NPS Form 10-900
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received SEP 18 1984
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Yakima Valley Transportation Company

and/or common Yakima Valley Electric Interurban Railroad

2. Location

street & number Corner of Third Avenue and Pine Street ___ not for publication

city, town Yakima ___ vicinity of

state Washington code 053 county Yakima code 077

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
_x_ district	___ public	_x_ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
_x_ building(s)	___ private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
_x_ structure	_x_ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
_x_ objects	___ in process	___ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	_x_ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	_x_ transportation
	n/a	___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Yakima Valley Transportation Company

street & number 104½ West Yakima Avenue

city, town Yakima ___ vicinity of state Washington 98901

Right of Way for the tracks within Yakima City Limits owned by the city and franchised to the YVTC.

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Yakima County Courthouse

street & number North Second and East B Streets

city, town Yakima state Washington 98901

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Washington State Inventory of Cultural Resources has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes _x_ no

date 1975, 1983 ___ federal ___ state ___ county _x_ local

depository for survey records Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

city, town Olympia state Washington 98504

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	_X_ original site
_X_ good	___ ruins	_X_ altered	___ moved date _____
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Yakima Valley Transportation Company (YVTC) is a complex of structures, buildings, and objects that constitute an electric interurban railway system that has operated in the Yakima Valley since 1907. The system includes two locomotives and a line car, one large car repair barn with attached shops, two electric substations, one stone shed, one bridge, and approximately 21 miles of track and overhead electric lines. Most of the resources in the district are located at company property in central Yakima, but the tracks spread out over the valley and cross through areas of urban, suburban, and agricultural development. Most of the resources in the district are in a good state of preservation. However, the car repair barn has been substantially altered, and many miles of track have been removed. The two locomotives and line car are the only survivors of a system that has utilized many different passenger and freight cars over its long history.

The center of operations for the YVTC has been a large plot of ground roughly bounded by South Third Avenue, Pine Street, and South Fourth Avenue. This ample parcel is covered with gravel and the various company buildings and track lines are scattered about it. The surrounding area is composed of light industrial development, vacant land, and some commercial properties. Located on company land south of the main shop barn is the new corrugated metal barn that was erected to house Yakima's two passenger trollies that went into service in 1974.

Car Repair Barn

The most prominent feature of the YVTC yard at Pine and South Third Streets is the large car repair barn. Constructed in 1910, it is located at the north side of the parcel on Pine Street. The building is primarily constructed of roughly-cut random coursed ashlar and squared rubble stone. This sandstone is quite weak and spalling is severe near ground level. Originally, the building was composed of three sections. On the west side was a car barn. Rectangular in shape, it was one story high with a flat monitor roof. Its long west wall was built of stone but its north and south entrances were framed in wood. This section was demolished in 1976 when the storage space it provided was no longer needed. The center section of the building was the main repair shop for the facility. It is a tall building with an arched wood truss roof. The monitor above this section was removed in the late 1970's. Access to the shop is provided through a wood barn-type door on the building's north side and two sliding doors on the south. The building maintains a long series of segmentally-arched, multi-paned clerestory windows and has two segmentally-arched windows flanking the north door. On the interior, the stone walls are braced with thick wooden beams. These beams are also found on the exterior of the west wall which formerly served as a party wall between the car barn and repair barn. Concrete pads are beneath the tracks leading into the barn; a wood floor and gravel cover the rest of the area. Suspended from the walls on the south side of the building is a 15 ton Niles crane. This was used to lift engines from cars that needed repair. Also extant on the interior is a wide array of early tools used to repair the Yakima Valley Transportation Company cars. Driven by a system of overhead belts, the machinery is primarily intact. A list of this equipment is included on page 7-5. The two locomotives and line car are now housed in the wing of the building.

Attached to the east side of this center structure is a long single story wing that houses office, storage, and shop spaces. The walls are entirely of sandstone and the rooms are illuminated by segmentally arched, double-hung wood sash windows. The blacksmith's shop is at the northern end of this section. This shop still has a dirt floor

and a number of tools have survived in place and are listed on page 7-5. The offices in this section have wood floors, matchstick-board walls, and period radiators. The southern half of this wing is used for storage and retains its early wooden shelves and "pigeon holes" which were used to store spare parts.

