

WASHINGTON HERITAGE REGISTER

A) Identification

Historic Name: **Northern Pacific RR Water Tank - Roy**
Common Name:
Address: Directly east of the intersection of Warren Street & 1st Street
City: Roy County: Pierce

B) Site Access (describe site access, restrictions, etc.)

South on Pacific Ave. (Hwy 7) right to the Roy Y follow into Roy travel across railroad tracks left on Gregg Higgins Rd. water tank on right side of Railroad Tracks.

C) Property owner(s), Address and Zip

Name: City of Roy
Address: 214 McNaught Rd S.
City: Roy State: WA Zip: 98580

D) Legal boundary description and boundary justification

Tax No./Parcel: Lot 6 Block Bin WE ¼ of NW ¼ section 34 Boundary
Boundary Justification: Justification: Township 18 North, range 2 East at Roy Washington located on the right of way of property of railway company at Roy.

FORM PREPARED BY

Name: Carol Dittbenner
Address: 28605 73rd Ave S.
City / State / Zip: Roy Phone:
Email: Caroldittbenn2016@icloud.com Nomination Date: July 2018

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E) Category of Property (Choose One)

- building structure (irrigation system, bridge, etc.) district
 object (statue, grave marker, vessel, etc.) cemetery/burial site
 historic site (site of an important event) archaeological site
 traditional cultural property (spiritual or creation site, etc.)
 cultural landscape (habitation, agricultural, industrial, recreational, etc.)

F) Area of Significance – Check as many as apply

- The property belongs to the early settlement, commercial development, or original native occupation of a community or region.
- The property is directly connected to a movement, organization, institution, religion, or club which served as a focal point for a community or group.
- The property is directly connected to specific activities or events which had a lasting impact on the community or region.
- The property is associated with legends, spiritual or religious practices, or life ways which are uniquely related to a piece of land or to a natural feature.
- The property displays strong patterns of land use or alterations of the environment which occurred during the historic period (cultivation, landscaping, industry, mining, irrigation, recreation).
- The property is directly associated with an individual who made an important contribution to a community or to a group of people.
- The property has strong artistic, architectural or engineering qualities, or displays unusual materials or craftwork belonging to a historic era.
- The property was designed or built by an influential architect, or reflects the work of an important artisan.
- Archaeological investigation of the property has or will increase our understanding of past cultures or life ways.

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G) Property Description

The nominated property is located just east of the intersection of Warren St and S 1st Street in the heart of downtown Roy. It encompasses the railroad water tank, and the pump house and well site. The site is flat, covered in grass and is adjacent to the Pacific Northern Railroad tracks.

The water tank is 15' in diameter wood stave unit constructed of old growth fellow fir which is strapped together by 16 metal hoops. The tank holds approximately 16,696 gallons of water. The stave is covered in a conical roof clad in rolled asphalt. The tank sits approximately 16' above the ground and is supported by a series of metal legs resting on concrete pads. This five and a half foot framing system has smaller diagonal cross members to keep the structure in square. The tank itself is resting on two large "I" beams on the east and west sides. The interior of the metal legs enclose a rectangular frost box clad in horizontal drop siding. This box protects the well pipes from freezing in cold weather.

Just north of the water tank is a small pump house. This simple structure has a shed roof and is completely clad in corrugated metal. The west façade has a window, currently covered in plywood. The east façade has a simple wooden door. Attached to the northwest corner is an enclosed picket fence area covering a hand dug well. The well is covered with wooden boards.

H) Significance

The community of Roy began as a whistle stop of the Northern Pacific Railroad (NPRR) *Prairie Line* which began regular rail operation from Kalama to Tacoma in May of 1874. Work had begun on the Pacific Division of the Northern Pacific Railway in 1870 and by July of 1871 twenty-five miles of track had been laid northward from Kalama. By the following year an additional forty miles were built. After some delay the railroad reached Tacoma when the last spike was driven by General McCarver at about 3 o'clock on the afternoon of December 16, 1873.

Initially there was only one station agent and one telegraph office between Tacoma and Kalama, both located at Tenino. However the physical needs to the train itself facilitated the need to have various refueling points along the lines. Early trains were steam powered and they could only go a certain distance without having to refill their boilers back up with water. The future community of Roy, initially called Media, happened to be exactly halfway between Tenino and Tacoma, and was the perfect location for a refueling stop. Initially there was just a platform beside the tracks, and a large water tank.

Enticed by looking for a good place to fish, in 1883 James McNaught (General Counsel for NPRR) and Dr. Samuel Warren (NPRR physician in charge of the incidents on the between Tenino to Tacoma), embarked in Media to fish in an area that McNaught had recently purchased. McNaught's purchase was slightly over 600 acres. Impressed by the possibilities of the region, Dr. Warren suggested that,

...a town should be located in that beautiful section and an organized settlement established if only to furnish conveniences and accommodations to the fishermen (Baccuss 1995:19).

