



*Decatur, Illinois Transfer Station  
(pictured right and left)*

August 18, 2022  
Richmond, IN to Decatur, IL  
Decatur, IL to Council Bluffs, IA

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Today we stopped in Decatur, IL to visit the city where ESTAR and SER were fused in the 1917 Decatur Convention. At the time, both were relatively young institutions, ESTAR and SER from 1880 and 1890 respectively. The convention, far from being antagonistic, saw ESTAR and SER come together in the hopes of achieving new vitality – and ultimately, rather than homogenizing the two, resulted in a sort of symbiosis. All of this was done under the auspice of one “Lord Solar de Tejada,” a Spanish aristocrat with some interest in the Birds – and possible Bird himself – who covered the travel cost of many of the European attendees.

The convention was held at the St. Nicholas Hotel, which appears to have been demolished. However, in a photograph of the hotel from 1917 another building looms in the foreground, Decatur’s historic Transfer Station, built in 1892. Though there is no known connection between the Convention and the Transfer Station, it is reasonable to assume that many of the participants in the Convention arrived *by way* of the Transfer Station, whether by horse or trolley. This in itself would not be very curious, except for the fact that the Transfer Station itself exhibited an uncanny Bird-like agility, evading demolition by being carted to Decatur’s Central Park in 1962 – around the same time that “Hogfoot” was reviving the defunct union of ESTAR and SER. A close inspection of the Transfer Station did not yield any clues in this direction.