Stone Shed

Immediately to the east of the large shop building is a small square shed. Constructed of the same stone as the shop building, this shed has a wooden door and shed roof. The building is thought to have been used for the storage of flammable materials.

Main Substation

Approximately 300 feet to the south of the stone shed is YVTC's main substation. Constructed in 1911 of poured concrete, the building has five bays on its north and south sides and four bays on its east and west sides. The bays are separated by projecting piers that extend to the cornice line. The main entrance is on the north side in the center bay; it has wood and glass doors and a transom. The windows in the other bays are one-over-one double-hung wood sash, also with transoms. Some of these windows have been filled-in with concrete block. The east facade (facing Third Avenue) has an ornamental wood cornice. The building's interior is divided into one large generator room, two small offices, and a vault room. The offices have simple wood door trim and the vault has a metal safe door. The generator room has a concrete floor and pressed metal ceiling. The purpose of the substation was to convert the 6,600 volts of alternating current purchased from Pacific Power and Light into 600 volts of direct current which was fed into the overhead wires. The original transformers and motor-generators that accomplished this task are still in place and in pristine condition. A new, much smaller electrical system was installed in this room in 1975. This new machinery is rather compact and does not intrude on the original equipment. A complete list of substation machinery can be found on pages 7-6 through 7-8.

Warehouse

To the southeast of the shop barn is a deteriorated warehouse. Originally twice as large, half the building was blown down in a storm earlier this year. The remaining section was altered and half of the original concrete floor was left exposed. The remaining structure is wood frame with corrugated metal siding. Due to its severe lack of integrity, the warehouse is not considered to be a contributing element of this nomination.

Wide Hollow Substation

Interurban lines were extended west into the Ahtanum Valley in 1910. Shortly thereafter, the YVTC built a substation at a location called Wide Hollow, about two miles from the main substation. This substation provides a boost in the current that is fed to the lines that run west to Henrybro and Wiley City. Also of poured concrete, this small building has parapet gable ends, a low pitch gable roof, metal door, and square metal windows near the roof line. A gable roofed wooden loading dock was once attached to the

structure's east side. The building is only eight feet from the rail line and stands at the edge of an apple orchard. Like the main substation, this building still houses its original machinery although new equipment was installed in 1975. A complete list of substation machinery can be found on page 7-8.

Tracks and Overhead Lines

The Yakima Valley Transportation Company developed a sprawling interurban line that eventually reached a total length of 48 miles. Some of this track was located in downtown Yakima, while most of the lines served the agricultural areas surrounding the city. Consequently, the track went through a variety of landscapes with the lines most commonly terminating at cold storage warehouses.

The YVTC line has two major cuts. One is on a rocky slope at Selah Gap and the other is at Congdon's Orchards and is followed by a fill. A gradient profile is not available for the system, but the highest points on the line are at Selah Gap and Nob Hill Boulevard between 16th and 17th Avenues. The lowest point in the system is at the Union Pacific interchange yard.

On certain streets in Yakima, the YVTC tracks have been laid in the center of the right-of-way. On Nob Hill Boulevard, the line runs adjacent to the street. The rails are standard guage (4 feet 8½ inches) and lie on ties which are replaced every 30 years or so and are imbedded in asphalt in the urban areas. In its 76 year history, the Yakima Valley Transportation Company has never undergone a major rebuilding campaign; the tracks, trolley signals, and overhead wire and hangers in place today are essentially the same materials that were originally installed. Most of the overhead wire is suspended from cross arms mounted on trackside poles. Where the track runs down the center of a street, the overhead wire is suspended by guy wires strung above the street between poles. The materials, methods, and design of the Yakima Valley Transportation Company's overhead wire are typical of such early twentieth century interurban systems. It is not known which engineer or engineers are responsible for designing the YVTC system. Early company records indicate that a Mr. Edward Kenly was employed as an engineer by the YVTC.