McNaught took his friend's advice and filed a plat for a town in January of 1894. McNaught wanted to name the town "Warren" after his friend, but Warren said no, and suggested it should be named after the man who laid out the town. Reportedly McNaught wanted his town to have a short name so he decided to name it after his oldest son, Roy (Baccuss 1995:19). Within two short years the town, which overlaid the main rail that ran right through the heart of town grew exponentially. By 1896 the community had a proper depot, several hotels, warehouses, a school and a variety of small businesses.

McNaught, never lived in Roy but Dr. Warren, settled there with his family and erected the first permanent building, a hotel. That first spring it was booked solid with fisherman. So many, in fact that Warren had to quickly improvise a large pile of old lumber into bunks for additional accommodations (Baccuss 1995:19). The town was on its way to becoming a thriving robust community.

While the population of the county was increasing, the lumber industry was also developing. In Roy, the Betchard lumber mill moved to a new site across the railroad tracks to be closer to the railroad. Further growth was spurred by on by hop farming in the surrounding area. As a stop on the line, soon Roy became an important shipping hub for regional farmers. The population reached 315 people by 1910. Many businesses moved to Roy to be close to the railroad and the ease shipping and receiving of goods. Roy was incorporated on January 1908.

At the time an increasing number of trains were being routed through Roy. In 1910 an agreement was brokered by the NP to grant trackage rights on their line to the Union Pacific Railroad (UP), also known as the Oregon, Washington Railroad & Navigation (OWR&N), and to the Great Northern Railroad (GN). With the addition of the other railroads, activity was at an all-time high for the mostly single track line. Author Louis T. Renz reports in his book "The History of The Northern Pacific Railroad" that daily totals from the three railroads were 22 passenger trains and 18 freight trains -- and those figures were on the increase.

While the increased traffic may have been good for business in Roy, the heavy use of the line facilitated a need to improve railroad operations, and NP began looking for other more efficient routes to get trains into Tacoma. The goal was to have the line from double tracked, straightened, and reduced in gradient. The same had already been completed on the Kalama-Portland segment in 1909.

Since a portion of the “*Prairie Line*” south of Tacoma contained 2.2 miles of 2.2% grade, the NP desired a much flatter grade into Tacoma. The new line was to diverge at Tenino, follow the grade of the NP-owned *Port Townsend Southern Olympia* branch for six miles to Plumb, and then head northeast toward Nisqually and Steilcoom. The line would then follow the Sound to Point Defiance, entered a tunnel at Ruston to the Commencement Bay side of the Point, then turned south into Tacoma.

Since the new line was at water level and contained no grades to speak of (.3% maximum), the NP did not complain about increasing the length of the Tenino-Tacoma segment from 39.18 to 43.71 miles. The line was completed with double track in December 1914 which corresponded with the opening of Tacoma’s new Union Station.

The GN and UP were given a choice of moving operations to the new “*Point Defiance Line*” or to continue using the “*Prairie Line*”. The UP rerouted all passenger and freight business to the new line on December 15, 1914 whereas the GN decided to keep all operations on the *Prairie Line*. The NP moved most of its mainline freight and passenger business to the new line. The June, 1916, NP Public Timetable shows only one NP Seattle-Portland passenger train and one Grays Harbor train (Tacoma-Lakeview) remaining on the *Prairie Line*.

Still during 1916 there were reportedly 22 trains by passing through the community of Roy with 17 scheduled stops in the community for freight pickup and drop-off. By the mid-1920s NP still maintained a timetable station in Roy where they handled train orders via a telegrapher at the depot.

As was the case for most industry and business, the 1930s saw great decline for railroad business which resulted in many line and station closures. The *Prairie Line* was no exception to this and services were further cut back. By 1935, only Yelm, Lakeview and South Tacoma hosted telegraph operators (days only) between Tacoma and Tenino.

The *Prairie Line* through Roy lost its through passenger service on August 8, 1943 when the GN moved the Seattle-Portland pool passenger train over to the double track *Point Defiance line*. After 1943 only local periodic train traffic to serve industries came through Roy and the line was used as an occasional alternative route for large loads.

Despite train schedules, the community of Roy had its share of trials and tribulations. The town had been dealt with devastating fires ever since its establishment in 1884. Due to the town’s lack of a working water system, there was no fire department to serve the community. Each time a portion of the downtown commercial district caught fire the Tacoma Fire Department was summoned to fight the blaze. It was a 20 mile race to Roy from Tacoma. By the time the firefighters arrived, a good portion of town would have already burned to the ground. Roy endured fourteen notable fires from 1889 to 1936. The fact that portions of the business district sporadically burned down contributed to the eventual downturn of Roy’s economy.

Another factor in Roy's economic bust was the U.S. Army's 1917 acquisition of large portions of land north and west of the town. This cut Roy off from existing and potentially new commerce with the surrounding communities.

In 1970, both the Northern Pacific and the Great Northern lost their individual identities when they merged with the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy and the Seattle, Portland & Spokane to make one large company: the Burlington Northern (BN) railroad. In 1973 the restricted clearances of the *Point Defiance line* was suddenly improved and as a result, the need for the *Prairie Line* as an alternate route was eliminated.

