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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The interest in railroads and model railroads faces a possible death due to technology. Yet might not technology offer it new life as well?

A few decades ago, it seemed as if technology might wipe out an interest in railroads by wiping out railroads themselves. Passenger service sharply declined; much track was abandoned; railroads disappeared through mergers. Undeniably, the railroad was far less important in the life of the nation and in the daily lives of people than it had been, say, from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century.

Yet railroads rebounded. Amtrak preserved passenger traffic, as did the growth of commuter lines around big cities. There's talk of a massive expenditure on high-speed rail.

Both giant railroads wrought by mergers and smaller ones that took over the most profitable track seemed to flourish. Technology revolutionized railroading, especially in terms of traffic control. Locomotives continued to develop and whole new classes of freight cars were born—notably the container traffic.

In short, there's life for American railroads in the twenty-first century.

I'll reveal here a thought I've often had that might interest some and horrify purists. The study of railroad history and the modeling of railroads—completely aside from the main character—is a tremendous excuse for learning about two other things: history and the way that societies actually function.

Regarding history, though I spent four years as an undergraduate and five

years as a graduate student studying history, it is remarkable how limited was the reading and research involved. Through studying railroads—especially the B&O—and model railroading I learned about the three-dimensional aspects of history. That includes: wagons and autos; clothing; industrial and mining operations; the evolution of gas stations and coal depots; a huge amount about architecture; and vast amounts of other things in addition to railroad operations and equipment.

In short, until you've opened the door through railroad operations and reproducing that material culture, you cannot possibly understand and imagine life in past eras.

And how can one understand one's own society without any knowledge of how the people and institutions have been shaped by the way goods were grown or produced; shipped and serviced; sold and developed over time? One of the most interesting aspects is how cities live by the transport of huge amounts of food and other things every single day.

But I return to my original topic: How is new technology going to encourage a continued interest in this subject?

First, of course, the Internet has allowed research and communication unimaginable a few short years ago. In minutes one can do what would have taken months otherwise. Not only is there communication among those interested in discussing the B&O—as the very successful discussion group shows—but reams of photos, data on

(continued on page 35)

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P. O. Box 24225
Baltimore, Maryland 21227-0725

e-mail: info@borhs.org
website: borhs.org

Missing Sentinel: magazine@borhs.org

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EDITORIAL STAFF

Barry Rubin, Editor
sentineleditor@borhs.org
Harry Meem, Managing Editor
magazine@borhs.org
Al McEvoy, Archives
John Teichmoeller

Roberta Poling, Graphic Design
roberta@thundergrafix.com

Contributors welcome:

Articles, manuscripts, photographs, reviews, and other historical data are solicited for publication. Original material will be returned upon publication. Send all material to:

Harry Meem,
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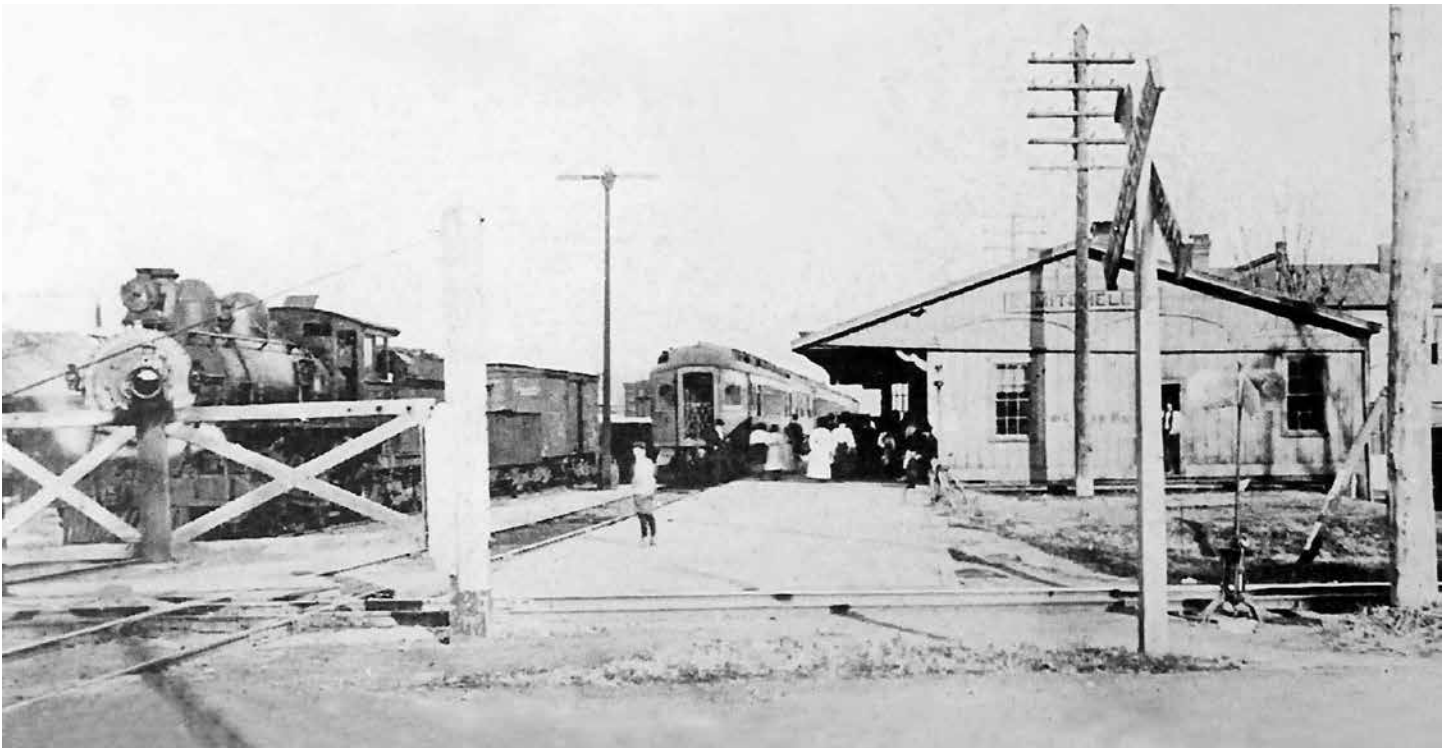
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ON THE COVERS

FRONT COVER: An eastbound freight climbs the Baltimore belt line at Mt. Royal with a collection of locomotives that are hard to find today. Dale Corn writes about running trains to Philadelphia on the old Baltimore Division's east end, beginning on page 17. (John D. Floyd II photograph, BORHS collection)

BACK COVER: B&O "Bobber" caboose C-1775, with a bright coat of paint, sits at the B&O Museum. Ed Kirstatter writes about the little cabooses beginning on page 27. (Museum photograph)



This photograph, taken around the turn of the century, shows the B&O/Monon crossing in Mitchell at the left and the B&O passenger station at the right. The crossing was controlled by the swinging gate positioned across the B&O tracks in this shot. The gate system was replaced by a tilting target signal around 1912. Color Position Lights were installed in 1937, but the tilting target signal remained in use until the crossing was interlocked in 1947. (Author's collection)

The B&O in Mitchell, Indiana

In Part, a Tale of Stations Unbuilt

By Edward Young

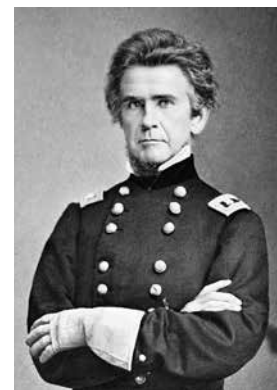
Like many other 19th century Midwestern towns, Mitchell, Indiana, owes its existence to the coming of the railroads. Located in Lawrence County about 30 miles south of Bloomington, Indiana, and about 50 miles northwest of Louisville, Kentucky, Mitchell was once served by the B&O and the Monon railroads.