Naches River Bridge

When the line to Selah was begun in 1912, it became necessary to cross the Naches River. The YTV erected a steel two span through truss bridge. The bridge's steel beams and stringers were set on concrete piers, one of which was erected in the center of the river. A bridge for another railroad is located immediately to the east. The bridge is still in regular use and shows no sign of deterioration. The bridge utilizes a Pegram Trus, and is the only known example of this truss type in the state.

Line Car A

Like the other two locomotives, Line Car A is now housed in the large repair barn on Pine Street. In use until last May, it was at that time the oldest active piece of interurban rolling stock in the United States. Line Car A was originally a simple flatbed center-cab locomotive. The machine is 40 feet long and has a steel frame, wooden deck, and wooden cab of vertical shiplap siding with a segmentally-arched roof. Its trucks are of

the standard C-50 type and the motor is a General Electric 80A. Like the other Yakima Valley Transportation Company locomotives, it has two sets of controls. When a car would reach the end of a line, it would not turn around. Rather, the engineer would shift to the controls located on the opposite side of the cabin and would consequently be facing the direction in which he wished to proceed. These controls are General Electric Type K-28-F and were patented February 2, 1904. Between 1909 and 1922, this locomotive primarily hauled freight. In 1922, a better locomotive was purchased and the car was equipped for overhead line work. At this time, the wood tower and working platform were added on one side of the cabin and a tool shed and wire rack were added on the other. All of the locomotives (which were originally black) have been repainted yellow for safety reasons.

Electric Locomotive No. 297

No. 297 is a boxcab electric locomotive built in 1923 by Baldwin-Westinghouse for the Glendale and Montrose Railway (an interurban line in Southern California). This interurban system was also purchased by the Union Pacific, who discontinued its operation in the late 1930's. In 1942, No. 297 was transferred to the YVTC. Baldwin-Westinghouse electric locomotives were the combined product of the Baldwin Locomotive Works of Philadelphia, a pioneer steam locomotive builder, and Westinghouse Electric and Manfacturing Company of East Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, the leading maker of heavy electric railway power appliances. No. 297 is numbered 56937 by the manufacturer and is dated August 1923. The trucks are by Baldwin and the motor is a Westinghouse 562D5. The locomotive has a cabin with an arched roof, fixed windows, a bell on the cabin roof, and a steel deck with railings at either end. Though No. 297 has actually operated with the YVTC for less than fifty years, the locomotive nevertheless makes an essential contribution to the historic significance of the YVTC. Actually built for an interurban line, No. 297 operated in a similar capacity to those cars which were already in service for the YVTC. It was normal practice for interurbans to periodically replace or add to their rolling stock. As the last major locomotive to be purchased by the YVTC during its heyday, No. 297 is necessarily a contributing element within this nomination.

Locomotive No. 298

No. 298 is a classic example of a 50-ton steeple cab electric locomotive. Its design is typical of the electric locomotives used by interurban railroads all across the continent. It has been the Yakima Valley Transportation Company's primary locomotive for the past 61 years. The cab and truck frames (type Alco RM 63B) were built by the American Locomotive Company. General Electric supplied all of the engine machinery (type 207-2, class 40 4-3-100-4GE207D). The controls are an HLF-9 type. No. 298 was listed by the builder as No. 8788 when it was produced in 1922, the most recent patent listed on the controls is December 1907, held by General Electric of Schenectady, New York. Constructed of steel, No. 298 has a central cab with an arched roof and a number of fixed windows. Flanking the cabin are two shed roof hoods that cover an air reservoir and compressor. No. 298 possesses great integrity and only minor alterations (such as an overhead flashing light) have been effected.

