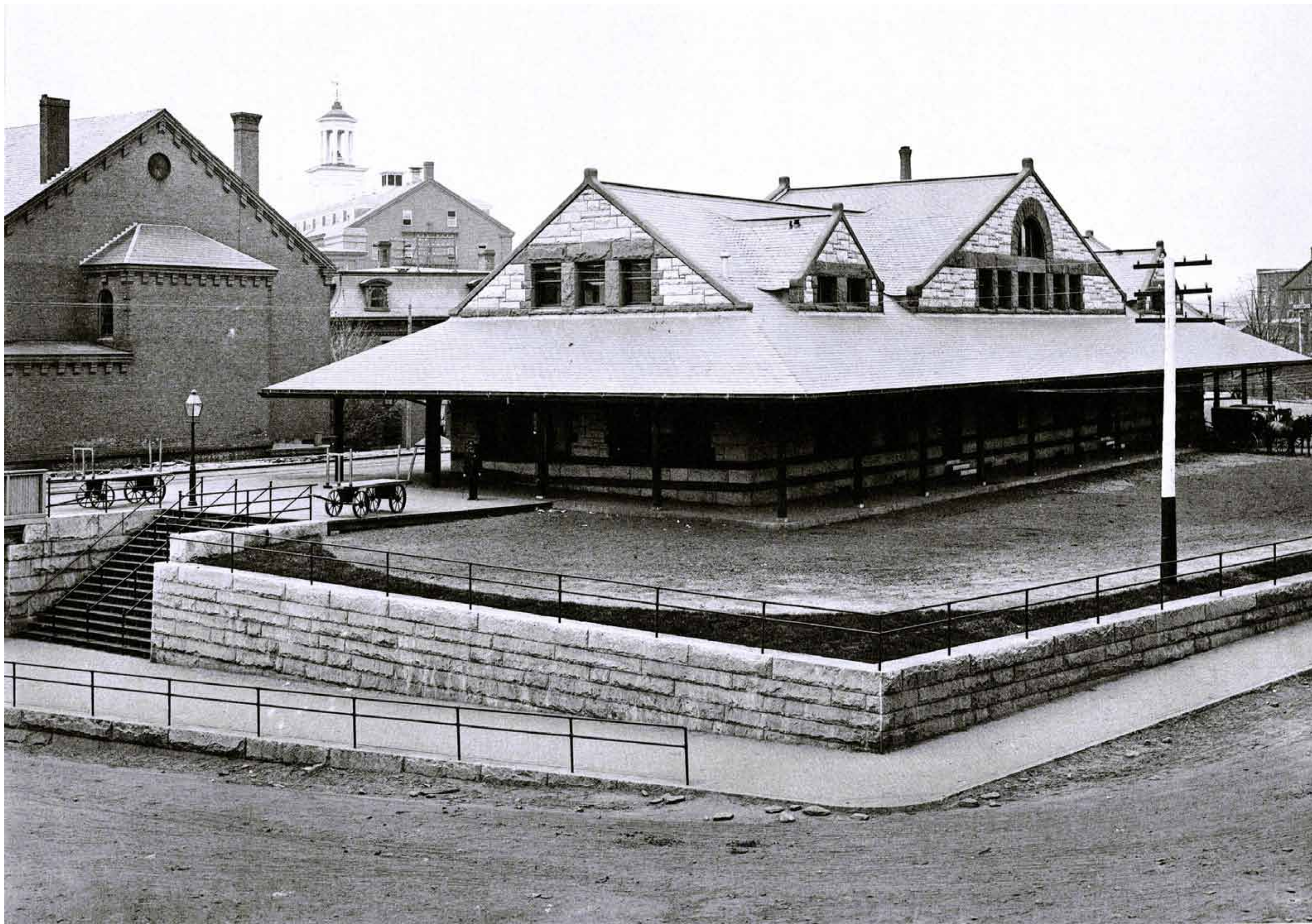


Holyoke's Depot Square and the Richardson Train Station

A study of the district's history and historic buildings



Henry Hobson Richardson (1839 - 1886) remains one of America's best known and best loved architects. He rose to this lofty position following the designed nconstruction of Trinity Church, located on Boston's Copley Square, introducing a style that eventually became known as Richardson Romanesque. This style, recognizable by its heavy stonework, contrasting granite and brownstone, contrasting granite and brownstone, and use of Roman arches, and deep set windows, can be found in many towns and cities across the country, whether designed by Richardson or by his many imitators.

Holyoke's train station, completed in 1885, is one of the few existing Richardson buildings in western Massachusetts. It was commissioned by the Connecticut River Railroad in 1883, at a time when railroads were improving stations and expanding passenger rail service.



Richardson believed that train stations in anything but the largest cities should be modest. The design should respond, according to Richardson, to only a few factors: 1) facilitating the "best possible circulation of the maximum number of travelers" while creating the greatest "comfort and efficiency"; 2) showing a attractive and suitably dignified presence for a railroad company in a given town; and 3) providing travelers with the best possible impression of the hosting town as possible (an important point for the railroads).

Holyoke's station, while empty and neglected for many years, is less damaged than many of Richardson's old stations and is anticipated to be a great candidate for renovation. The cinder block walls and extended roof added to the south end of the building were built in such a way so as to allow removal without damaging the original structure beneath. Holyoke has a tarnished treasure that, with some polishing, will once again shine brightly.

Top - Holyoke's train station, December, 2011, owned by Holyoke Gas & Electric.

Above - The H. H. Richardson "Stone" station, soon after completion in 1885.