First to arrive was the New Albany & Salem Railroad, organized in 1847 to give the city of New Albany access to the rich farming country around Salem in Washington County. While reaching Salem was good for the citizens of New Albany, it was decided that extending the line northward would be even better. The NA&S was constructed—running north-to-south—through Lawrence County between 1851 and 1853, probably reaching the future location of Mitchell in early 1853.

The route eventually terminated at Michigan City, Indiana, in 1854. There was now a rail line linking Lake Michigan with the Ohio River.

Indicating its intent to reach Chicago, the NA&S changed its name to the Louisville, New Albany & Chicago in 1859. This goal was not reached, however, until 1881, when the LNA&C merged with the Chicago & Indianapolis Airline Railroad. The two lines crossed at Monon, Indiana, giving rise to the railroad's nickname, The Monon Route. The road was reorganized in 1897, changing its name to the Chicago, Indianapolis & Louisville Railway.

The line was renamed the Monon Railroad in 1956 and was sold to the Louisville & Nashville Railroad in 1971. Today, much of the former Monon has been abandoned and removed; the remainder is a part of CSX.

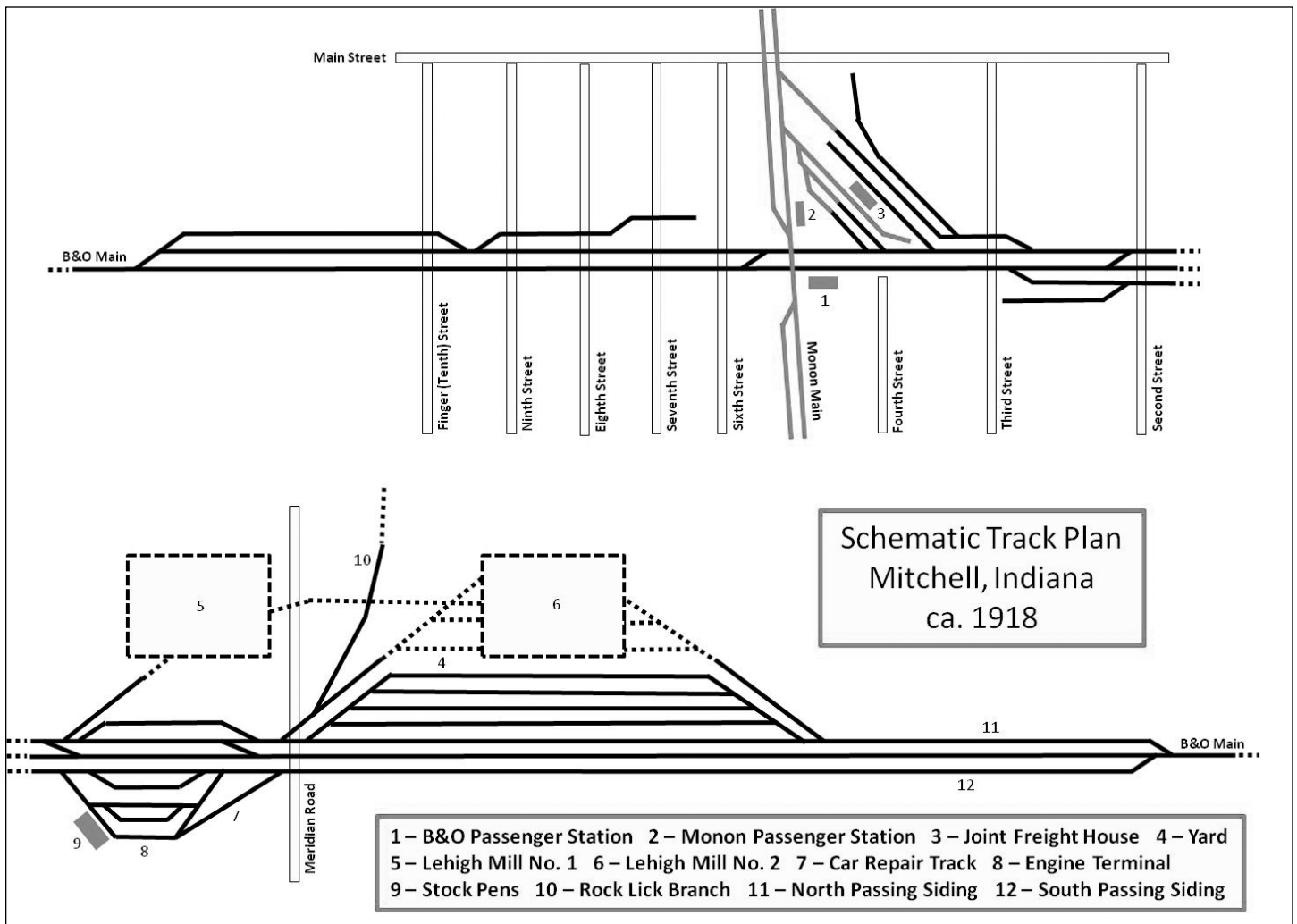


Ormsby Mitchel

The Ohio & Mississippi Railway was the next to arrive and, as we shall see, was responsible for the creation of Mitchell. The land where the O&M and the NA&S crossed was settled as

early as 1813, but the town would not take shape for four more decades. John Sheeks owned the land that was to become Mitchell, and in 1853, he sold a half interest to George W. Cochran, a Cincinnati businessman and strong supporter of the O&M.