In addition to these three surviving locomotives, the Yakima Valley Transportation Company operated nearly twenty-five other passenger and freight cars in its long history. All of these machines have been scrapped or sold. Three passenger trollies (Brill Master Units) have been relocated to the Snoqualmie, Washington, Railway Museum. These cars are in various states of preservation. In 1974, two trollies were constructed in Oportu, Portugal, using older Brill locomotive parts. These trollies, No. 1776 and No. 1976, imitate the styling of the Yakima Valley Transportation Company's earliest trollies, and were purchased by the City of Yakima as a Bicentennial project. They are not considered to be contributing elements of this nomination.

Also a part of the original YVTC system were a number of small wooden waiting sheds. One of these passenger shelters has been relocated to the Yakima Valley Museum. The YVTC once had an office located at First and B Streets in Yakima, but that building has been demolished. For a number of years, YVTC operations have been supervised from the Union Pacific Building on Third and Pine in Yakima.

EQUIPMENT INVENTORY

Machinery in YVTC Car Repair Building

1. Lathe, belt driven; Lodge & Shipley Co., patent May 23, 1905
2. Threading Machine, belt driven; National Machinery Co., no date visible
3. Radial Drill Press, belt driven; Bickford Drill & Tool Co., no date visible
4. Shaper, belt driven; Cincinnati Shaper Co., Cincinnati, Ohio, patent February 10, 1910
5. Drill Press, belt driven; W.F. & G. Barnes Co., patent September 12, 1892
6. Pedestal Drill Bit Grinder, belt driven; Halidie Machine Co., Seattle, Washington, no date visible
7. Cut Off Saw, belt driven; Higley Machine Co., patent November 5, 1907
8. Electric Motor to drive belts; no name visible, but assume General Electric, no date visible
9. Grinding Stone; no name visible, no date visible
10. Two-wheel Grinding Machine, electric powered; name plate illegible, date illegible (was acquired from Union Pacific roundhouse in Yakima about 1979 when that structure was dismantled)
11. Overhead Crane, 15 tons, electric; Niles Co. (Niles, Ohio?), no date visible
12. A Workbench and various smaller hand tools complete the inventory of the Main Shop Building

Machinery in the YVTC Blacksmith Shop (in Car Repair Building)

1. Electric Motor to drive belts; General Electric Co., date illegible
2. Forge Blower, belt driven; no name visible, no date visible
3. Forge; no name noted, no date noted
4. Anvil; no name noted, no date noted

Note: Equipment in the Blacksmith Shop appears not to have been used for several years.

Electrical Equipment in YVTC Main Substation

Alternating Current Panel

1. Thomson Ammeters (4), 0-150 AC; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent April 2, 1901
2. Thomson Ammeters (3), 0-150 AC; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent June 1, 1909
3. Thomson Ammeter (1), 0-150 AC; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent June 13, 1911
4. Power Factor Indicators (2), .5 amp, 110 volt; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent May 26, 1903
5. Power Factor Indicator (1), .5 amp, 110 volt; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent June 1, 1909
6. Thomson Voltmeter (1), 0-175 volts; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent April 2, 1901
7. Operating Levers (3), 5 amp; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, no date visible
8. Relay (1), type P, form DB; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, no date visible
9. Demand Meter (1), 0-1200 kilowatts; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, no date visible
10. Watt-hour Meter; no name noted, no date visible
11. Alternating Current Contactors (2), three-phase; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, no date visible

Direct Current Panel

12. Relays (4), P2404; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, no date visible
13. Relay (1), P2405; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, no date visible
14. Relay (1), P2406; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, no date visible
15. Contactors (2), DC; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent December 6, 1921
16. Low Voltage Release for Circuit Breaker (1), 1200 volts; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent December 7, 1909
17. Circuit Breakers (2), 1200 amp, 650 volt; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent July 2, 1902
18. Overload Circuit Breaker (1), 800 amp, 1200 volt; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent December 12, 1911
19. Thomson Astatic Ammeters (4), 0-1500 amp; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent June 10, 1902
20. Thomson Astatic Ammeter (1); General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, no date visible
21. Thomson Ammeter (1), 0-80 amps; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent April 2, 1901
22. Thomson Ammeter (1), 0-150 amp; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent April 2, 1901
23. Ammeter (1), Type D-7; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, no date visible

