

## THE TY TOWER

(excerpts from Cabin Chatter at the Douglas County Museum and articles written by Lynrita Aldridge Brown)

The Illinois Central Gulf, Baltimore and Ohio Chessie System, and Union Pacific (formerly C&EI) railroad lines all intersect on the west side of Tuscola. On Sunday, Dec. 31, 1898, a terrible wreck occurred at 8:25 A.M. at the intersection. A swiftly, moving, heavy freight train on the I. C. track struck the Danville passenger train on the C&EI resulting in injuries and death. The wreck occurred where the TY Tower was later erected. Trains were expected to stop at the intersection; whistle twice and proceed if the track was clear. The C&EI had stopped, whistled twice and proceeded but backed up and was unable to clear the track before it was impacted by the I. C. train. The engine of the C&EI train was thrown off the track and into the ditch on the west side of the I. C. track. It landed on its back, headed toward the north. The tank was thrown 100 feet and landed bottom up on the east side of the Central track. The fireman on the I. C. train was thrown 150 feet and buried under several tons of coal and the heavy tank. Both engines and five cars of the I. C. train were badly damaged.

Earlier in 1898 plans had begun for an interlocking tower. Unfortunately the wreck occurred before the tower plans were finalized. In May of 1899 the public was informed that the tower was on its way. By September 29 the tower was nearly completed, and by November it was installed. The crossing for three railroad lines in Tuscola was then safe. When the interlocking tower first began operation, it featured a derailing bar. If the track was clear, an approaching train could continue through the crossing without the traditional stop and two-whistle warning. On the other hand, if the signal showed that another train had the right of way at a given moment and an approaching train did not hear the signal, it would be derailed by a bar, which clamped over the rail in front of the violating train. This was all manually done. The system provided safety and saved time and money.

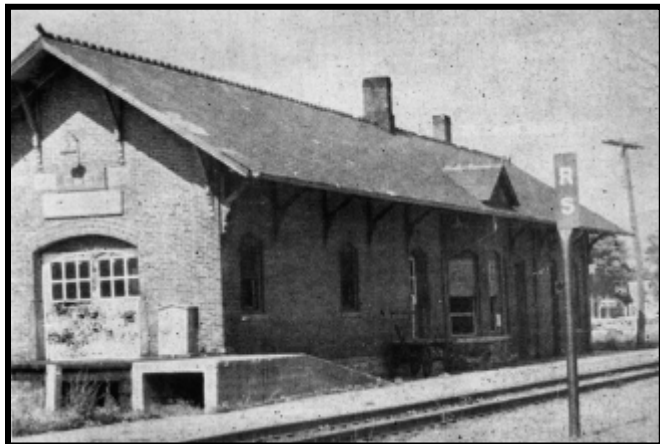
Eighty-nine years later the interlocking tower, fondly known as the TY tower, was razed. An automatic system was adopted.



**Aerial View of TY Tower**



**TY Tower – Interlocking Tower**



**C&E I RAILROAD DEPOT**



**ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILROAD DEPOT**



**B & O RAILROAD DEPOT**



**On the B & O Tracks  
Parallel to S. Central  
Notice the Cattle Catcher  
on the front**



**John and Lena Kinney – 1920's**  
Parents of Delbert and Pauline Kinney  
Grandparent of Leon Kinney and  
Betty Hill, Great grandparents of  
Patti Hill Phillips and Great, Great  
Grandparents of Teri and Mark Phillips