In 1986, BN severed the "*Prairie Line*" from the main line at Tenino and took the line south of Yelm out of service. Then in April of 2003, BN took the northern most 2.1 miles of the *Prairie Line* out of service due to the cost involved in constructing a crossing for the Tacoma Sounder light rail. Tacoma trains now travel to Nisqually on the *Point Defiance Line* and backtrack to reach the still intact segment of the *Prairie Line* between South Tacoma and Roy. Occasionally BN crews deliver grain cars to the Wilcox Farms at the Roy elevator.

The nominated water tank is a replacement tank, installed c. 1910. Historic images and Sanborn maps show a large water tank approximately in the same location as the existing tank. While dimension are unknown, the first tank appears to have a diameter twice the size of the existing and was resting closer to the ground on shorter piers.

At first, reportedly water was first pumped into the tank from nearby Muck creek. At a date unknown a hand dug well just north of the tank was later used to fill the water tank. The tank was a standardized structure that was most likely order in mass from one of the many tank & silo companies whom operated around the United States.

It most likely continued to be used at least until the mid-1950s when needed for steam trains passing through the community. Nationwide, the phase out of steam trains began in the mid 1940s and was accelerated in the PNW after a train wreck in downtown Renton in 1955. The NP ran their last steamer in 1957.

That same year NP sold the water tank to the town of Roy. The bill of sale to the city shows the community paid \$50.00 for the water tank, pump, pumphouse and well. The total area of property was 3,000 sq ft. The railroad maintained ownership of the land and least the site to the city for an annual fee of \$10. The city's goal at the time was to utilize the water facility to provide water for Peirce County Fire District #17.

As time went on the tank became a source of civic pride for the community. By the early 1990s, the tank was restored using donated funds ad volunteer labor. By 2017 lease of the land from BNSF had increased to \$1,026.55

Today the water tank represents the prosperity Roy and is a direct connection to its railroad past. Recently a "Save the Water Tower" Committee" has been formed and is working towards restoration and long term preservation of the structure. The city of Roy

has recently placed a temporary chain-link fence around the water tank, the pump house and well to protect the structures for vandalism.

The NP Water tank in Roy is one of the few surviving such structures in the state, a once common railroad feature which was ubiquitously found along rail lines every about every 30 miles. While some wooden stave tanks can be found the only other wood railroad tank is in Moses Lake.

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I) Documentation

Xerox and attach any information or evidence that supports the property's significance.

Written Sources (books, articles, newspapers):

The Look of Old Time Washington, by Lucile McDonald and Werner Lenggenbager 1971 pg. 107

History of Roy, Washington 1884-1944 by Walter Kunschak pg 68A early photo of Roy Roy Area Pierce County, Washington an historical overview 1995 compiled by Janet Nixon Baccus

Prairie Line Terminal Section: Catalog of Character Defining Features – Artifacts Consulting, 2011

Prairie Line Rail Corridor: Historic and Cultural Assessment Report – Artifacts Consulting, Dec. 2016

Roy City Council

1932 Meeting Minutes September 19, 1932. In Roy City Council Minutes, 1908-2006.

Electronic resource, Washington State Archives Digital Archives

<http://digitalarchives.wa.gov>, accessed July 2016.

1934 Meeting Minutes January 15, 1934. In Roy City Council Minutes, 1908-2006. Electronic resource, Washington State Archives Digital Archives <http://digitalarchives.wa.gov>, accessed July 2016.

Throssell, Charles

1995 Roy Businesses. In Roy Area Pierce County, Washington An Historical Overview (Janet Baccus, editor).

Burlington Northern Archives, Burien Washington Gary Tarbox (email)

Oral History/Interviews:

Cecelia Hansen, City of Roy Librarian, did research on the Water Tank years back and assisted the Lions club with information on the water tank they replaced the roof as it was beginning to cave in and a star on the top, she retired from the school district where she was the Roy Librarian for many years.

Jim Rotondo, Retired, worked for the Roy Fire Department and he remembers using the water tank for the Roy fire department tanker to put out brush fires and house fires in and around the Roy area, he moved on to Lakewood fire department until his retirement. He also grew up in Roy with