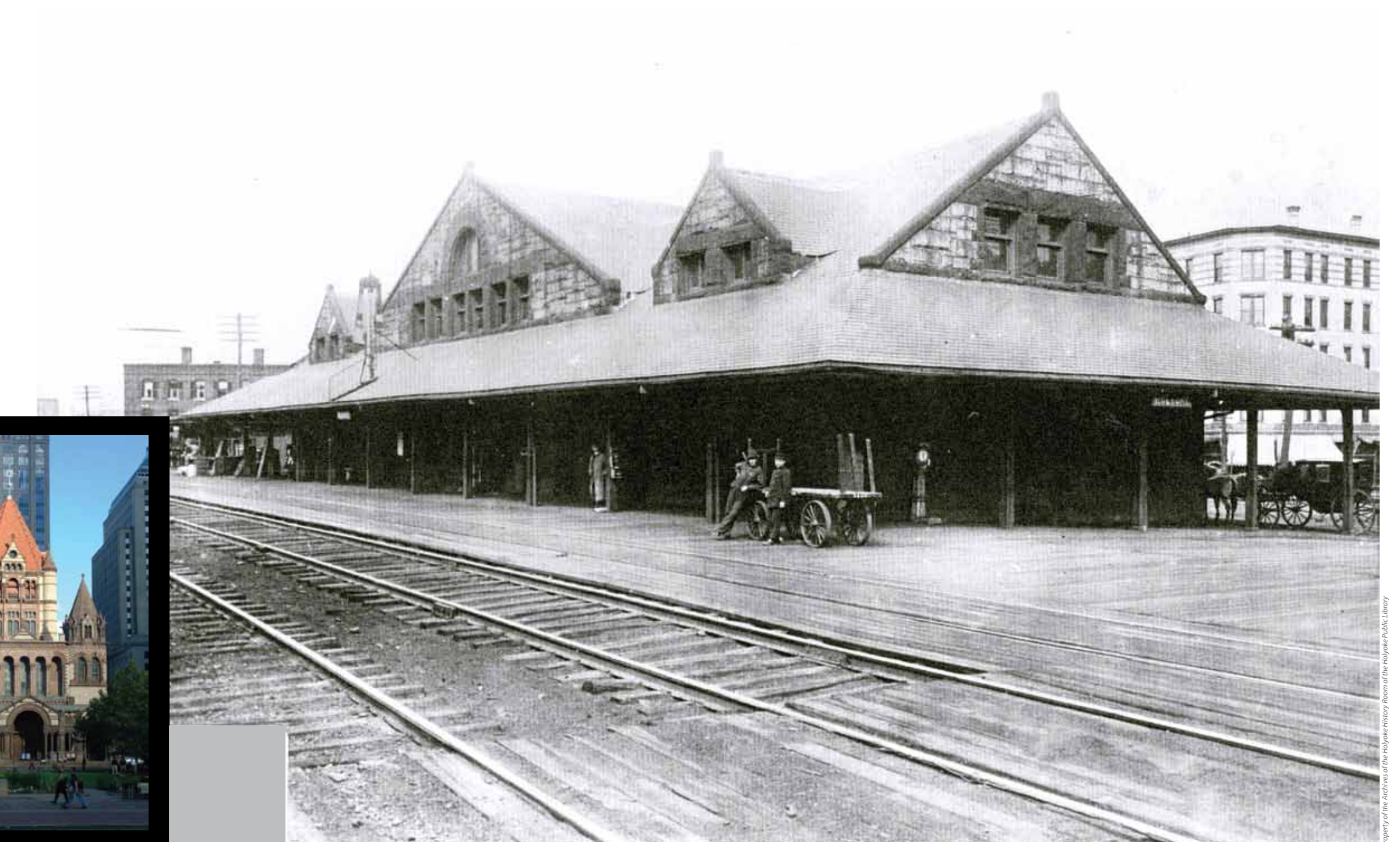
Below - The original floorplan as drawn by Richardson's office. Note the unusual "Emigrant's Room", likely meant for the many Slavic, French-Canadian, Irish, and other immigrants who came through Holyoke seeking work in the factories of Holyoke and the tobacco fields of the Connecticut River valley.



Above - Hubert von Herkomer's 1886 portrait of Henry Hobson Richardson, renowned American architect of Holyoke's "stone" train station, 1885.

Inset - Richardson's remarkable Trinity Church, Copley Square, Boston

Right - The wooden platforms extended across all three sets of tracks soon after completion of the Richardson station. Note the five story tenement behind the station to the right, on Bowers Street. The Flats at this time was the most densely populated part of the city. (Courtesy of the Holyoke History Room)

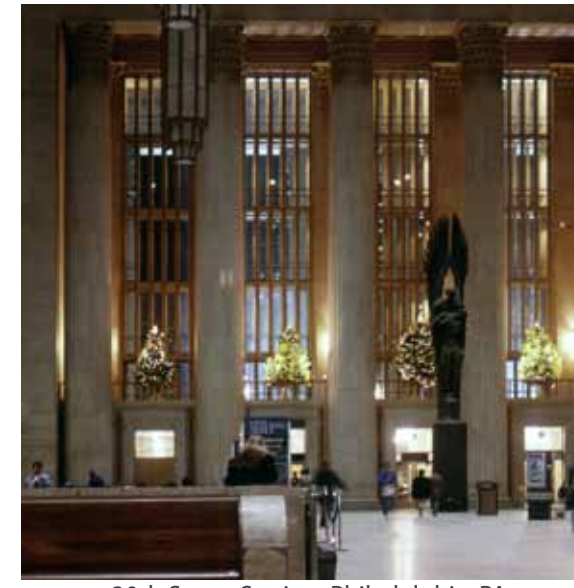


Holyoke's Depot Square and the Richardson Train Station

A study of the district's history and historic buildings

Many former train stations have found new life in the past few decades as restaurants, commercial buildings, and some still as passenger rail stations. Boston's South Station, Philadelphia's 30th Street Station, and Washington, DC's Union Station are all well known examples of reuse that creates vibrant community spaces in today's market. To provide some ideas of what the reuse of both Richardson stations and stations more the size of Holyoke's station might look like, below are examples of several train stations. It should be noted that there are not many of Richardson's train stations that still exist, but from those that do we may extract some useful lessons. The studies of other stations can help to envision what uses the Richardson station in Holyoke might someday house.

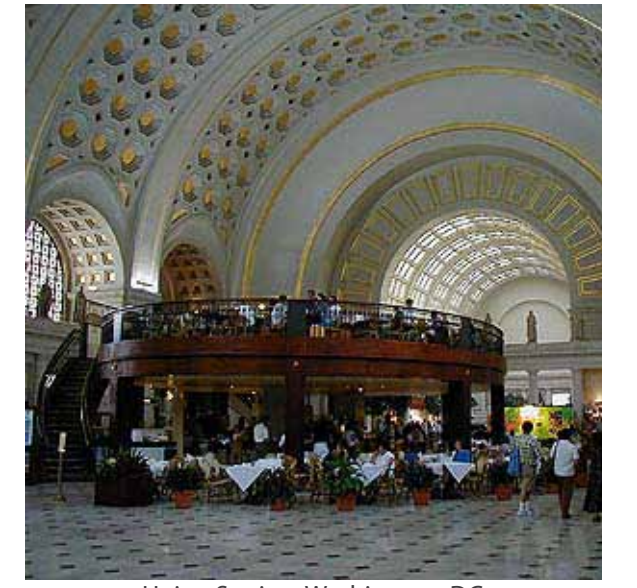
Adaptive Reuse Precedents



30th Street Station, Philadelphia, PA



South Street Station, Boston, MA



Union Station, Washington, DC



South Framingham Station, c. 1916



South Framingham Station, 2009

South Framingham Train Station, South Framingham, MA
 This H. H. Richardson designed station in South Framingham has much in common with Holyoke's station. Commissioned, designed, and completed at virtually the same times (1883-1885), the two stations share a similar size and layout. Framingham's station continued to serve Amtrak and commuter rail passengers until the late 1990s when the MBTA built a new station adjacent to the old one. At that time the Richardson station was converted to a restaurant and has housed several different restaurants during the intervening years. The most recent restaurant in the station is Café Belo, a Brazilian eatery. The interior has been restored, including having "had paint stripped from its wooden bead-boarding, and many details are maintained, such as brick moldings and some tile-work. The central interior room reveals a soaring network of trusses and beams." South Framingham is still served by many commuter trains and two Amtrak trains every day.

Palmer Union Station, Palmer, MA
 The Palmer Union Station opened on June 1, 1884, having been commissioned by the New London Northern Railroad and the Boston and Albany Railroad to replace two separate stations. This was the second railroad passenger station commission received by Richardson's office. The Union Station was designed to serve passengers of both an east-west line (Boston & Albany) and a north-south line (New London Northern). Located at a junction where the tracks of two of the railroad lines crossed and an acute angle, Richardson designed a trapezoidal station that presented platforms on its two longest sides and the main entryway on a shorter side.



Palmer Union Station, 2007



Palmer Union Station

Today, the roof, with its deep eaves sheltering board-walk waiting areas, remains the dominant feature of the building. Richardson's trademarks granite and brown-stone masonry are overshadowed by the deep eaves. On the north and west sides of the building the eaves have been removed, presumably due to damage caused by neglect, revealing tall, narrow windows gathered in groups of three. The station has not served passenger traffic for 40 years, but the activity on the tracks reportedly still draws trainspotters to watch the freights and the occasional Amtrak train. The station's owners operate a restaurant called the Steaming Tender in the station and have been working to restore the station since 1987.



