

Memphis New Central Station and Track Elevation Work

By Assistant Engineer H. C. Brown

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On October 21, 1914, the new Central Station, formerly known as Calhoun Street Station, was dedicated and opened to passenger traffic. This station is used jointly by the Illinois Central, the Yazoo & Mississippi Valley, Rock Island Lines, and the Frisco Railroads, the last three mentioned roads being tenants, paying interest on the investment and their portion of the operating expense on a wheelage basis. The entire expense of the project, amounting to 1,500,000.00, was borne by the Illinois Central Railroad.

The Illinois Central has for a great many years maintained two passenger terminals at Memphis, one at the north end of the city on the river front, known as the Poplar Street Station, where the trains of the Y. & M. V. formerly terminated; the latter south of the business district at the corner of Calhoun and Main Streets, known as the Calhoun Street Station. The new station stands at this latter site, although much larger than the former, the main structure covering a space of 250 feet by 150 feet, rising to a height of eight stories.

Under the new arrangement trains of the Y. & M. V. will terminate at the new Central Station, and the Poplar Street Station will be used only as a local stop, all switching of cars being done at the former.

The building is of the Roman Doric type of architecture, the main motive consisting of a colonnade of Bedford stone three stories high, from the sidewalk to the first cornice, above which the office portion of the building, in brick walls with terra cotta trimmings, continues an additional five stories.

Above the second floor of the building is devoted to offices of the Illinois Central and Yazoo & Mississippi Valley roads, including those of the passenger and freight traffic departments, the general, division and terminal superintendents, the superintendent of

motive power and the claims department. One of the features of the building is the emergency hospital on the fourth floor. This hospital is equipped with all modern sanitary and medical appliances and emergency wards for both white and colored patients, which will be available for patrons of the roads entering the station who may become ill or in need of surgical attention. A surgeon and a graduate nurse will be on duty constantly throughout the day.

The main entrances to the station consist of five large doorways on Main Street, at the sidewalk level, and there are additional entrances on Calhoun Avenue leading directly to the waiting room for colored passengers and to a carriageway and cab stand. In addition to these, there are separate exits on both streets named for white and colored passengers, so that passengers leaving trains do not need to pass through the waiting rooms. The ticket office and the baggage checking counter are located on the ground floor directly opposite the main entrance. Immediately off the ticket lobby is the lunch and dining room fronting on Calhoun Avenue. From this ground lobby an easy half flight of stairs leads up to the main waiting room, which measures 75 feet by 75.

Adjoining the main waiting room are general waiting rooms for both white and colored passengers, which are reached by a short flight of stairs, and where passengers may rest while waiting for trains, removed from the rush of the main waiting room. Connecting with the white waiting room are rest rooms for women and smoking rooms for men, together with toilet facilities.

Directly outside of the main waiting room is the passenger concourse, 35 feet wide. A broad flight of stairs leads from this level to the train concourse at the end of the stub tracks used by all trains terminating at this point. The concourse also extends under-

neath the through tracks, to which the passengers gain access by means of stairways between the tracks.

The main and general waiting rooms are lighted by an indirect system. The ticket lobby and the general offices are equipped with direct lighting. The floor of the ticket lobby, waiting room and corridors is of mosaic tile with Tennessee gray marble wainscot, and ornamental plaster side walls and ceiling. A white glazed tile is used to a considerable extent throughout the ticket lobby.

The entire building is equipped with vacuum cleaning system. The offices are all connected by a pneumatic tube system, with the central station located in the telegraph office, thus facilitating the handling of special mail and telegrams. The clocks throughout the building are all electrically operated and controlled by a master clock located in the telegraph office. Conduits have been laid to provide for the installation of a callaphone system whereby trains may be announced from one point, the sound being distributed over the various waiting rooms and ticket lobby by means of loud speaking telephones. Arrangements have also been made for installation of a telautograph system, by means of which writing may be transcribed from one point to another. This was proposed principally to enable the information regarding the movements of trains may simultaneously be given by the dispatcher to the man in charge of the information bureau and the various operating officials.

The depot layout consists of ten tracks, five being stub tracks for the use of the trains which terminate at this point and five being through tracks for use of the I. C. Seven platforms are provided, two of which are used solely for trucking of baggage and mail in connection with the through tracks. The length of these

Express Building at Georgia St.