Chartered in Indiana in 1848, the O&M began construction in 1852; the



line was built—running east-to-west—through Lawrence County in 1855-57.

Sheeks and Cochran contracted Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel, chief engineer and surveyor for the O&M, to survey the town as he was surveying the route for the new railroad. The site was first called The Crossing, probably to signify the eventual intersection of the O&M and the NA&S. A post office was established here as Woodland on December 10, 1852.

Surveyed by Mitchel, the town was platted by Sheeks and Cochran on September 29, 1853. In exchange for his service, they changed its name to Mitchel on June 15, 1854. The second “L” was added later. By 1860, the budding town had just more than 600 residents.

Born in 1810 in Morganfield, Kentucky—of significance to me since it was also the birthplace of my mother—O.M. Mitchel was a West Point graduate (same class as Robert E. Lee), a professor at the University of Cincinnati, a noted

astronomer (which earned him the nickname “Old Stars”), and former chief engineer for the Little Miami Railroad in Cincinnati.

During the Civil War, he entered the Union Army and rose to the rank of major general; Mitchel is probably best remembered for ordering a group of Union spies under the leadership of James J. Andrews to steal a train in Georgia and disrupt Confederate rail operations. The raid, which failed, involved the locomotive *The General*, and has become most commonly known as the Great Locomotive Chase.

While in command of the Union garrison at Beaufort, South Carolina, Mitchel died of yellow fever on October 30, 1862.

