The Small C&NW Tower at Belle Plaine, Iowa

by Ron Christensen with technical advice from Lloyd Keyser

Photo from Lloyd Keyser collection
The east end lever tower, controlled all the switches from just west of 7th Ave to 8th Avenue. This would include all switches and signals leading to and from the main line tracks as well as the pneumatic crossing gates at 7th, 8th and 9th Avenues.

The North Western also had a larger tower at the west end of the Belle Plaine yard, guarding the north and south branch lines.
Over the years, the C&NW painted its depots and interlocking towers in a variety of color schemes. Originally, depot and tower walls were oxide (or boxcar red) with brown window sash and building trim. Floquil boxcar red works well for the walls while roof brown mixed in a 4:1 ration with reefer white will work well for the trim. Some towers had white window trim rather than the brown.

Later, buff walls with brown trim was the standard paint scheme used on towers. To model this scheme, buff can be made from 80% roof brown and 20% reefer white.

Gray walls with white trim was yet another CNW paint scheme for interlocking towers, SP lettering gray for walls and reefer white for the trim both work well for this version.

Since Floquil is no longer manufactured, it is suggested that a Floquil color chart be used to match present day paints.

- Boxcar red - 110074
- Roof brown - 110070
- Reefer white - 110011
- SP lettering gray - 110011
The same Tama C&NW tower in gray and white scheme. This was the last paint scheme.