Palmer Union Station, 2007



Palmer Union Station



New London Union Station, c. 1905

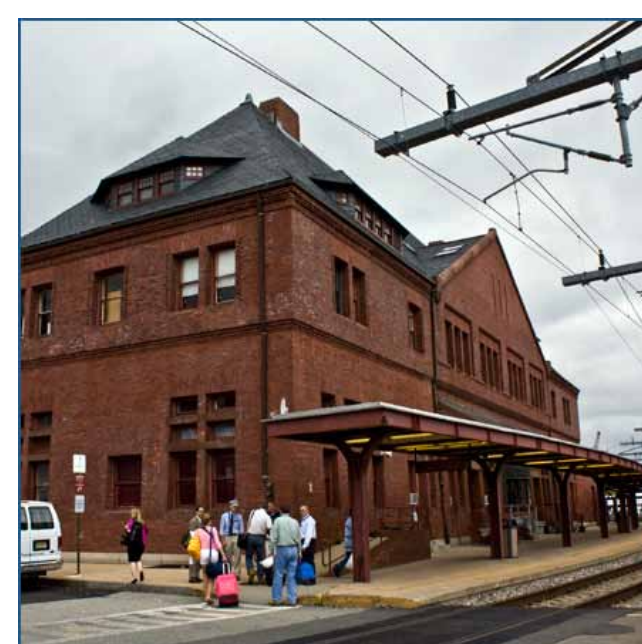


New London Union Station, 2005

New London Union Station, New London, CT
 Located with its back against the waterfront, the New London Station faces a public plaza and the rest of the city. Designed by H. H. Richardson's firm, the building was completed in 1889, three years after Richardson's death. The station was commissioned by the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad and the New London Northern Railroad, who together decided to construct and share a new "union station" to replace a station that burned down in 1883.



New London Union Station, 2008



New London Union Station, 2005

After the station stop being used in 1969, it soon became shabby and run down and it was threatened with demolition by the city's redevelopment agency. In 1971 the building was placed on the national register of historic places, and in 1975 a group of investors advocating for preservation and adaptive reuse of historic structures purchased the station to ensure that remain open to passengers. Sold again in 2002, a full restoration was undertaken of the exterior and of the waiting room. In a slight departure from a true restoration, the massive wooden benches to the waiting room so as to facilitate a variety of uses in the main waiting room. Today the station serves both travelers and office tenants on the upper floors and as the city's regional intermodal transportation center, including local buses, commuter rail, and ferries to Long Island and Block Island. An average of 20 trains serve New London daily, including Amtrak's Acela high-speed service.

Northampton Train Station, Northampton, MA
 The train station in Northampton was built in 1897 for the Boston & Maine Railroad, serving both the north-south Connecticut River line and the east-west Massachusetts Central Railroad that connected Northampton to Boston with several trains a day. Amtrak suspended service through Northampton in 1987 and soon after the station was bought and became home to two restaurants, Union Station and Spaghetti Freddie's. Union Station was a mid- to high-priced restaurant while Spaghetti Freddie's was more mid-range. In 1999 the Tunnel Bar, located in an underground passageway that once provided access to the platforms to foot traffic, was opened by the owners. These establishments were successful for many years although the two restaurants closed in 2011, citing the three year old recession. The Tunnel Bar, a popular destination in a creative use of an unusual space, remains open at this time. The city may consider it for their station when Amtrak returns to the city in next few years.



Northampton Train Station



Northampton Train Station, 2009

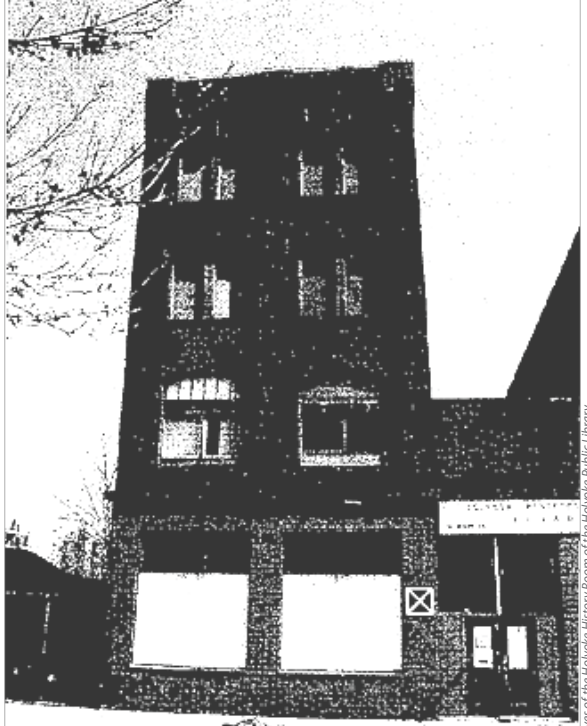
MAIN STREET BETWEEN CANAL AND DWIGHT STREETS



T 1 Main Street: The Parson Block was built for the Parsons Paper Company for additional office space sometime before 1877. The building became known as the Flatiron Building, reportedly for its unusual footprint (the famous Flatiron Building in New York City, with a similar footprint, was not built until 1902). Located at the corner of Main, Race, and Canal Streets on a site that narrows to a point, the four story brick building had handsome brickwork and stone lintels and was designed in a commercial classical style. The lot's sharp corner is softened by the building's rounded, bullnosed promontory, with the regular window pattern continuing across its face to make clear that the inside program continues within the unusual shape of the building. The ground floor tenant was for many years a drugstore, first as Ball's Drugstore and then as Bardwell's Drugstore. The building was taken down by the late 1960s.



U 2-6 Main Street: The Second Baptist Church of Holyoke first occupied this location with a large building constructed sometime after the parish was organized in 1856 and before 1857, when the church is shown in a map. The church stood until the late 1880s, when it was demolished for unknown reasons. By 1884 a very narrow building, then known as the Norris House Hotel, had been built on a thin lot squeezed between the church and Mosher Street. With a façade only two windows wide, the building had only eight rooms, but it had the sudden advantage of being the closest hotel to the new Richardson train station when it opened in 1885. By the mid 1890s the hotel had been rebuilt with 42 rooms; it is unclear whether the original two-window wide building was expanded upon or simply replaced with the larger structure. This building, renamed the Hotel Monat in the early 20th century, stood until the late 20th century.



V 12-18 Main Street: The North end of Main Street was densely built up by 1877, as shown in a bird's-eye view of that year, but parts of it were rebuilt in subsequent periods of development. These buildings were probably built for Chase and Cooleedge, a mill supply firm known to have moved to this location before 1892. The company had been founded in 1878 by Henry M. Cooleedge, who later formed a partnership with John E. Chase. Mill supply and machine shop businesses were obviously an important component of Holyoke's mill-dominated economy. The two that comprise 12-18 Main Street were originally both four story structures. 16-18 had lost all of its historic character, but 12-14 retained its 1880's character. Typical elliptical-arched window heads on the second and third floors, round arched window on the top floor, and a corbelled brick cornice.

LOST HOLYOKE

A record of a few of the historic buildings that have been lost in the Depot Square area

Many more buildings have been lost than are recorded here, particularly along the Main Street across from the original passenger rail depot at Depot Square. Preservation and reuse allow the city to retain its historic and architecturally important buildings while providing a framework for future development.