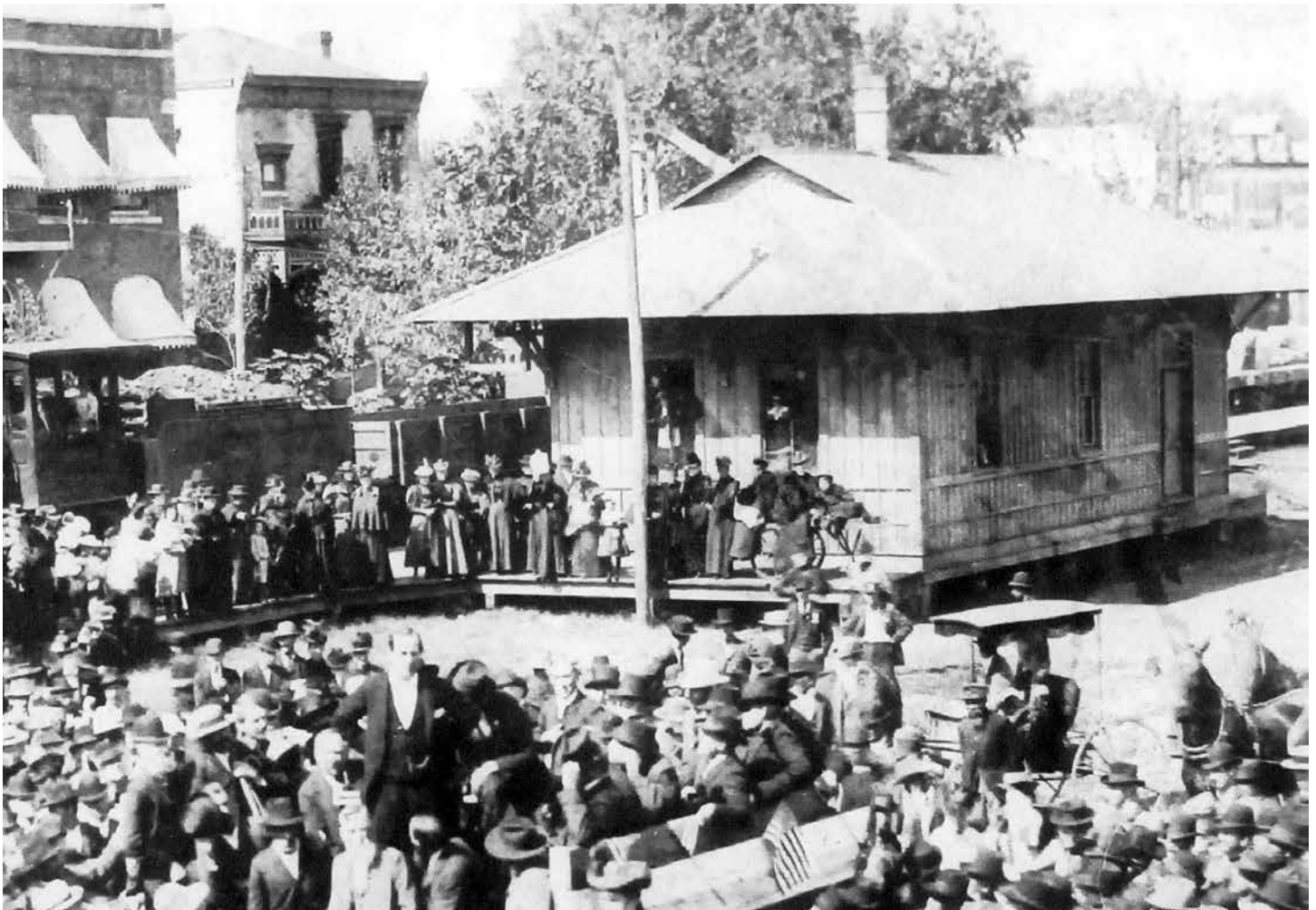
With the final spike of the O&M main line driven on April 15, 1857 at Rock Cut, about seven miles east of Mitchell near Rivervale, the first train on the O&M passed through Mitchell a short time later. Much of Mitchell’s early growth was

based on the two railroads and the business they brought into town. Mitchell was incorporated as a town on December 23, 1864.

The O&M became part of the B&O Southwestern Railroad in 1893. The B&OSW was absorbed by the Baltimore & Ohio in 1900. Today, the former B&O in Mitchell—like the former Monon—is a part of CSX.

When completed, the two lines crossed slightly southeast of what is the downtown business district of Mitchell. The mains of the east-west B&O and the north-south Monon met at approximately right angles. The B&O also had two passing sidings in Mitchell, one on the north side of the main, the other on the south side. Both began about 1.6 miles east of the crossing.