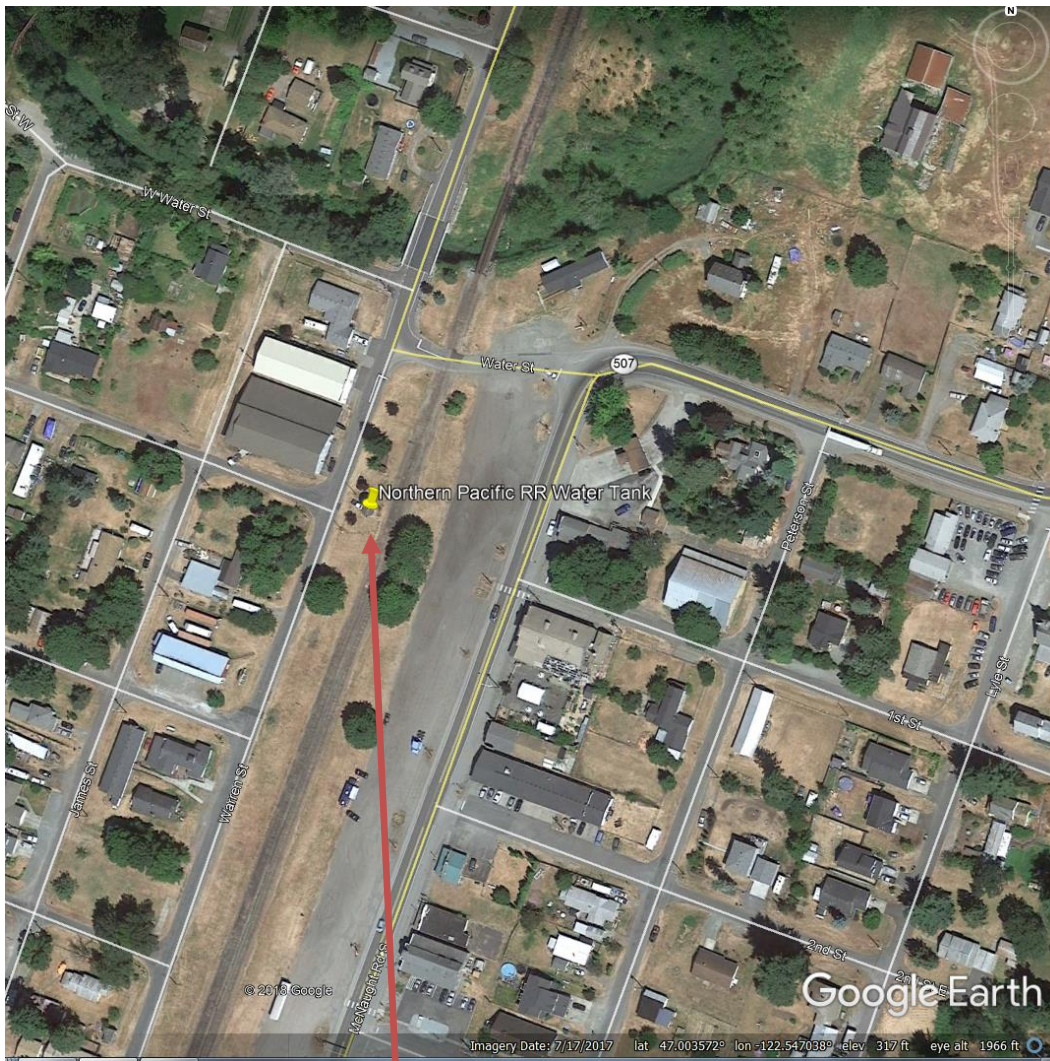
many of the other young folks around here. He remembers the long metal tube that they used to take water from the tank to the fire trucks, he said is laid by the tank for years and then disappeared.

Kenneth DittBenner, retired, grew up in Roy and has lived his all of his life, has known many of the folks mentioned in the various documents and books mentioned. Personally has known Janet Nixion Baccas, we purchased her book years ago. Ken has shared the history of Roy with younger folks around Roy, telling them who lived where. His grandmother and grandfather ran the Grand Hotel in Roy, his grandfather also played in the band at Judge Roy Beans when it was the dance hall. He also Provided a lot of the information regarding the Water Tank for this report.


Leon Garrison, grew up in Roy and was a part of the Lions club that remodeled the old Roy School gym they found old photos of Roy and placed them in the Roy Library and some at the Roy school to share with everyone. His family lived by the water tank and does remember it having better days.

J) Map and Photographs

Attach copies of historic maps or photos if available, and current photos (5 x 7 B & W). Include a current map – appropriate U.S.G.S. map and parcel map – with the location of the property and its boundaries clearly marked. (see instructions)