Parson Block, aka Flatiron Building (Courtesy of the Holyoke History Room)



The intersection of Main, Race, Canal, and Mosher Streets, with the Parson Block on the right, the Hotel Monat on the left, and Holy Rosary Church in the distance (Courtesy of the Holyoke History Room)



The northern end of Main Street, with the Hotel Monat in the distance (Courtesy of the Holyoke History Room)



Morris & Company employees and equipment at their shop at 24 Main Street (Courtesy of the Holyoke History Room)

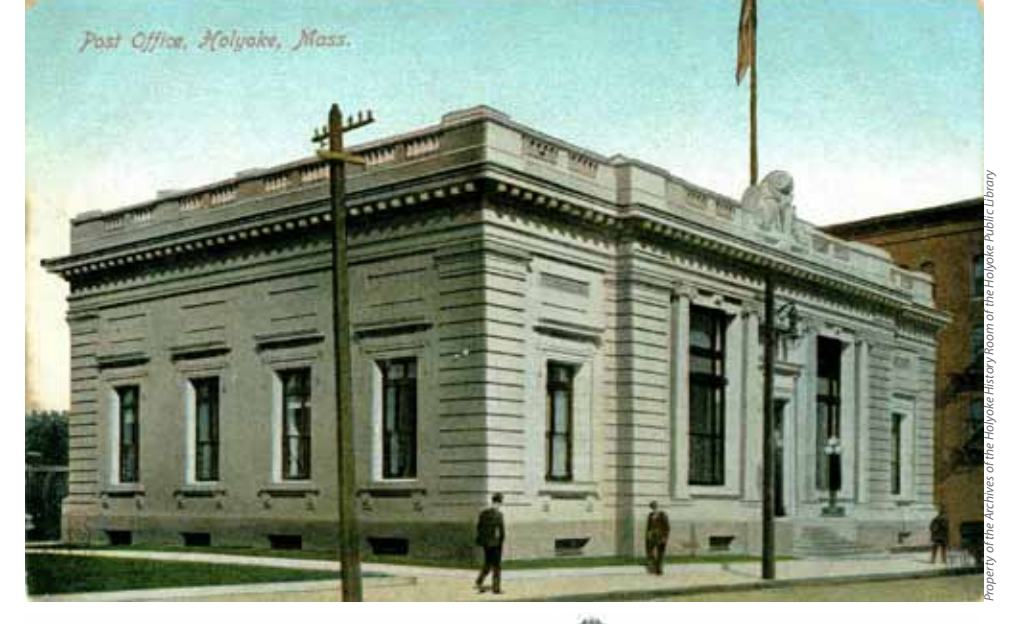


W 22 Main Street: The building was constructed in 1886 and was used by Edwin C. Swift as a firm distributing papers and products used in packaging meat and fowl. Located in the center of Holyoke's meat and produce market and also near the mills, the firm was a successful business serving the community and local "meat wagons" on a daily basis. Forced to expand its product market with the demise of the practice of buying meat on a daily basis, Swift (and later Quirk) became known for developing three types of toilet paper.



X 24 Main Street: In 1884 the four story commercial building was erected for George Nightingale, a paper stock dealer. Architecturally, the structure is very similar to those in the commercial district on High Street.

This storefront housed Morris & Company in the early 20th century, as can be seen in a photograph to the lower left.

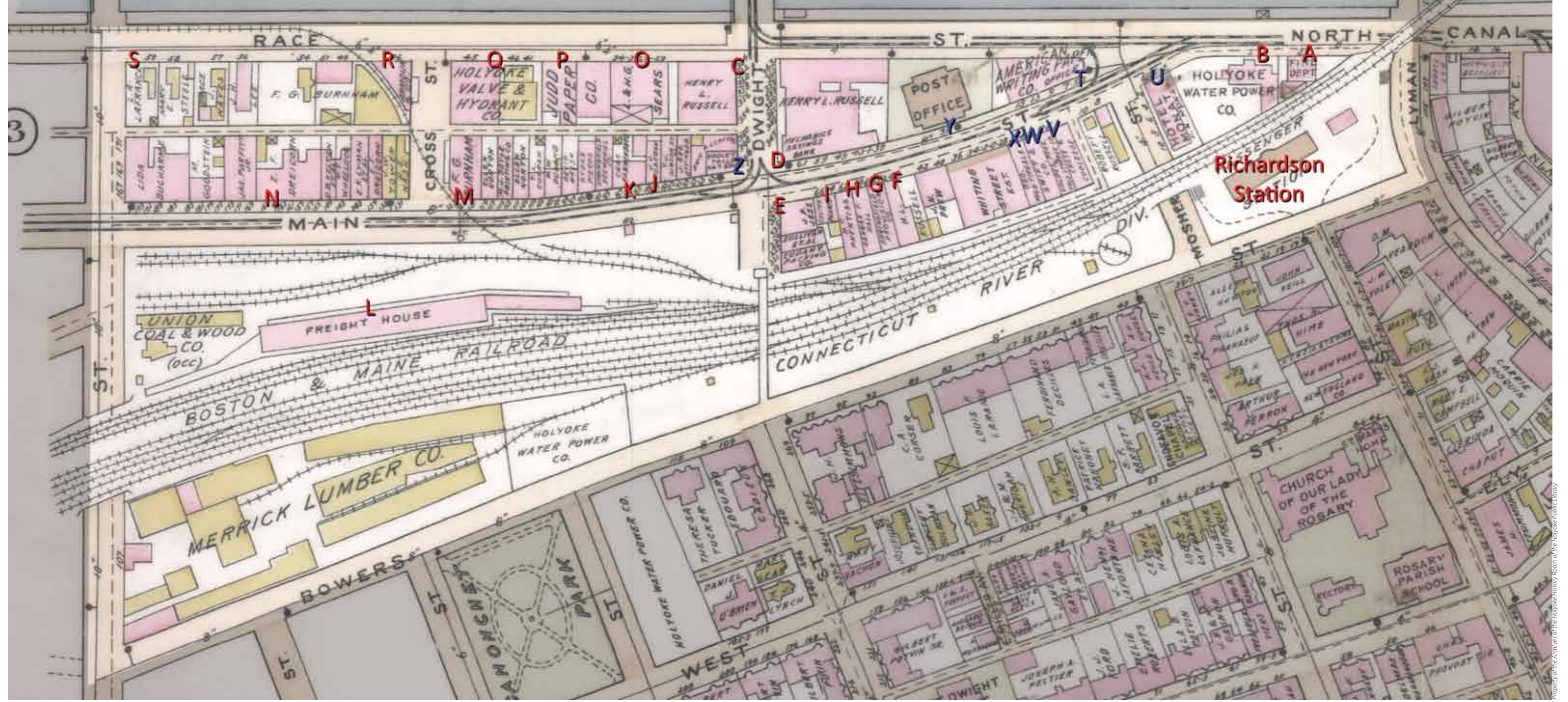


Y 31 Main Street: In 1905 a new marble Post Office building opened on Main Street to replace the one that had been in the Holyoke House since 1853, having moved there from its location in the first passenger train depot. The advent of parcel post, however, rendered the new post office too small for its purpose soon after opening. The post office, however, stayed in this building until 1935, when a new post office opened on Dwight Street between Chestnut and Elm Streets. The 1905 Post Office was torn down in 1949.



Z 324-344 Dwight Street: This building on the south west corner of Dwight and main streets resumed to have been built sometime in the 1860s. It was home to the Hadley Falls National Bank from the time of its construction to at least 1911. The bank had been organized in 1851 as the state bank. In 1865 the Hadley Falls Bank became a national bank. The building was designed in the commercial Romanesque style popular with post-Civil War Victorians. A white belt course ran across each façade between the elliptical window arches made of alternating colored stone. The building was taken down sometime after 1984.