24. Thomson Astatic Voltmeter (1), 0-750 volt; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, no date visible
25. I.G. Rheostat Stacks (5), with thermostats; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent July 4, 1910
26. Large Knife Switches (4), labeled "Main," "Selah," "Ahtanum," and "City #1"
27. Relays (2), 220 volt, 60 cycle; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, no date visible
28. Operating Lever for Circuit Breaker (1), Type HA-2; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent July 4, 1922
29. Relays (2), Type PB-55; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, no date visible
30. Overload Relays (2), inverse time limit; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent July 23, 1907
31. Overload Relay (1), definite time limit; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent July 23, 1907
32. Direct Current Reclosing Relay (1), Type RB-112; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, no date visible
33. Direct Current Underload and Reverse Power Relay (1), Type RB-21; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, no date visible
34. Rheostat Controller (1); General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, no date visible
35. Direct Current Under Voltage and Reverse Polarity Relay (1), Type RB-113; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, no date visible
36. Relay (1), Type RG-1, 220 volt, 60 cycle; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, no date visible
37. DC Contactors (6); General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent December 6, 1921

Note: The following are components of the motor-generator sets

38. Synchronous Motor (1), #1, 435 horsepower, 2300 volts; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent December 2, 1902
39. Continuous Current Generator (1), #1, 500 amps, 600 volts; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent April 2, 1912
40. Exciter (1), #1, 64 amp, 125 volts; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent April 2, 1912
41. Synchronous Motor (1), #2, 435 horsepower, 2300 volts; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent December 2, 1902
42. Continuous Current Generator (1), #2, 500 amps, 600 volts; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent December 2, 1902
43. Exciter (1), #2, 44 amp, 125 volt; General Electric Company, Schenectady, New York, patent April 11, 1902

Note: The silicon rectifier equipment installed in 1975 is listed below

44. Silicon Rectifier Equipment (1), #1, 480 volts AC, 600 volts DC; General Electric Co., March 1975
45. Dynamic Breaking Equipment (1), #1, 600 volts DC, 50 kilowatts; General Electric Co., March 1975

46. Silicon Rectifier Equipment (1), #2, 480 volts AC, 600 volts DC; General Electric Co., March 1975
47. Dynamic Breaking Equipment (1), #2, 600 volts DC, 50 kilowatts; General Electric Co., March 1975
48. Heavy Duty Safety Switch (1), main disconnect, 480 volts AC, 800 amps; Westinghouse Corp., March 1975
49. Heavy Duty Safety Switch (1), Selah line, 600 amps, 600 volts; Westinghouse Corp., no date noted--installed 1975
50. Heavy Duty Safety Switch (1), Ahtanum line, 600 amps, 600 volts; Westinghouse Corp., no date noted--installed in 1975

Electrical Equipment in Wide Hollow Substation

1. Automatic Switching Equipment (1), K-2188454; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent October 15, 1918
2. Continuous Current Generator (1), 44 amps, 125 volts; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent April 11, 1905
3. Continuous Current Generator (1), 500 amps, 800 volts; General Electric Co., Schenectady, New York, patent December 2, 1902
4. Automatic Voltage Sensing Unit; General Electric Co., no date noted--installed in 1975
5. Silicon Rectifier Equipment (10, #3, 480 volts AC, 600 volts DC; General Electric Co., March 1975
6. Dynamic Breaking Equipment (1), #3, 600 volts DC, 50 kilowatts; General Electric Co., March 1975
7. Heavy Duty Safety Switch (1), main disconnect, 480 volts AC, 400 amps; Westinghouse Corp., no date noted--installed in March 1975

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion	
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science	
___ 1500–1599	_X_ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture	
___ 1600–1699	___ architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian	
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater	
___ 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	_X_ transportation	
_X_ 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)	
		___ invention			

