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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The city of Torrington lies in a broad, geographical area called the Great Plains. More specifically, it is in an area where the Great Plains meet the Rocky Mountains, called the High Plains. According to geology professor D. L. Blackstone of the University of Wyoming, the High Plains in Wyoming are on a series of flat-lying rocks of Cenozoic age that are partly granitic and partly the debris of volcanoes and mountains further west. The debris was carried eastward by a complex of rivers and, following elevation of the earth's crust, streams cut deeply into it, forming broad-floored valleys. One of these broad-floored valleys was cut by the North Platte River, among the largest streams draining the eastern flank of the Rockies. Flowing in the shape of a "U" in Wyoming, the stream's headwaters are in the Front Range in Colorado. Leaving Colorado the stream becomes a river, heading north to the city of Casper, Wyoming and then east-southeast. Cutting diagonally through Goshen County and south of the city of Torrington, it leaves the state in the southeast corner and eventually forms a junction with the South Platte River at North Platte, Nebraska.

Topographically Goshen County is generally flat, rolling country although it contains a few eroded buttes rising from the floor of the North Platte Valley, and an upthrust of low-lying hills called the Hartville Uplift in the northwest part of the county. Generally, the altitude of Goshen County is fairly uniform, averaging probably less than 4500 feet. In addition to the North Platte Valley itself, the Rawhide Valley in the north and Horse Creek Valley in the south are distinguishing, topographical features of the county. Together they describe an area known as Goshen Hole.*

The South Torrington Union Pacific Depot is located one-third of a mile south of the North Platte River and about a half-mile south of the city of It is about 100 feet east of U.S. Highway 85 which enters Torrington. Torrington from the south, opposite the sprawling Holly Sugar Company factory on the other side of the highway. The passenger and freight depot, designed by Gilbert Stanley Underwood and Company of Los Angeles, is of the architectural style known as Spanish Mission, and cost approximately \$33,700. The building appears to be structurally sound, and has seen little change since its construction in 1926. The most striking change noted when viewing historic and contemporary pictures of the depot area is the vegetation which has appeared during the past 48 years. Some of that vegetation may be found within four curbs adjoining the west end of the building. Between the curbs and the Union Pacific railroad tracks to the west is a ten-foot-wide brickyard running the full length of the building. Immediately to the rear of the depot is a railroad spur allowing freight to be

*Although there are several explanations for the source of the name "Goshen", one is that it derives from the Biblical "Land of Goshen", a desert which was made to bloom. Due to reclamation projects along the North Platte River, the Goshen Hole country of Wyoming is a type of analogy.

PERIOD (Check One or More as	Appropriate)		
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In the <u>Description</u> of this nomination it was noted that geologic forces worked to effect a particular geography called the High Plains. The landscape of southeast Wyoming, including the valley of the North Platte River, is part of that geography. It is part of a transitional zone in which is found the basis for three economic industries: agriculture, mining, and transportation and commerce. The growth and interaction of these industries, and concomitant enterprise, beginning with the earliest inhabitants of the region ten thousand or more years ago, has determined the material development of the region. The construction of railroads to serve mines, beet factories, and agricultural centers in the area of the North Platte River Valley is representative of a later manifestation of this economic growth and interaction. The Union Pacific Depot at South Torrington is also representative of that growth.

The first railroad built up the North Platte Valley was the Burlington and Missouri* which by 1900 had been constructed to Guernsey, Wyoming. The first east-west, transcontinental railroad—the Union Pacific—was built south of the North Platte route, where wood and especially coal were more readily available. In 1887, the same year the Chevenne and Burlington was built to Cheyenne from Sterling, Colorado, a more direct rail connection was made between the North Platte Valley and major commercial centers to the south such as Chevenne and Denver. This was done in order to take advantage of the iron mines of the Hartville-Sunrise area. In 1899 rails were laid from the northern terminus of that line to Orin Junction, connecting with the Chicago and North Western Railroad. In 1893 the entire line became known as the Colorado and Southern Railway, and in 1908 came under the ownership of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy. As a result of this and other developments, by 1909 the Burlington had a north-south line from the Pacific Northwest to the Gulf of Mexico, intersecting the North Platte Valley.

*This line subsequently became known as the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy, and today is known as the Burlington Northern.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

South Torrington U.P. (Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

Physical Appearance - 2

unloaded directly onto the loading dock, an elevated wooden platform approximately 100 feet long which is attached to the north end of the depot. South of the depot is a small park, part of which recently has been supplanted by a metal building that, upon abandonment of the old depot building by the railroad, will serve as an office for railroad personnel at South Torrington.