1911 Richards & Company Map of Holyoke - Building indexed by letter (red for surviving buildings, blue for demolished buildings)



MAIN STREET BETWEEN CANAL AND DWIGHT STREETS

SOUTHWEST CORNER OF DWIGHT AND MAIN STREETS

1911 MAP OF DEPOT SQUARE AREA

Holyoke's Depot Square and the Richardson Train Station

A study of the district's history and historic buildings

CANAL STREET



A 2 Canal Street: The Mt. Tom Hose Co. No. 1 was established as the Mt. Holyoke Company in 1851. Thirteen hundred dollars was appropriated to buy an engine, hose, hooks, ladders and other apparatus. 62 members were accounted for when the company was fully organized. Later renamed Fire Station No. 4, the present station was built in 1887.



B 1 Canal Street: Constructed in 1873 to serve as an office for the burgeoning Holyoke Water Power Company. At this time, the Company was heavily involved in maintaining the vital dam and canal system which serviced nearly all industries in the City and in developing and selling new mill properties. Originally a one-story structure, the mansard roof was raised and a second floor added between 1875 and 1885.

DWIGHT STREET



D 362 Dwight Street: Parsons Hall was one of Holyoke's earliest buildings to serve the public. While it hosted shops on the ground floor and offices on the second floor, the third floor was an auditorium that hosted entertainment, dances, political and other lectures. It is reported that town meetings were held in the auditorium prior to the construction of the new city hall in 1874. The third floor of the building was removed by the 1940s, as has the top of the landmark tower.



C 363 Dwight Street: The Holyoke House opened in 1850 as one of the first hotels in Holyoke. It was certainly the most grand, according to claims that compared it with the best hotels in Boston and New York. The hotel underwent significant renovation and expansion between the 1860s and 1890s and was renamed the Hotel Hamilton. Eventually the hotel could boast "accommodations for 150 guests" and "dining room capacity for 300 at one time." Much of the building's fourth floor was removed and storefronts on the Dwight Street façade were built out in the early 1940s.

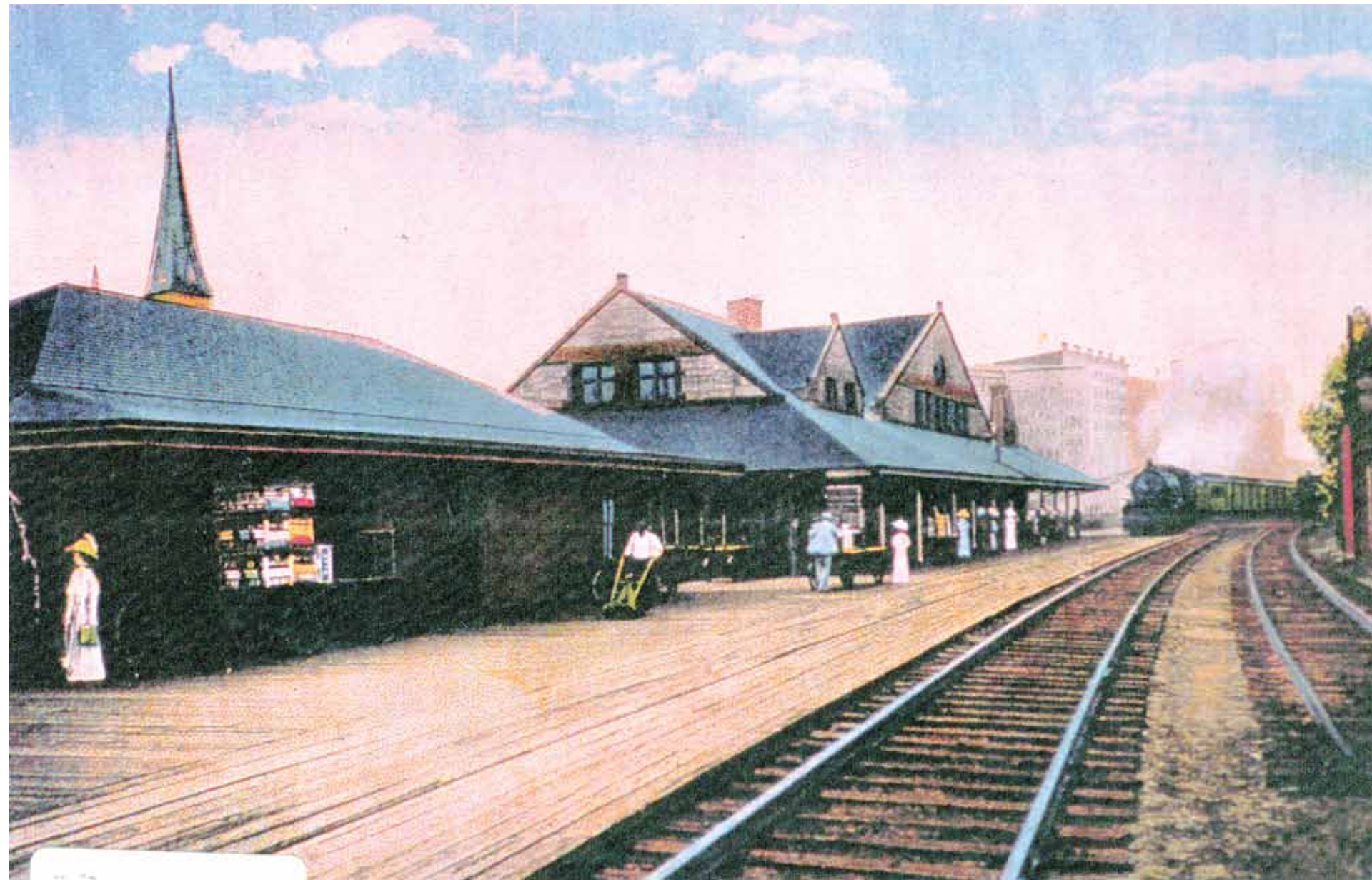


E 68 Main, 335-339 Dwight Streets: The Perkins Block was built by 1874 when the city directory lists S. Worthington and J.E. Chase, oils and mill supplies, as tenants. Chase remained there for ten years and then went to Three Rivers for a short time to establish a new mill. He apparently opened his own mill supply business upon his return to Holyoke and then in 1878 formed a partnership with Henry M. Cooledge. The Perkins Block is one of several extant structures that were built around the Depot Square in the 1860s and 1870s.

SURVIVING BUILDINGS



The Lyman Street bridge over the Second Canal with the Holyoke Train Station just visible beyond the railroad's covered bridge; the intersection of Main, Race, Canal, and Mosher Streets, with the Parsons Block on the right, the Hotel Monat on the left, and Holy Rosary Church in the distance (Courtesy of the Holyoke History Room)