The west end of the 11,777-foot-long north passing siding—still in use—is about 300 feet east of Old State Route 37. The west end of the 7,212-foot-long south passing siding was about 100 feet east



Presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan (at lower left) addresses a crowd next to the Mitchell Monon depot on October 3, 1896, during his campaign. The depot—the second Monon depot in Mitchell—was constructed in 1892. This view, looking north, shows the rear and south end of the depot, which contained the waiting room. (Author's collection)

of Third Street. Only a 1,250-foot-long remnant of the siding remains today. Each railroad's passenger station was in close proximity to the crossing.

The O&M passenger station probably was built around 1857 when the line opened for service. On the south side of the main and about 90 feet east of the Monon crossing, it was a one-story frame structure of typical O&M board-and-batten construction. The station had a gable roof with a 10-foot overhang along the front and rear and a one-foot overhang on the ends. Originally it probably was 24 feet wide and 86 feet long, identical in size and comparable in general layout to O&M depots in Washington and Loogootee, Indiana; the O&M built the same style of depots, but 25 feet shorter, in Brownstown and Medora, Indiana

By 1894, 10-foot-wide and 17-foot-long segments were added to the rear of



Taken in the 1940s, this is a view of the west end and front of the original O&M/B&O passenger depot in Mitchell, Indiana, looking east. This end of the depot, built around 1857, contained the waiting rooms and the ticket agent's office/operator's bay. A random snowflake may account for the blur in the image. (Robert Clark collection, BORHS)

the depot on the east and west ends; by 1899, the western addition was expanded to 49 feet long. Based on ICC Valuation field notes made in 1920, from west to

east along the front side, the station contained a men's/general waiting room, a ticket agent's office/operator's bay, a women's waiting room, a freight/express



This view of the east end and front of the Mitchell O&M/B&O passenger depot apparently was taken the same day as the one on page 5, with the same camera. This end of the depot contained the freight/express room, and a baggage room--originally a lunchroom. There was an additional penstock at the west end of the platform.

(Robert Clark collection, BORHS)



Probably in 1953, the B&O constructed a new passenger station in Mitchell. These 1974 photos, looking west [above] and east [below], show the baggage/freight room on the east end and the waiting room and ticket agent's office on the west. Clad in local Bedford limestone, the new depot was built just west of the original station.

(Two photographs courtesy Dan Finrock)



room, and a baggage room. Originally, the baggage room was a lunchroom. The additions along the rear likely included offices and storerooms.

The station appeared to have had a basement, probably containing two steam boilers to heat the structure; it may have contained storerooms as well. Originally there were two brick chimneys along the centerline of the roof, one between the men's/general waiting room and the ticket office, another between the women's waiting room and the freight room. A third chimney was later added near the west end of the station for the offices along the rear.

There was an approximately 800-foot-long brick platform along the front of the station that ran between Third and Fifth streets.

The B&O also had a passenger waiting shelter at Mitchell. Built around 1903 across from the east end of the station, it was an open-front frame structure, 9 feet wide and 13 feet long. It had a 300-foot-long wood platform that ran between Fourth and Fifth streets. Still present in 1920, it appears to have been removed by the mid-to-late 1920s.

The original Monon passenger station in Mitchell probably was built around 1853 when the town (originally Woodland) was platted. It was a single-story frame structure of board-and-batten construction. On the east side of the main and about 120 feet north of the B&O crossing, it originally was 20 feet wide and 48 feet long, with a gable roof.

In 1892, a new depot was built on the site of the original depot. The overall size remained the same, but the window and door arrangement was changed and the roof was a combination gable/hip style.

By 1931, the north end of the station had been extended 16 feet, increasing the overall size to 20 feet wide and 64 feet long. Several windows were added and the freight door was relocated northward.

The last Monon passenger service through Mitchell was on September 30, 1967. The Monon passenger station was torn down between mid-1967 and late 1971.

The B&O and Monon jointly operated a freight house in Mitchell, located in the northeast corner of the junction of