Google Earth - Edit Placemark

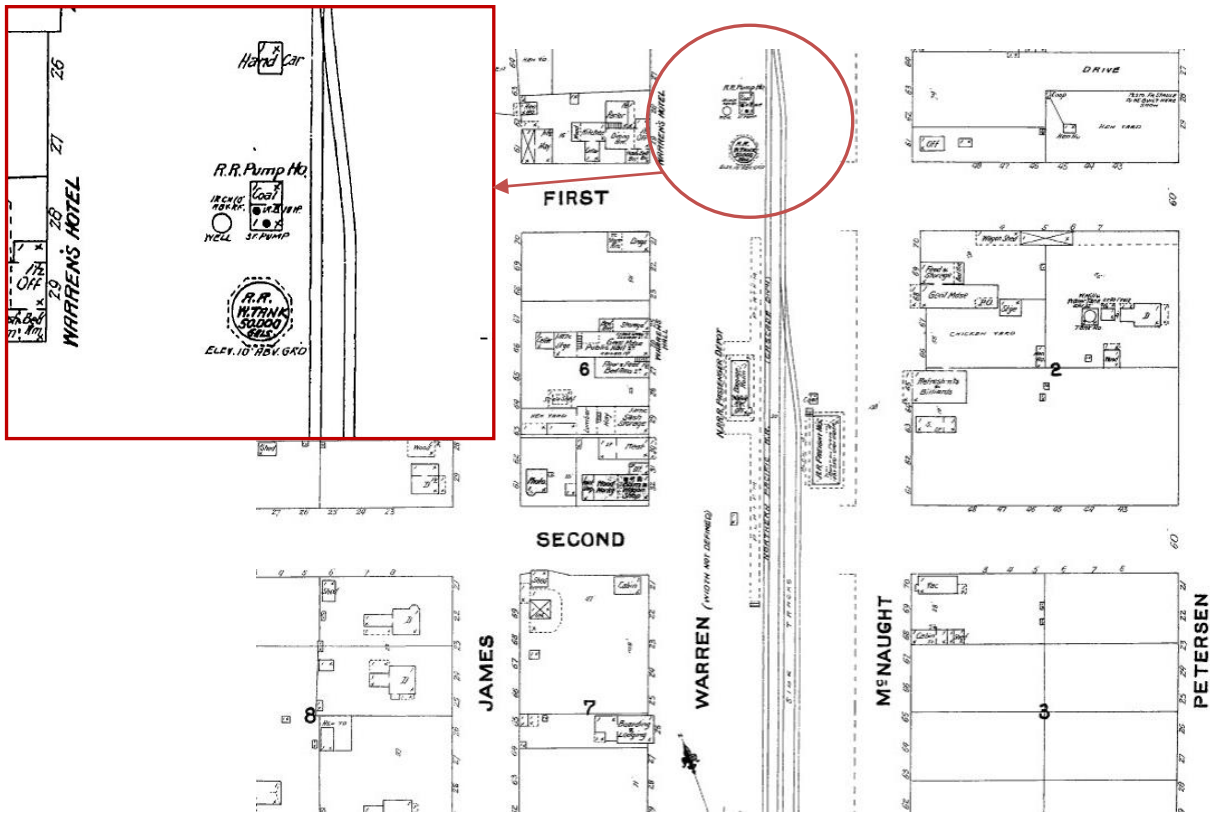
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Latitude:

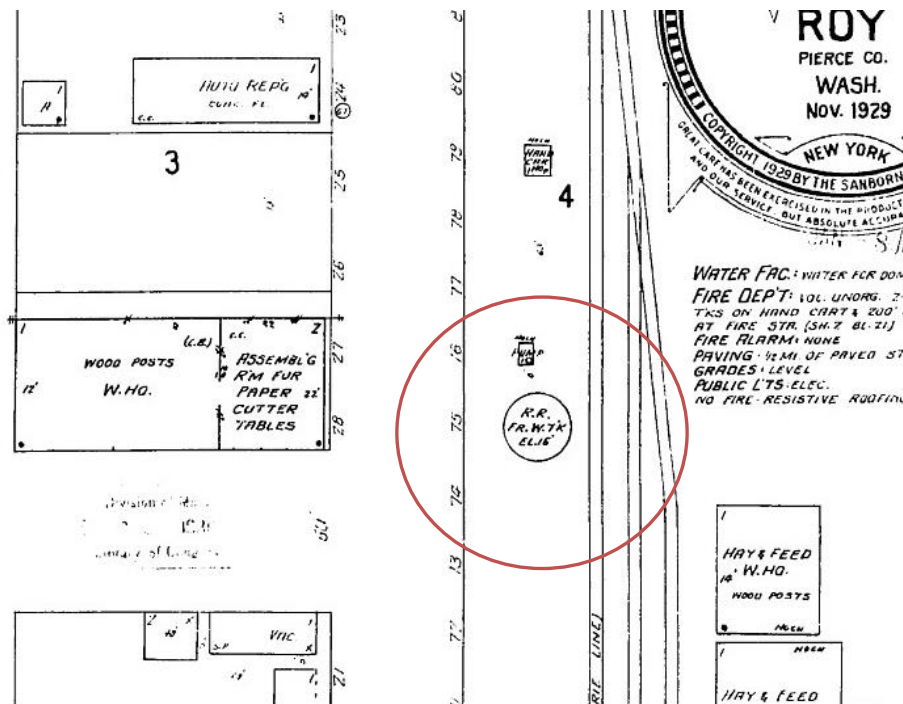
Longitude:



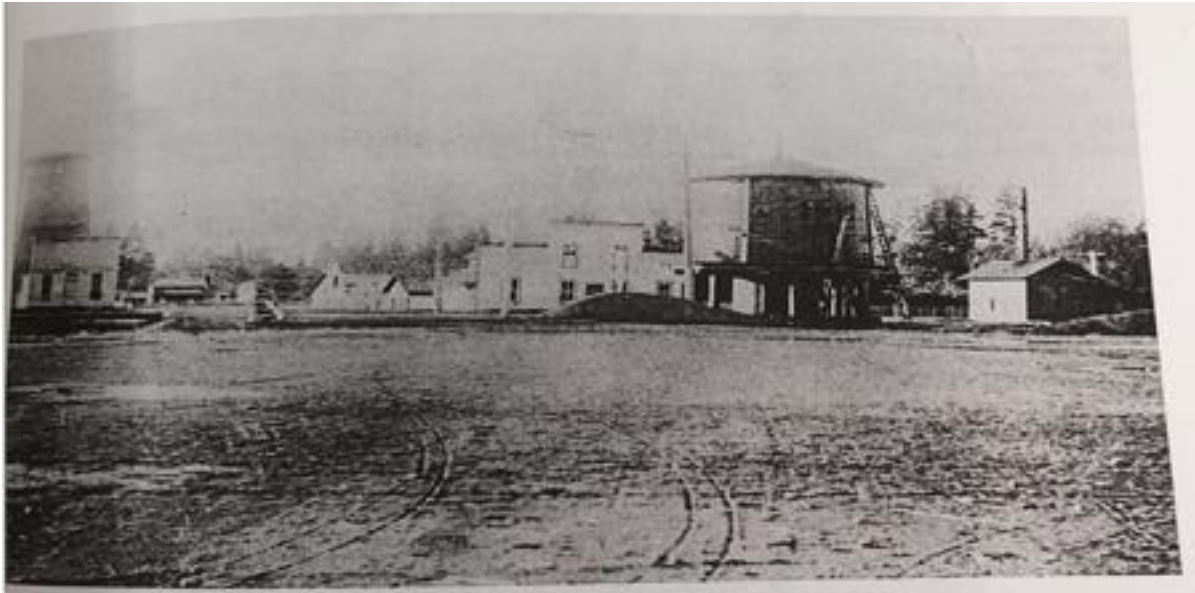
Northern Pacific RR Water Tank
Site Plan



Sanborn Map – Sheet 1, 1896
 Showing first larger water tank at 10' above ground



Sanborn Map – Sheet 1, 1926
 Showing existing water tank at 16' above ground



Early Photo of Roy's first Water tank. Note size and height of this early tank.
 Image courtesy of "History of Roy, Washington" by Walter Kunschak 1884-1944

TIME TABLE OF TRAINS RUNNING THROUGH ROY IN 1912

Time Table of N.P., G.N., & O.&W. Trains
 Roy, Wash.
 Effective Sunday, February 18, 1912

No.	363 wst bd.	1:30 A.M.	O.&W.
	355	12:45	G.N.
	301	2:21	N.P.
	361	9:33	O.&W.
	357	12:15 P.M.	G.N.
	307	10:24 A.M.	N.P.
	311	1:25 P.M.	O.&W.
	369	1:49	O.&W.
	333	2:30	N.P.
	359	5:42	G.N.
	313	6:05	N.P.
	360 east bd.	5:08 A.M.	G.N.
	364	3:57	O.&W.
	302	4:15	N.P.
	308	11:35	N.P.
	362	12:55 P.M.	O.&W.
	358	2:07	G.N.
	314	2:48	N.P.
	370	6:22	O.&W.
	312	6:53	O.&W.
	334	8:07	N.P.
	356	9:20	G.N.

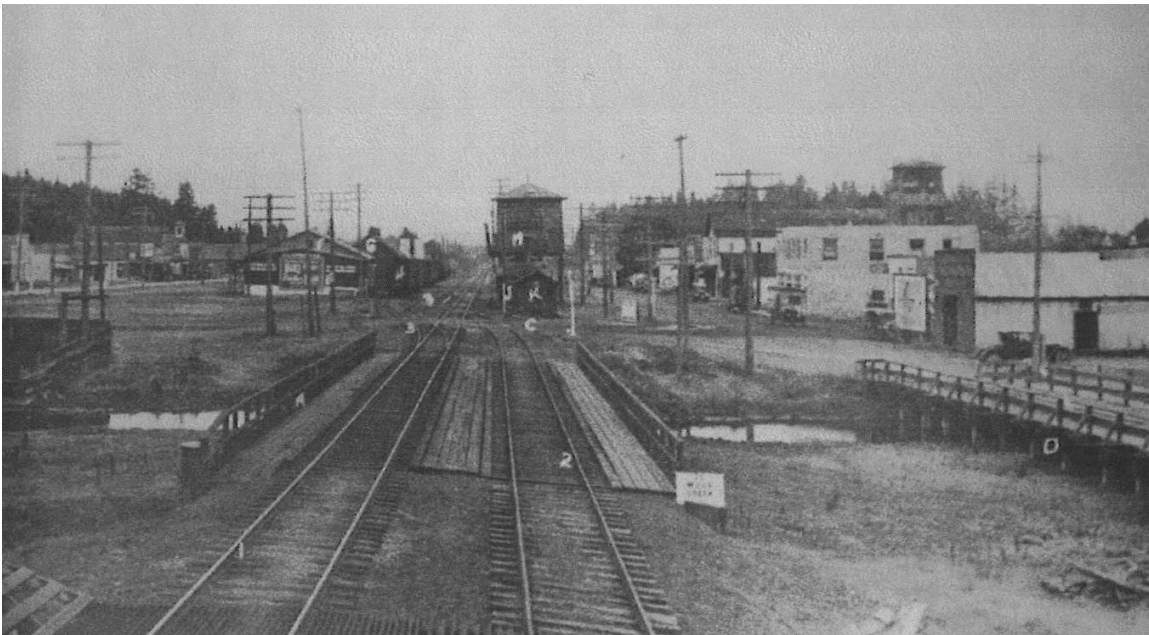
Nos. 311, 359, 314, 312, 356, Don't stop.

