

IOWA RAILROAD HISTORY

Presentation for the Cedar Rapids Sunrise Rotary Club
Cedar Rapids, Iowa – July 13, 2006
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We'll start our history in reverse order to see what the situation is now, a little of the railroad "climate" so to speak, and then we'll show how the state of railroads in the state got to where it is today.

To use a phrase from a few years ago; "today's Oldsmobile is not your father's Oldsmobile," and today's railroads are not your father's railroads. Accordingly they are both now gone – the Oldsmobile, entirely – and railroads are gone to in their familiar view to the public.

There is little left of the friendly depot agent that would look after your shipment of freshly hatched chickens on the afternoon local train from Clinton, or the five-person crew on the morning train to Eagle Grove getting off their caboose to hunt rabbits on that run.

So let's look at the railroads of today first.

QUIZ: No answers are necessary. The answers are provided below.

- How many railroads are there in Iowa today? (At one time there were *at least* 150!)
- How many are in Cedar Rapids today? (At one time there were seven or eight!)
- Can you name them?

Railroads are big business today; even mega corporations. That wasn't always so! Consequently, there are fewer and larger railroads, and that is the impetus for our quiz.

Railroads today are few and far between – both literally and factually. At one time there was nearly 10,000 miles of railroads in Iowa. Today that has fallen to about 4200!

Trains are usually larger in almost every respect. They are longer, heavier, faster, and carry a different variety of commodities as well as commodities as well as carrying them differently.

How did railroads of today get to where they are? The answer is shown on the following maps.

Answers to above quiz:

Iowa today has six BIG lines.

Union Pacific	1550 mi.
Burlington Northern – Santa Fe	750 mi.
Canadian Nation – Illinois Central	570 mi.
Norfolk Southern	60 mi.
Iowa Chicago & Eastern	625 mi.
Amtrak (not really a railroad)	340 mi.

Iowa today has two regional lines.

Iowa Interstate	325 mi.
Dakota and Iowa	40 mi.

Iowa today has several short lines.

Cedar Rapids & Iowa City (CrandiC)	55 mi.
Iowa Northern	135 mi.
Iowa Northwestern	30 mi.
Iowa Traction Co.	10 mi.

Appanoose County RR	35 mi.
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Iowa today has several terminal companies.

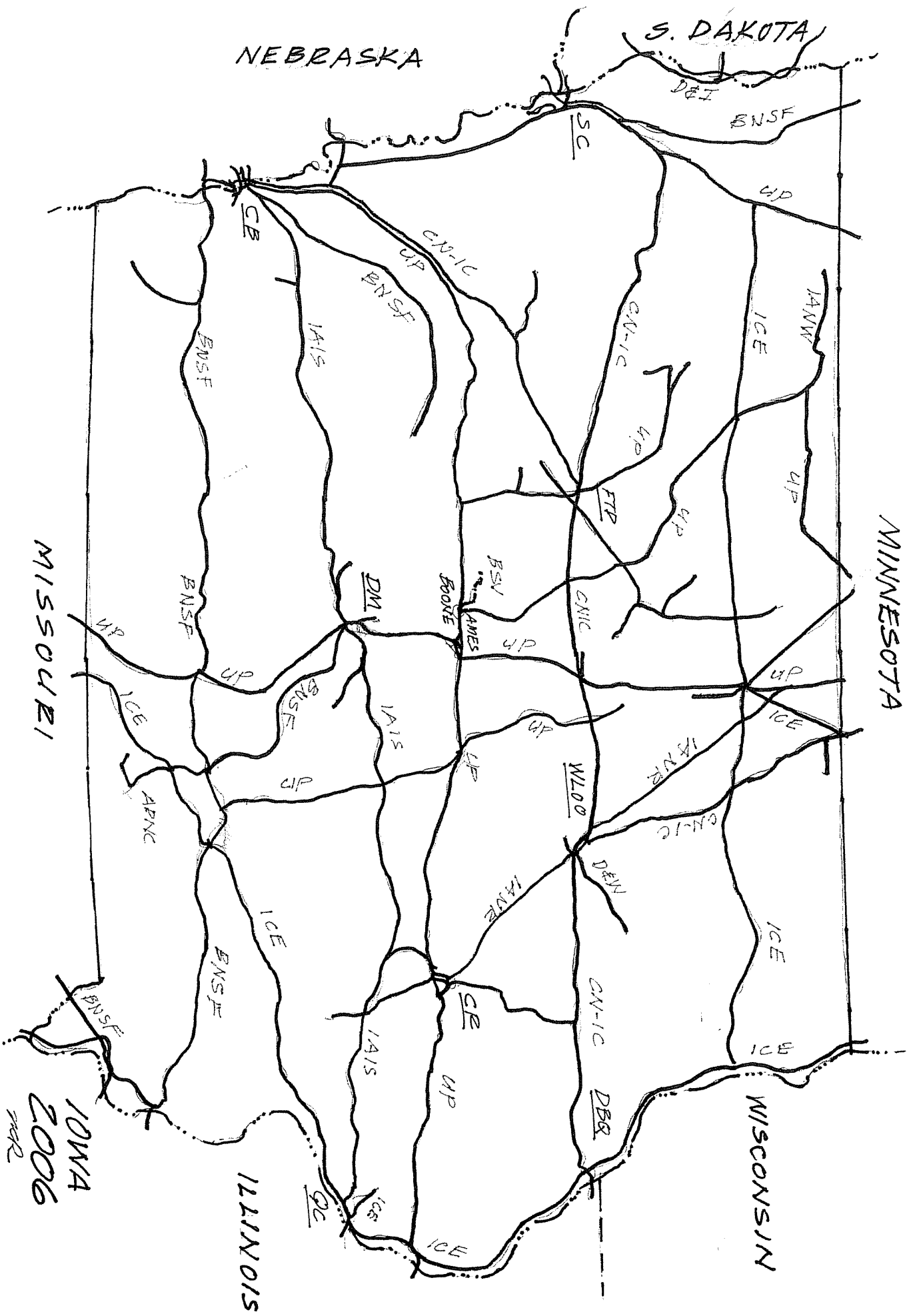
Burlington Junction	2 mi.
Keokuk Junction	5 mi.
Iowa Transfer	< 1 mi.
Ottumwa Terminal	4 mi.
Council Bluffs Ry.	4 mi.