The depot is laid out on a north-south axis and has dimensions of 115 feet in length by 23 feet in width. The north and south ends together comprise slightly more than one-half of the building and are one story in height, while the south-central portion is two stories. The second story is a living quarters containing five rooms: two bedrooms, a living room, kitchen and a bath. The main level contains, from north to south: a freight and baggage room, a holdover room and record room, an agent's office, a passenger waiting room, restrooms, and a private hallway between the restrooms which leads to an upstairs apartment. Two rooms, one containing a furnace and the other storage space, form a basement on the south end of the building. With few exceptions the design of the depot is utilitarian. It is constructed of reinforced concrete, with red-brick trim and a colored-slate roof. The redbrick trim-especially the quoins-displays some random patterns. One change in the exterior of the depot over the years has been the removal of board shutters, and the replacement of the original, random pattern of brick facing on the headers with one which is uniform. The design of the frontdoor framing is somewhat reminiscent of classical Greek architecture, and over the doors is an elaborate plaque with the words "Union Pacific System -The Overland Route." In the middle of the west, or main face, of the building is a bay window enabling station personnel to look directly up or down the nearby railroad track. Within the depot interior the waiting room, exhibiting long, hardwood benches and rafters and a metal chandelier, reflect some concern with aesthetics. However, the overall impression to the casual onlooker is one of a building designed not to be ostentatious, but one designed for a specific, commercial purpose.



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The agricultural lands of the North Platte River Valley in western Nebraska and southeast Wyoming are also tapped by the Union Pacific Railroad.* By 1911 that company had extended its line as far up the North Platte Valley as Gering, Nebraska, and by 1913 it began construction of the North Platte Cutoff. The cutoff consists of a 54.7 mile extension from Gering to South Torrington and a 62.7 mile, north-south line from Yoder, Wyoming to Egbert, located 32 miles east of Cheyenne on the main, transcontinental line. The name of the line derives from the fact that it provides a cutoff or shortcut from the Union Pacific branch along the Upper North Platte River to the main transcontinental The cutoff, completed to Torrington in 1926 and to the main line in line. 1928, eliminated routing of rail shipments from the upper North Platte Valley east to North Platte, Nebraska and then west along the main line. With the construction of the cutoff the distance over Union Pacific lines from Denver, Cheyenne and points west of Cheyenne to the North Platte Valley was shortened by 200 miles. Built with heavy, 90-pound rail and ballasted by gravel quarried west of Cheyenne at Sherman Hill, the cutoff also allows continuation of service in the event of a derailment along the main, double-track system between Chevenne and North Platte, Nebraska. Another result of the cutoff is that increased development was spurred in that agricultural area known as the Horse Creek Valley, or the Hawk Springs-LaGrange District. Finally, the cutoff made the North Platte Valley area accessible to such products as lumber from the west, livestock shipped from the west for winter feeding, and limerock used in seven sugar factories which by 1928 had been built along the North Platte River,

One of those sugar beet factories was the Holly Sugar Company factory built at South Torrington in 1926. This factory, located at the northern end of the North Platte Cutoff, was erected at a time when sugar beet production was rising, nationally. However, it was not the first sugar beet factory in Wyoming. In 1915 a factory was established at Sheridan. The following year one was erected at Lovell, and in 1917 Worland had a plant. Goshen county itself was an important producer of sugar beets prior to 1926. In 1924 the county produced more than twice as many tons of beets as any other county in the state. In 1926, prior to the completion of the sugar factory, 101,700 tons were produced in Goshen County, while Washakie County was next in production with 55,200. Up to 1953 the east-central district of Wyoming (Goshen,

^{*}The resources of the further reaches of the North Platte Valley in Wyoming and Colorado are tapped by two branches of the Union Pacific. The Saratoga and Encampment branch extends from the main Union Pacific track near Walcott Junction to Encampment 40 miles south. The Coalmont Branch, known historically as the Laramie and Hahns Peak Railway, extends from Laramie, Wyoming on the main line to Coalmont in North Park, Colorado.

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Platte, and Laramie counties) produced more tons of beets than any other area of the state, being surpassed in that year by the Big Horn Basin area, and up to 1966 Goshen County was the single biggest producer until it was surpassed by Park County.*

The year 1926 was a year of new growth for Torrington and several, small eastern Wyoming towns such as Yoder, Hawk Springs, LaGrange and Albin. On November 19, 1925 the <u>Torrington Telegram</u> announced that the Union Pacific Railroad Company was surveying a line from Cottier to Torrington in Goshen County, in preparation for construction of a railroad extension to the proposed, 3,000-ton Holly Sugar factory to be built just south of the Torrington city limits. By December 10 the survey work was completed and six acres of land opposite the factory had been purchased for the proposed new Union Pacific Depot. Torrington was thus to have the service of a second railroad, and a new industrial plant. The <u>Telegram</u> editor was ebullient in describing the town's future, and the newspaper that year and the next often featured front-page articles describing the progress of both ventures.