Time table of trains running through Roy in 1912,
Roy Enterprise – July 5, 1912



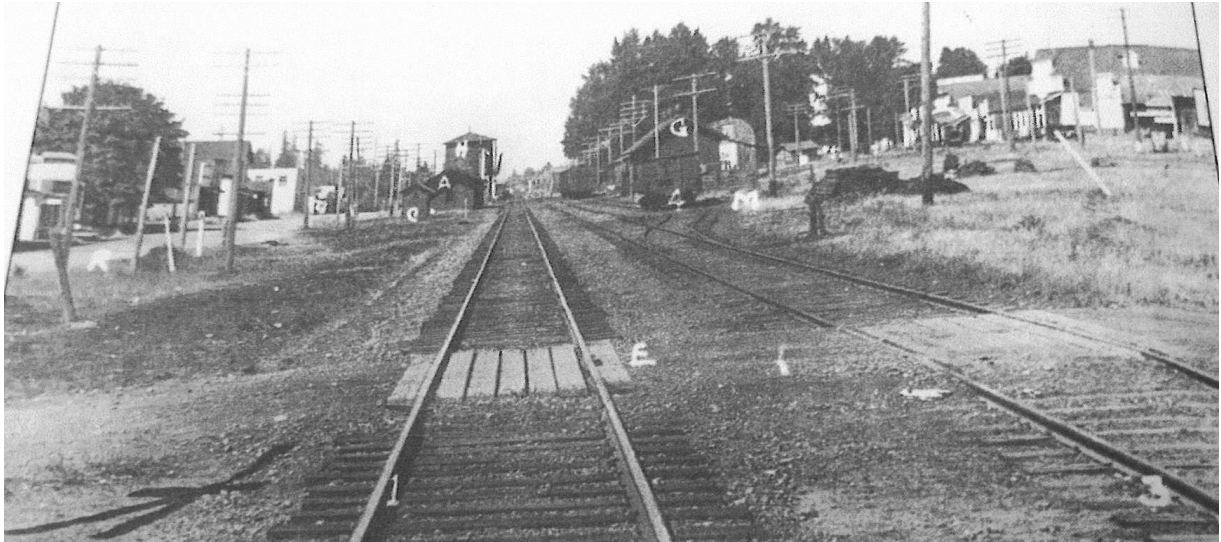
Photo taken c.1915 of Northern Pacific Railroad Station in Roy looking west.
Existing, nominated water tank at far right.

Courtesy of Lorraine Dickens Kearns from Hughes glass negative. Out of book "Roy Area Pierce County, Washington an Historical overview" by Janet Nixon Baccus July 1955 pg 12



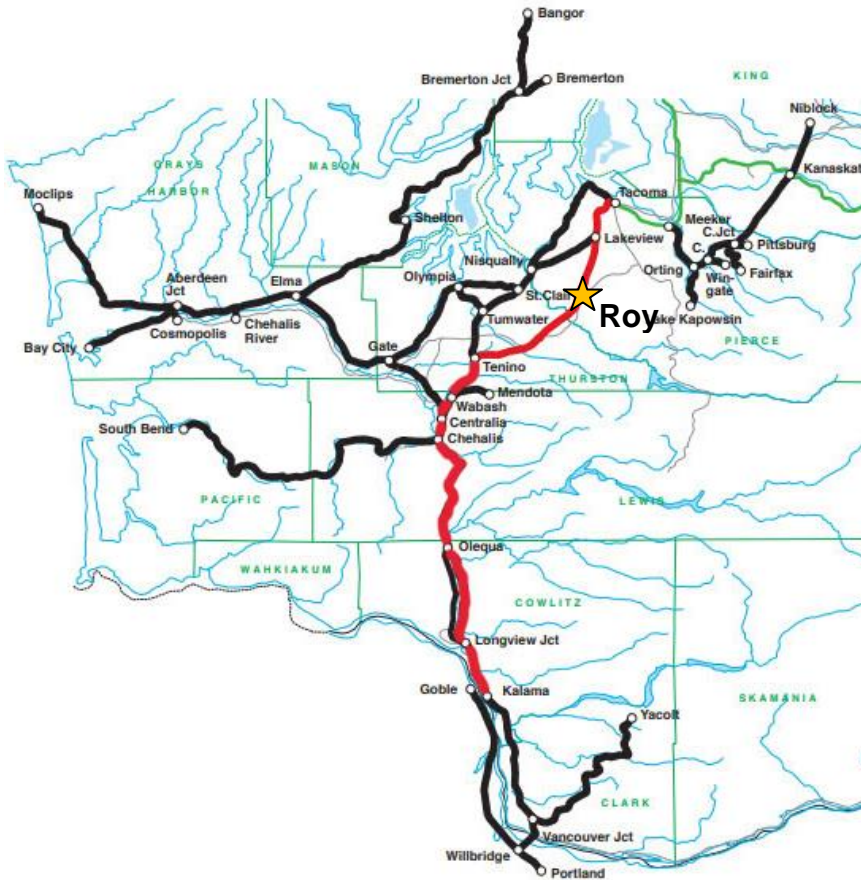
Northern Pacific Railroad Station in Roy looking south. – 1929
Existing/nominated water tank and well at center.