Specific dates 1907, 1910, 1922, 1923 **Builder/Architect** Various, see text

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Yakima Valley Transportation Company is a rare and intact example of an interurban electric railway system. Construction on the Yakima Valley Transportation Company began in 1907, and the next fifteen years saw an expansion of the track line to various agricultural districts around the city of Yakima. Originally, the Yakima Valley Transportation Company depended on passenger service for its patronage; however, the system was adapted to carry freight from Yakima farms to the rail lines in the city. The growth of the freight system facilitated the planting of large orchards and helped develop Yakima into one of the state's most productive agricultural regions. Most of the nation's interurban systems have been dismantled. The Yakima Valley Transportation Company is the only system that survives in Washington State and it has become a unique reminder of a type of transportation system that "bridged the gap between a horse and buggy nation and a modern America that rides on rubber over endless lanes of concrete."

In the United States, interurban lines enjoyed their greatest popularity between the 1890's and 1920. By 1917, there were hundreds of systems in place with over 18,000 miles in track. As the name implies, these systems tied together different municipalities, significantly expanding the area of streetcar service that had previously been limited to individual jurisdictions. Interurban lines located in population centers tended to be passenger oriented and, in fact, facilitated the growth of these urban areas by making the suburbs more accessible to commuting workers. The electric interurban lines were also cleaner than horse drawn streetcars and they offered frequent service and more closely spaced stops than could the mainline steam railroads. In much of the western United States, interurban companies depended less on their passenger service than on their freight lines. These tracks were developed as feeder lines for produce going from storage warehouses to the central rail terminals. Although its founders promoted it as an electric street car system for the city of Yakima, the Yakima Valley Transportation Company was also intended to be an interurban railway connecting surrounding towns and agricultural districts with Yakima and the steam railroads that passed through the city.

Almost all members of the original board of directors of the YVTC were bankers and real estate developers. Early city routes for the railroad were planned so that they passed through property represented by these developers. However, the lines were also laid out to tap other resources further from Yakima. Thus, the Fruitvale, Wiley City, Henrybro, and Selah lines ended in agricultural districts. The Summitview line served several ranches.

Within the Yakima City limits, the city government exercised a great deal of control over the Yakima Valley Transportation Company. The council specified that electricity be used for power, set fares, regulated speeds and the placement and abandonment of tracks. The first three miles of streetcar lines were opened in 1907 using second-hand and leased cars. In the following two years of operation, the company suffered from a severe lack of capital that was required for expansion of the system. In 1909, the YVTC was purchased by a subsidiary of the Union Pacific Railroad. This was a crucial event for the YVTC; for it allowed them to function as a semi-independent rail system, provided capital

9. Major Bibliographical References

Johnsen, Kenneth George. Apple Country Interurban, Golden West Books, San Marino, California, 1979.

Middleton, William D. The Interurban Era. Kalmbach Publishing, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1961.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property ______

Quadrangle name ______ SEE CONTINUATION SHEET Quadrangle scale ______

UTM References

A Zone Easting Northing B Zone Easting Northing

C D

E F

G H

Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state n/a code county code

state n/a code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth G. Johnsen, D.D.S. and Mark L. Brack

organization Archaeology & Hist. Pres. date June 1983

street & number 314 South Fourth Avenue telephone (206) 859-2111

city or town Kent state Washington 98032

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national _x_ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89–665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature [signature]

title State Historic Preservation Officer date September 7, 1984

For NPS use only Determined Eligible DOE/OWNER OBJECTION

I hereby certify that this property is ~~included~~ in the National Register

for [signature] Beth Grosvenor date 11/1/84

Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the National Register

~~Attest~~: [signature] date 10/8/92

~~Chief of Registra~~tion Owner objection withdrawn - new owner

for expanding the rail line, and gave the YVTC a direct connection with a large mainstream rail system. The Union Pacific Railroad also provided funds for the construction of the substations, car barns, and shops. This purchase directed the focus of the Yakima Valley Transportation Company away from passenger service to the more lucrative freight lines.