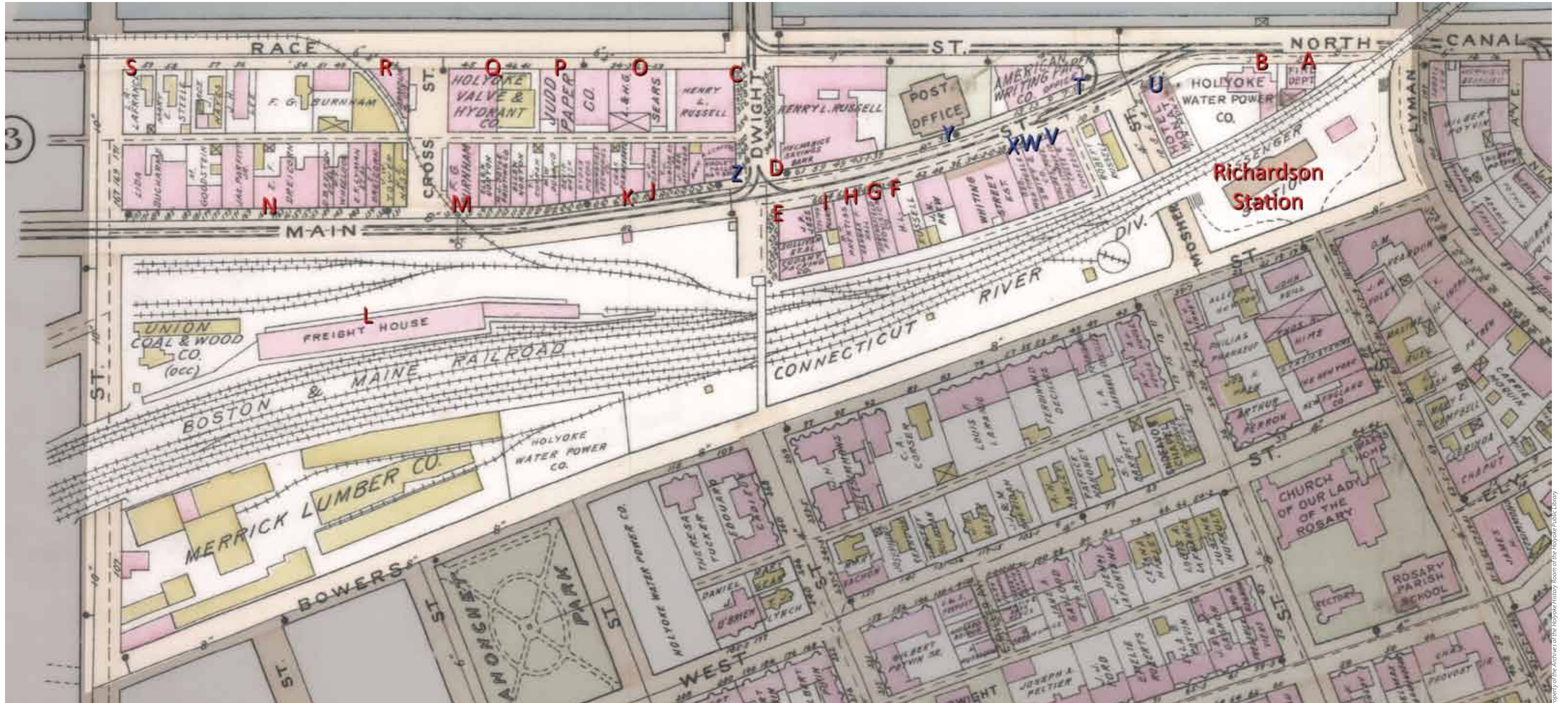


The Holyoke Train Station, from a postcard



The Hamilton Hotel, formerly the Holyoke Hotel, c. 1890 (Courtesy of the Holyoke History Room)

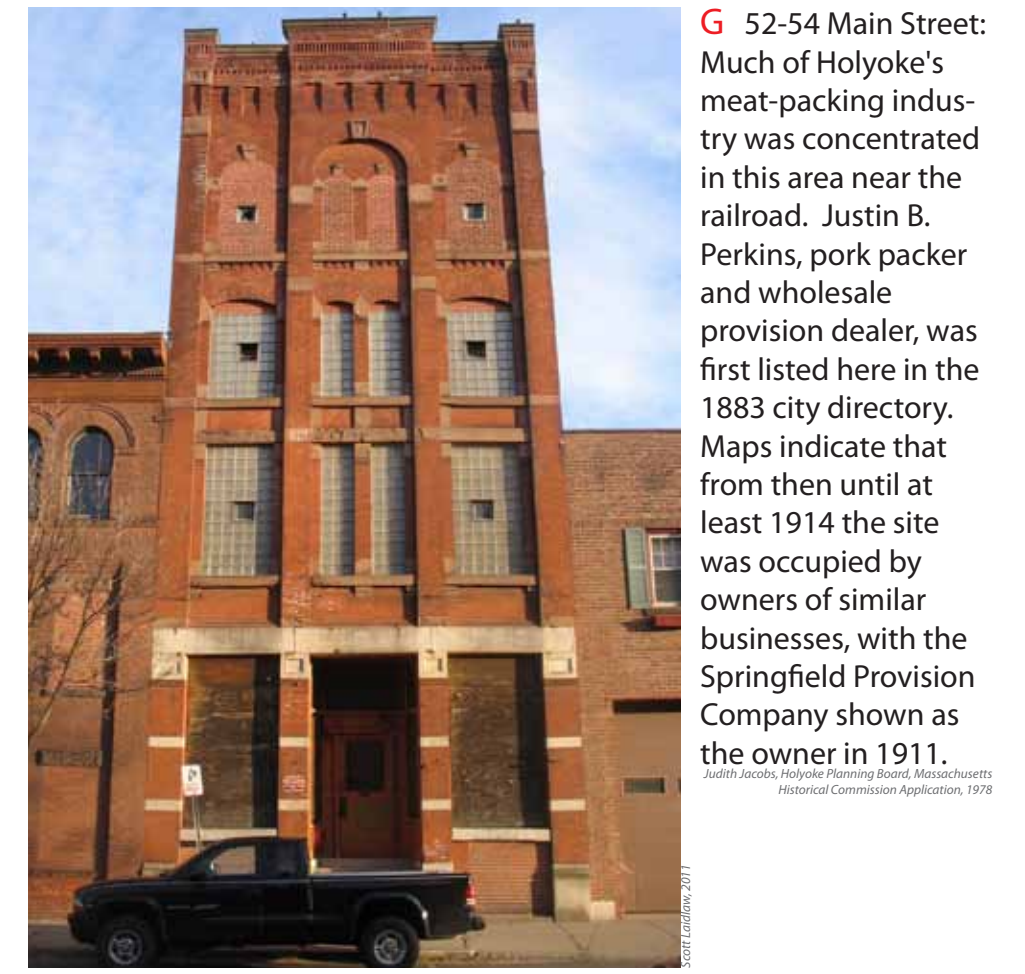
1911 Richards & Company Map of Holyoke - Building indexed by letter (red for surviving buildings, blue for demolished buildings)