Iowa has one private line-haul railroad:

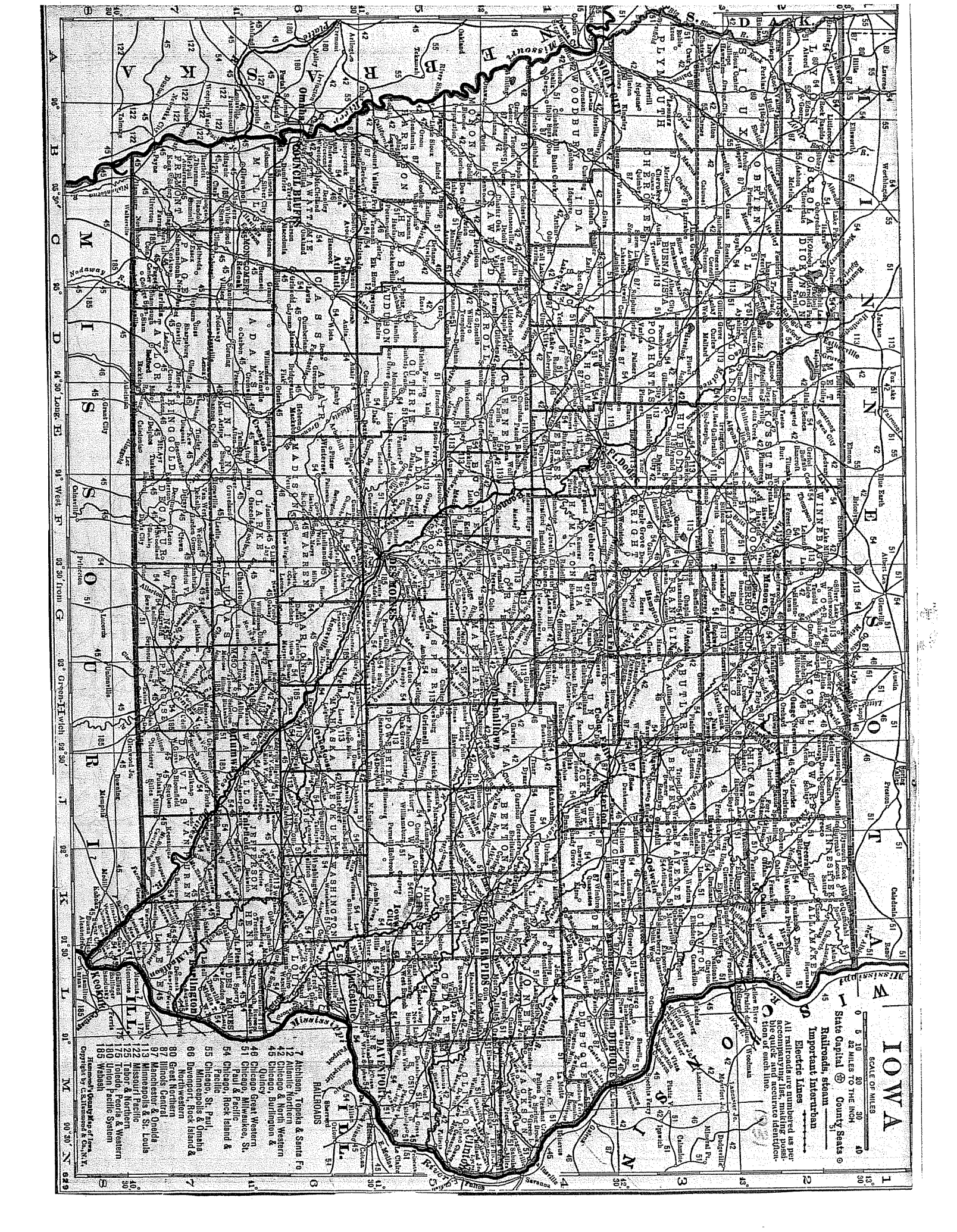
Cargill Co. (Eddyville-Avery)	4 mi.
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Cedar Rapids today has four railroads.

Union Pacific
CRANDIC; headquartered here.
CN-IC
Iowa Northern



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IOWA

SCALE OF MILES
0 5 10 20 30 40

State Capital @ Des Moines

Counties

Railroads steam

Electric Lines

Important Interurban

All railroads are numbered as per accompanying list, making possible quick and accurate identification of each line.

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- 2 Adair
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