Courtesy of Lorraine Dickens Kearns from Hughes glass negative. Out of book "Roy Area Pierce County, Washington an Historical overview" by Janet Nixon Baccus July 1955 pg 12



Northern Pacific Railroad Station in Roy looking north. – 1929
Existing/nominated water tank at center.

Courtesy of Lorraine Dickens Kearns from Hughes glass negative. Out of book "Roy Area Pierce County, Washington an Historical overview" by Janet Nixon Baccus July 1955 pg 12



Burlington Northern Railroad tracks – "Prairie Line" show in red

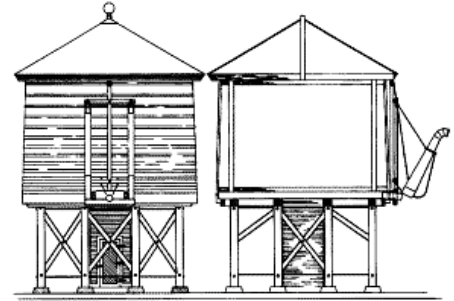
Railroad Tanks



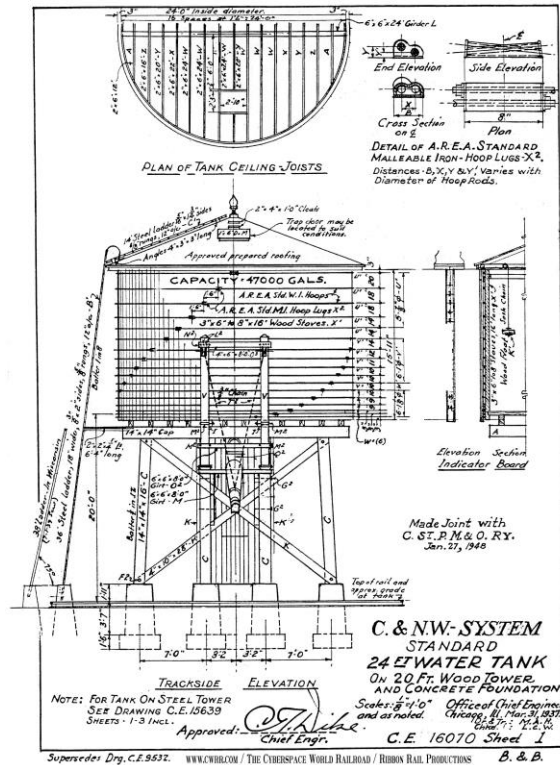
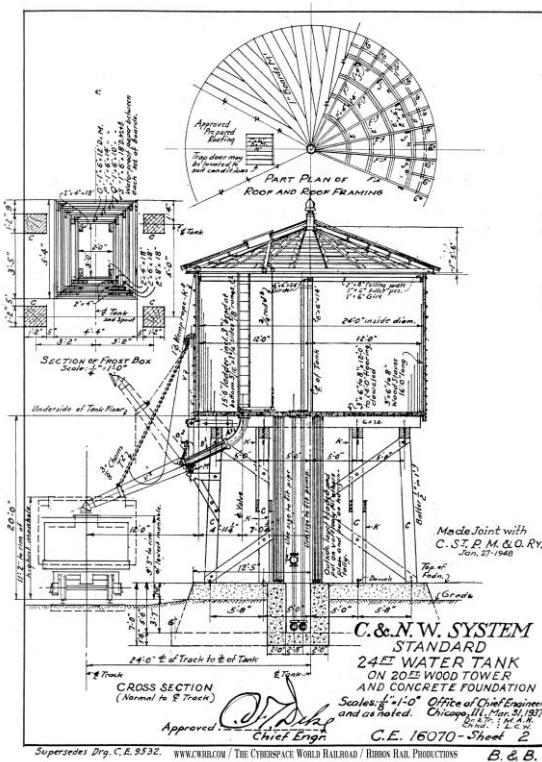
Elevated storage tanks for Railroads or Industrial Companies having their own system of tracks. Complete with fixtures, spout, etc.

Send us specifications or Blue Print for our estimates.

Typical Railroad Water Tank Designs



Kalamazoo Tank & Silo Company Catalogue - 1917



Cut sheets from C & NW System – Standard 24' Water Tank Plan. - 1948