1911 MAP OF DEPOT SQUARE AREA



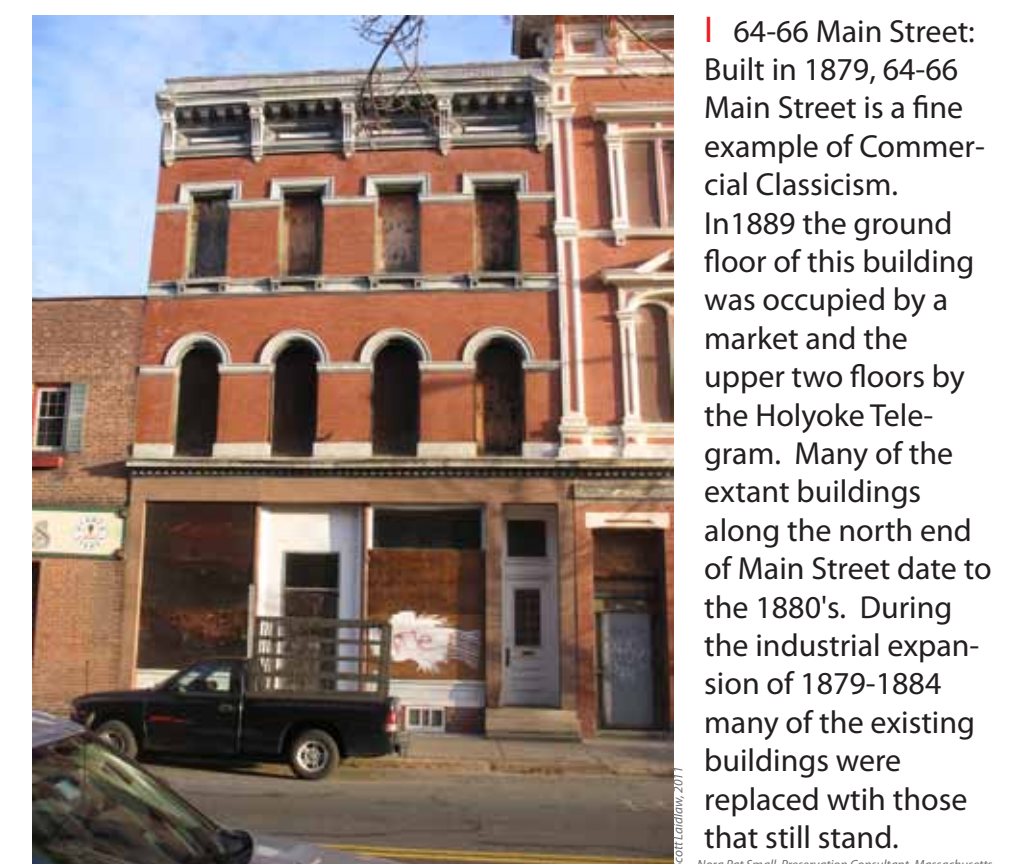
F 44-48 Main Street: Henry L. Russell, owner of this site by 1911, was the proprietor of J. Russell and Co., founded in the nineteenth century by his grandfather Joel Russell. The Company expanded considerably under Henry's direction, evolving into three divisions of which wholesale hardware was one. 44-48 Main Street was the hardware warehouse. 44 Main Street appears to have been built in a style more closely associated with warehouses. Renovations appear to be in process as of December, 2011, with new windows being installed on the second and third floors.



G 52-54 Main Street: Much of Holyoke's meat-packing industry was concentrated in this area near the railroad. Justin B. Perkins, pork packer and wholesale provision dealer, was first listed here in the 1883 city directory. Maps indicate that from then until at least 1914 the site was occupied by owners of similar businesses, with the Springfield Provision Company shown as the owner in 1911.



H 56-62 Main Street: The 2002 application for historic district designation reports that this building dates from 1874 or 1875. The report also notes that the top floor was removed sometime between 1895 and 1915. The windows, doors, and shutters were all in place by the time of the 2002 report.



I 64-66 Main Street: Built in 1879, 64-66 Main Street is a fine example of Commercial Classicism. In 1889 the ground floor of this building was occupied by a market and the upper two floors by the Holyoke Telegram. Many of the extant buildings along the north end of Main Street date to the 1880's. During the industrial expansion of 1879-1884 many of the existing buildings were replaced with those that still stand.

MAIN STREET BETWEEN DWIGHT AND APPLETON STREETS



J 77-79 Main Street (the blue building on the right): In an 1887 photograph of Depot Square, this building is four stories high with a mansard roof enclosing the 4th story. At that time, it appears to have housed a saloon on the ground floor with dwellings on the 2nd and 3rd (it is unclear what the 4th floor was used for, if it was even there in 1884), and wrought iron window frames can still be seen around a boarded up storefront and either side of a recessed central door.

K 81-87 Main Street (the yellow and red brick building on the left): Although currently a two story brick building, an 1884 photograph shows that it once had a third floor. In 1884 the Central Hotel was located in 87 Main Street while a saloon and a tailor occupied the building's other two ground floor storefronts. The upper two floors were used as dwellings.



L 170-190 Main Street: This is the location of the old passenger and freight depot. The property and buildings are currently owned by William Johnson and house a car repair shop and dealership. Two buildings on the property are recorded by the Assessor's Office to have been built in 1920. The locations of the buildings, however, appear to correspond with two sections of the freight depot as it appears on both the 1884 and 1915 Sanborn Maps. It may be that these sections were simply rebuilt in 1920, but it may be worth investigating further their age. Regardless of their age, renovations and additions to the original buildings are apparent.



M 125 Main Street: This property is noted to date from 1978. While a modern addition may indeed date from 1978, the south side and portions of the front of this building appear to be much older, perhaps dating from the 19th century. The front left corner was built to conform to the rail tracks that once passed from the depot across Main Street over to Race Street. Not enough of the original building remains to be certain of its age, although an 1884 map shows a three story building at this location that closely matches the footprint of what still exists.



N 161-167 Main Street: The Holyoke Assessor's Office records this building as having been built in 1880, at a time before the section of Main Street across from Depot Square had lost its commercial district primacy to High Street. It is currently a two story building, although it appears to have lost at least one upper story, judging from the brickwork on the façade. Both the 1877 and 1881 bird's eye perspective drawings made of Holyoke show three and four story buildings in this stretch of Main Street; possibly this is one of them.

SURVIVING BUILDINGS



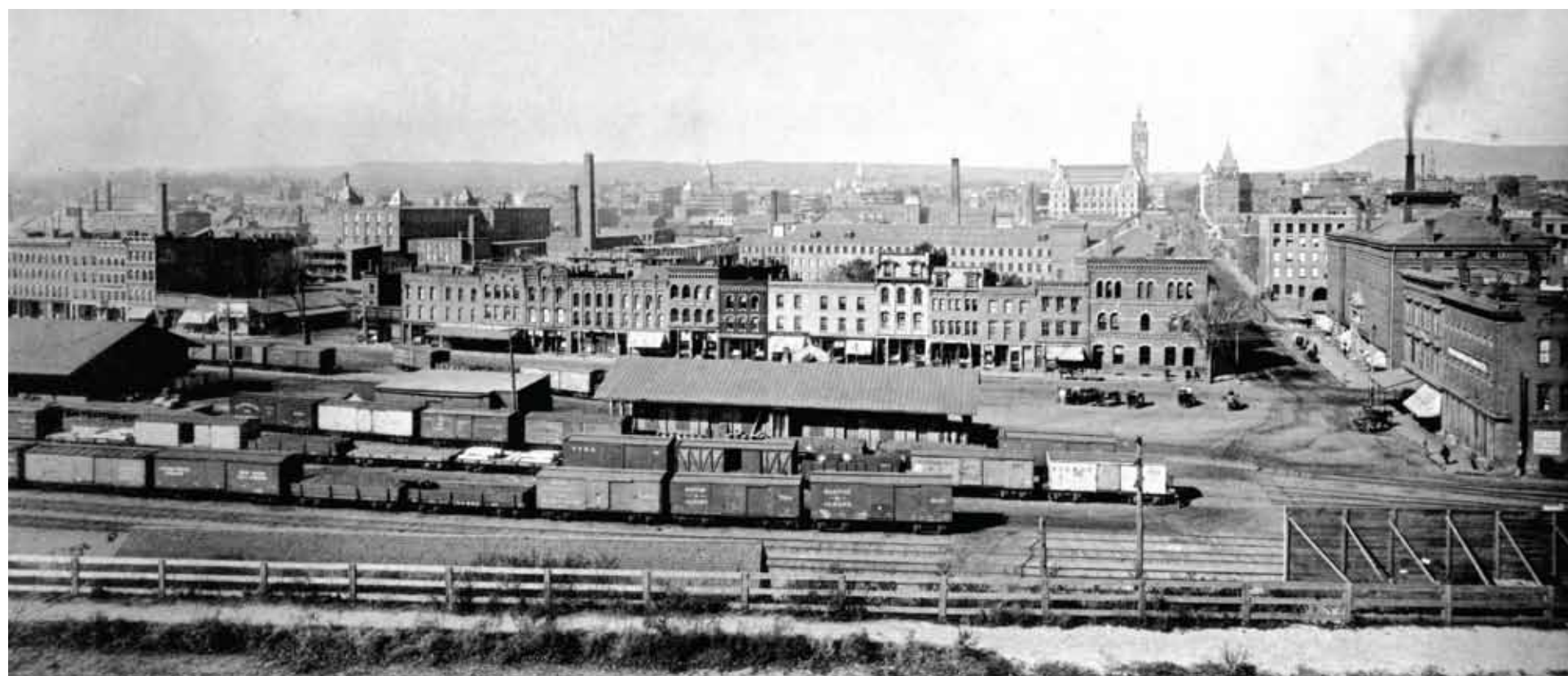
The original passenger depot at Depot Square, with Depot Hill in the background; teams and wagons often waited in Depot Square awaiting customers needing assistance in hauling or moving; teams can be seen on the Lyman Street bridge over the Second Canal with the Holyoke Train Station just visible beyond the railroad's covered bridge; the intersection of Main, Race, Canal, and Mosher Streets, with the Parsons Block on the right, the Hotel Monat on the left, and Holy Rosary Church in the distance (Courtesy of the Holyoke History Room)



