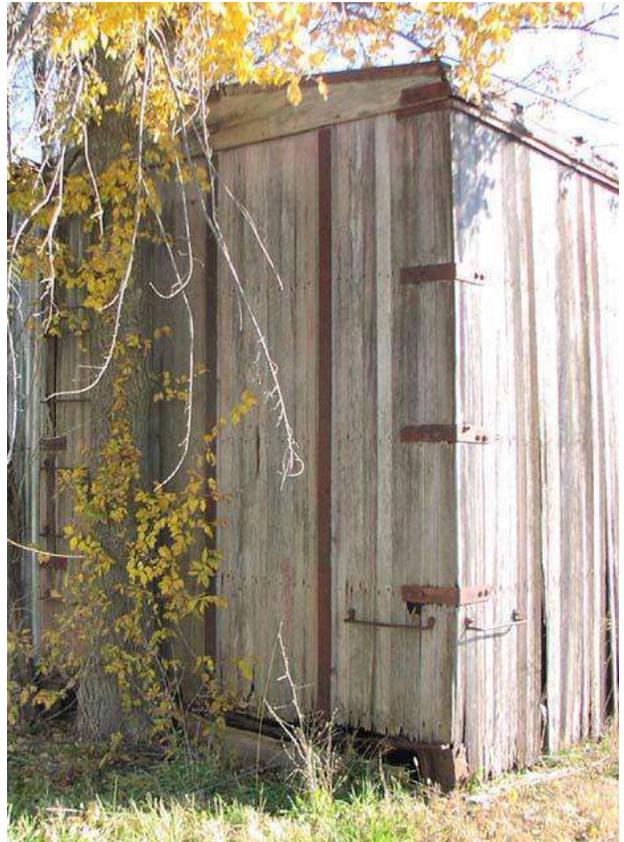


Fe-25 Auto box # 10903



Fe-K #8868 built in 1909. Also known as the AC&F "Battleships."

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