The Ahtanum line (1910) was specifically developed to tap freight revenues. As this line and other new lines snaked their way across the countryside, vast new areas were put into production. Apples were the preferred crop and the spreading YVTC guaranteed access to distributors. Twenty private cold storage units sprang up along the tracks. In fact, every rural line terminated at a cold storage plant. Approximately eleven of these private warehouses are still in operation. The YVTC also serviced a few lumber mills and the movement of timber produced substantial revenues.

By 1920, the system had reached its maximum length of 48 miles. Its emphasis was primarily on freight service by this time and it is more than a coincidence that patronage for passenger service declined as the automobile began its ascendancy after World War I. This was a common fate for passenger interurbans all over the country. As the American public began its love affair with the private car, ridership on interurban lines rapidly fell. The introduction of buses also had a negative impact on the interurbans, for buses had the capacity for more flexible passenger routes.

The YVTC continued its passenger operations, updating its cars from time to time in an attempt to attract riders. But, in 1921, the Yakima Valley Transportation Company began to abandon passenger routes, and the passenger system experienced a steady decline. Interurban passenger service survived until 1935, and Yakima Valley Transportation Company passenger service within the city of Yakima lasted until 1947. By the time this service was discontinued, the YVTC was the only remaining passenger rail trolley system in the state.

The loss of this patronage did not significantly impact the YVTC, for freight hauling had long been the most profitable element of the system. The YVTC was renowned in the valley for its personal and efficient service and it remained a competitive freight carrier. In May of 1983, the system was finally replaced with new diesel powered locomotives. Since that time, the electric system has been periodically revived when needed as a substitute for malfunctioning diesel cars.

As an operating system, the most important impact of the Yakima Valley Transportation Company was on the growth and development of the Yakima Valley agricultural industry. The spread of YVTC's tracks encouraged the planting of large new orchards. Cold storage facilities then developed along the YVTC tracks and the Yakima Valley subsequently grew into a nationally famous apple producing area. The YVTC tracks made possible this growth and capital investment by insuring timely transfer of agricultural products from the storage units to the mainline steam trains. Without the YVTC, it is unlikely that Yakima Valley's agricultural development would have enjoyed the expansion that it did. Although the YVTC also stimulated a small amount of new residential development, this impact on the community was far less dramatic than the role of the YVTC in developing the valley's agricultural industry.

The Yakima Valley Transportation Company was not the earliest or the longest interurban system in the state. It was preceeded by systems in Spokane and Walla Walla and the interurbans centered in Seattle and Spokane served far broader areas. The most similar line was the Walla Walla Valley Railway, which operated about 21 miles between Walla Walla and Milton-Freewater, Oregon. The Walla Walla Valley Railway operated streetcars, interurban passenger cars, and freight locomotives similar to Yakima Valley Transportation Company's and also relied heavily on agriculture for its business. The Walla Walla Valley Railway stopped operating electric locomotives in the 1940's, and its tracks fell under the ownership of the Northern Pacific Railway.

Several interurbans operated in the Puget Sound region. These were more heavily dependent on passengers and, as automobiles proliferated, these interurbans died early deaths, dropping from the picture between 1929 and 1939. Smaller interurbans also operated in less populated areas of Washington State. The Washington Railway and Power Company operated ten to twelve miles from Vancouver to Orchard and Sifton. It closed in the 1920's.

Of the hundreds of interurban railroads that once flourished in the United States, only one other (a line in Iowa) remains in electric service. This other line was considerably altered and modernized in recent years. This left the Yakima Valley Transportation Company (until recently) as the only intact operating example of an early twentieth century interurban electric railroad. Consequently, the system has attracted the attention of railway enthusiasts across the country. However, it should be remembered that the Yakima Valley Transportation Company, despite its longevity, was not an unusual or advanced type of interurban. Rather, the Yakima Valley Transportation Company's design, type of construction, makes and models of cars and locomotives, and modes of operation are typical of the "classical" model of North American interurban electric railroads. The locomotives are representative of those that serviced lines in rural areas across the country, and the shop and substation buildings are similar to structures erected by other interurbans during their period of greatest popularity. Today, the Yakima Valley Transportation Company remains a significant remnant of this once common feature of the historic American landscape. Although the cars, shops, power systems, and tools were all rather ordinary in their heyday, the surviving integrity of the complex provides a unique glimpse of an important period in the history of American technology and transportation.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(3-82)