View of trainsheds from offices

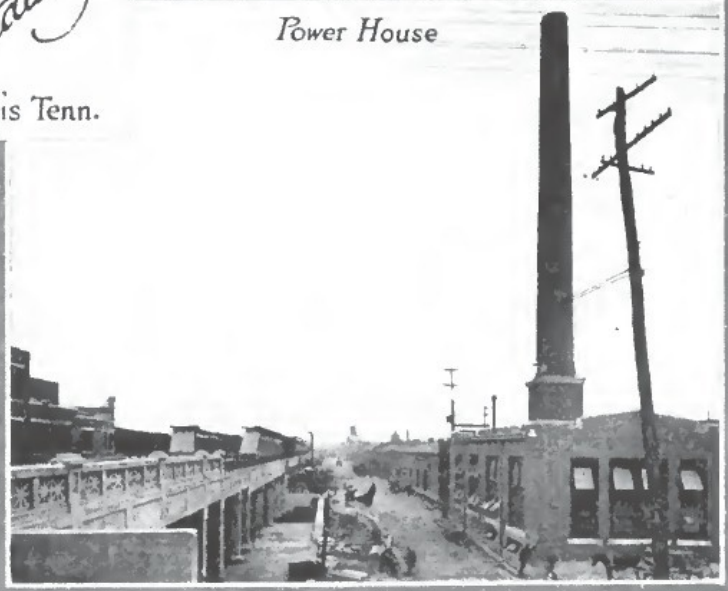


*Grand
Central
Station*
Memphis Tenn.

*Grand Central Station
from
Calhoun & Main Sts*



Power House



platforms varies from 700 feet to 940 feet. The three platforms on the east served by the stub tracks are used both for trucking and passengers. All platforms, with exception of those used for trucking only are protected by an umbrella shed extending the full length of the platform. The train concourse at the end of the stub tracks is covered with a wired glass and concrete roof.

The track elevation work that was carried on coincident with the construction of the Central Station eliminated dangerous street crossings at grade and provided subways at Carolina, Calhoun, Butler, Front, Wagner and Nettleton Avenues.

The bridges are all of permanent construction, reinforced concrete with

ballast floors, the floor depths varying from 3 feet at Calhoun Avenue and Front Street to 4 feet 3 inches at Carolina Avenue. This variation in depth is due to the fact that a construction of I-beams encased in concrete was used in the former streets, and in the latter concrete slabs reinforced with corrugated bars. The I-beams were used in order to decrease necessary raise in tracks, and keep the approach street grades as light as possible.

Piers were placed on curb lines and in middle of the street in Carolina and Calhoun Avenues, Front Street and Nettleton Avenue, while at Butler Avenue and Wagner Place I-beams span the full width of the street. At Calhoun Avenue, the supports are of structural steel encased in concrete, and the columns are spaced

far enough apart to permit teams to pass through from either driveway to the baggage and carriage concourse, west of the depot proper and underneath the tracks. In other streets the supports are of reinforced concrete, the columns being spaced 6 feet center to center and strengthened with spiral reinforcement. The forms were of the collapsible steel type.

Traffic for the I. C. and Y. & M. V. was maintained on present alignment from Huling Avenue down Nettleton Avenue and south through an alley between Front and Main Streets from Butler to Calhoun Avenue. The work of building the west one-half of Butler Avenue Subway was deferred until the last, as the present line crosses the proposed one at that point. The remainder of the track elevation work, including all



Dining Room



Office of Genl. Passenger Agent

Grand Central Station

Memphis, Tenn...



Main Lobby



Ticket Lobby



Ladies' Waiting Room

subways and retaining walls was carried on without interruption until completed. Through trains of the Illinois Central and Y. & M. V. Railroads operated from Calhoun Avenue south on a team track located just west of the west retaining wall, thence across Broadway into present main track, south of this point.

The work of elevating the depot tracks was carried on as follows: The wall on the west side was first constructed and the fill started from this side and extended eastward, abandoning the depot tracks as it became necessary in order to provide for slope of the embankment. As soon as the width of embankment permitted it the tracks were laid on top on the west, as they were abandoned at the bottom of slope on the east.

A baggage tunnel was constructed between tracks Nos. 5 and 6, with cross tunnels at the south end so that baggage could be taken to either end

of the platform and reduce trucking on the track level to a minimum.

A building to house the American & Southern Express Companies and the I. C. Commissary Department was located at the northwest corner of Main and Georgia Streets. This is a fireproof structure and the layout includes driveways paved with creosoted blocks for express companies' vehicles. An entrance has been provided from the express building directly into the baggage tunnel in order that the express may be handled in the baggage elevators to the track platform level.

The U. S. mail is handled from a transfer room at the south end of the depot proper just east of the baggage room with a special driveway for teams on Main Street. Both of these facilities are on the street level and the baggage and mail are handled through the tunnel and up the elevators to the track level. Mastic floors make the

rooms noiseless, sanitary and easy to work in. Automatic dial scales have been installed to expedite the handling of baggage.

The James Alexander Construction Company of Memphis had the contract for constructing the station proper. The concrete construction in connection with the track elevation was done by Bates & Rogers Construction Company of Chicago. George B. Swift & Company of Chicago had the contract for the construction of the power house and express building, and Kehm Bros. Company of Chicago furnished and installed the power house equipment.

Graham, Burnham & Company of Chicago were the architects for the station building, superintending its construction through their representative, Mr. H. L. Small. Asst. Engineer F. R. Judd had charge of the track elevation work and the construction of power house and express building.