Extensive Union Pacific plans for the community included not only a depot which the <u>Telegram</u> predicted would be one of the finest along the line, but a wye, round house, water tank and shops. Many miles of short, industrial track were to be built in the form of at least three spurs south of Torrington: one south of the North Platte River extending east; one south of the river and extending west; and one south from Yoder to the Horse Creek Valley to further tap the agricultural country of southeast Wyoming. By February a temporary box-car station south of the North Platte River was opened to handle freight that was arriving for construction of the sugar factory.

Although the Union Pacific Railroad won the right to transport Holly sugar from Torrington, the other two railroads in eastern Wyoming were not inactive. On March 11, 1926 the <u>Torrington Telegram</u> announced that the Chicago and North Western Railroad was planning to complete a line from Lusk to Torrington that summer. With the Union Pacific Planning to build from Yoder to their main, double-track system further south, the two extensions would provide the Torrington area with a north-south as well as an east-west railroad line. The Chicago and North Western line did not materialize but the Union Pacific extension was built, bringing with it the benefits noted above.

*Before American entry into World War II Wyoming was in the top half of the nation's sugar beet-producing states, but beginning in 1942 it was in the bottom half. In 1971 America, as an individual country, ranked second only to Russia in the production of sugar beets and Wyoming ranked ninth out of the sixteen, major, sugar-producing states in the country.

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On March 18, 1926 the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy, or Burlington Northern as it is known today, announced that a new wye for Torrington would add passenger service to the freight service their line already provided the city. Two weeks later the same railroad announced that improvements would be made in their Torrington property including a new depot and park, new stockyard scales, and the improvement of coal chute, water towers, and other facilities. Less than two months following the latter announcement the company declared they would initiate a daily, except Sunday, freight service between Bridgeport, Nebraska and Guernsey, Wyoming.

By May 20, 1926 the proposed factory was already scheduled to process 16,000 acres of beets. By that time also an engine house and the main Union Pacific track to Torrington south of the river were completed, allowing materials to be sent to the factory site where 300 men were at work on its construction. By late August of that year factory superintendent Charles Keating reported the Holly factory about 85 per cent complete, with 700 men at work on the The factory was planned for completion in time for the 1926 sugar beet site. harvest which was expected to fill 3,000 railroad cars. The latter estimation represents a considerable increase in the yield of beets south of the North Platte River over the immediate, preceding years, since in 1923 production in terms of carloads of beets amounted to nineteen. In 1924 production was up to 800, and in 1925 it was 1500 carloads. These totals excluded production north of the river around Lingle, and in the Rawhide Valley.

By October construction of the depot at Torrington had advanced far enough to allow the Union Pacific to offer the building to the Lions Club and the town of Torrington for a day and a night for dedication ceremonies. In mid-December, with the Depot nearly completed, R. B. Robinson of Omaha—chief engineer for the Union Pacific—along with his entire office staff arrived in Torrington by private car to inspect the station. By that time also the second-floor, depot apartments were occupied by agent V. C. Horne and family, and the building was ready for its grand opening. Strangely, from that point in time the <u>Torrington Telegram</u> made no reference to the dedication of the depot until December 30, when it noted that N. A. Williams of Cheyenne, Division Superintendent of the Union Pacific, appeared at a Torrington Lions Club meeting, the occasion of his visit concerning the depot dedication.

In conclusion, the interaction of the transportation and agriculture industries in the North Platte Valley is represented by the combined extension of lines, facilities, and services of two railroads and by the construction of the Holly sugar factory at South Torrington. The Union Pacific Depot at South Torrington is also a symbol of that interaction. Uncomplicated in its

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design, it reflects an architectural style which is generally pragmatic and businesslike in its approach. The functionalism expressed by the depot architecture, in turn, is one characteristic of an early twentieth century agricultural community in the American West.

The South Torrington Union Pacific Depot is not quite fifty years old, but will attain that age in 1976, the final year of the celebration of the American Revolution Bicentennial. Presently the people of Goshen County, through the Goshen County branch of the Wyoming State Historical Society and the Goshen County American Revolution Bicentennial Committee, are working together to obtain the building from the Union Pacific Railroad Company. The railroad company, in cooperation with that project, is presently completing a transfer arrangement whereby the city of Torrington will lease the depot, which is located outside the city limits. When the ownership transaction has been completed the building will be used as a museum. It will thus continue to receive the use which further justifies its preservation. By 1976 this bicentannial project perhaps will be complete and stand as an example of the determination of a local people to preserve a historic building, a building whose architecture is a symbol of their past.



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