The view from the stairway that descended Depot Hill to Depot Square, c. 1890 (Courtesy of the Holyoke History Room)



View north along Main Street from Depot Square; many of the buildings in the foreground still stand, including the Holyoke Hotel on the left and the first six storefronts on the left (Courtesy of the Holyoke History Room)

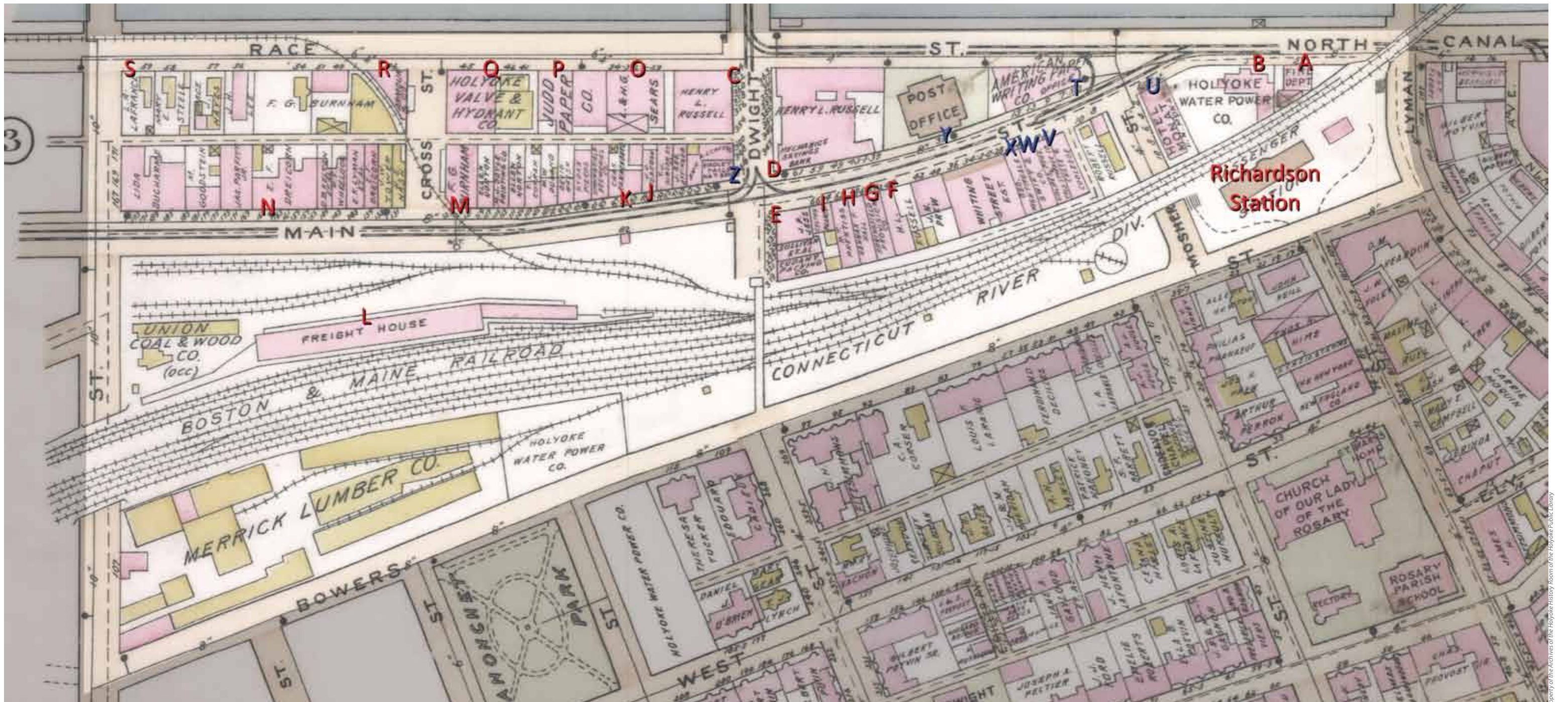


The view from atop Depot Hill of Depot Square, Main Street, and the city rising beyond the canals into the distance, c. 1890 (Courtesy of the Holyoke History Room)



The intersection of Main Street and Dwight Street, with the city hall visible up the hill, c. 1900 (Courtesy of the Holyoke History Room)

1911 Richards & Company Map of Holyoke - Building indexed by letter (red for surviving buildings, blue for demolished buildings)



RACE STREET BETWEEN DWIGHT AND APPLETON STREETS



O 80 Race Street: This block was built by Henry G. and Lemuel Sears around 1896 and is a fine example of late 19th century classicism. Henry came from Shelburne Falls and Lemuel came from Ashfield. The two formed a partnership in 1870 that lasted until Lemuel's death in 1912. The pair built a wholesale and retail grocery from that became one of the most successful in Western Massachusetts.



P 92 Race Street: In 1921, the building occupied by the Judd Paper Company burned to the ground at this spot. The Judd Paper Company was a wholesale paper dealer and mill supplier in the Paper City; the city directory first listed them on Race Street in 1892. The current building was built in 1923.



Q 116 Race Street: This building is typical of the small light industrial buildings of the early 20th century. It appears that the building was damaged or destroyed in the 1921 fire at the neighboring Judd Paper Company from 1924 plans for alterations to extant building dating.



R 130 Race Street: The south east side of this brick warehouse, most likely built sometime between 1904 and 1906, is built on a curve to accommodate the freight line that connected tracks along the canal on Race Street to the Depot Square freight yard and the primary north-south tracks of the Boston & Maine Railroad. Traces of the loading docks that faced the tracks can still be seen. This triangular building was built for the national meat packing company, Armour & Company.



S 176-186 Race Street: As with other 20th century industrial buildings, the façade is dominated by large metal framed windows. The brick facing likely covers a steel substructure and helps the building to blend into a streetscape dominated by structural brick buildings. Some city directories suggest that this building may have been built by American Produce and Fruit Company. It was built circa 1920.

1911 MAP OF DEPOT SQUARE AREA