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Exp. 10-31-84

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The nominated property contains the extant portions of the Yakima Valley Transportation Company's electric interurban railway system. The system includes: buildings and objects located at the central facility in Yakima; a substation adjacent to YVTC tracks at Wide Hollow; a bridge carrying YVTC tracks over the Naches River; and approximately 21 miles of track and associated electrical lines.

The nominated YVTC system consists of a central staging facility of seven acres. From this central point the track runs generally north to Selah, west to Gromore, and southwest to Wiley City. UTM references for the terminus of the Selah line are Zone 10, Easting 689500, Northing 5169790. The UTM references for the terminus of the Wiley City line are Zone 10, Easting 680000, Northing 5157760. The UTM references for the terminus of the Gromore Line are Zone 10, Easting 676400, Northing 5161770.

The nominated property for the tracks is a narrow strip of land eight feet on either side of the center line of the extant 21 miles of track and includes the electric lines and their supports. The location of these tracks is denoted by a red line on the accompanying U.S.G.S. maps. Terminus points for various lines are described with UTM references on the following pages. The YVTC tracks run generally in straight lines, but major turns in the system are also noted by UTM references. This nominated track area comes to a total of 41 acres, more or less.

The following is the verbal boundary description for the central YVTC district at Pine Street and South Third Street in Yakima.

The northeastern boundary of the district commences at the point which is the south corner of the intersection of Pine Street and South Third Street; thence proceed 428 feet in a southeasterly direction along the western edge of the Third Street right of way to a point which is ten feet south of the southwest facade of the main substation; thence proceed 140 feet southwest in a straight line perpendicular to Third Street; thence proceed 60 feet southeast in a straight line parallel to Third Street; thence proceed 58 feet southwest in a straight line perpendicular to Third Street to the eastern edge of the right of way of Fourth Street; thence proceed in a northwesterly direction to a point which is the east corner of the intersection of Fourth Street and Pine Street; thence proceed in a northeasterly direction along the southern edge of the Pine Street right of way to the intersection of Pine Street and Third Street, the point of beginning.

The Wide Hollow Substation is approximately ten feet south of the center line of the Gromore track, a point noted on U.S.G.S. Yakima West Quad, Zone 10, Easting 684480, Northing 5161300. The substation is immediately southwest of the intersection of the Gromore and Wiley City lines. The nominated property includes the substation and a ten foot wide strip of land surrounding its four facades.

The nominated property for the Naches River YVTC Bridge includes the tracks and bridge structure itself. The UTM references for the Bridge are Zone 10, Easting 689910, Northing 5166620.

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UTM References for points noted on accompanying U.S.G.S. maps:

Quadrangle Name: Wiley City, Washington — Quadrangle Scale: 1:24,000

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A*	10	680000	5157760
B	10	681080	5157800
C	10	679130	5161180
D**	10	676400	5161770

*Wiley City Line Terminus
**Gromore Line Terminus

Quadrangle Name: Yakima West, Washington — Quadrangle Scale: 1:24,000

	Zone	Easting	Northing
E	10	684460	5158720
F	10	684480	5161300
G	10	686100	5161700
H	10	685700	5161760
I	10	685640	5161920
J	10	689270	5161860
K	10	689280	5162640
L	10	689510	5162660
M*	10	690680	5162990
N*	10	690260	5162740
O*	10	690820	5162760
P*	10	690880	5162840
Q*	10	690860	5162860
R	10	690810	5163040
S	10	690280	5163300
T	10	691020	5162690
U	10	690450	5162910
V	10	690030	5164080

*YVTC Central District

Quadrangle Name: Selah, Washington — Quadrangle Scale: 1:24,000

	Zone	Easting	Northing
W*	10	689910	5166620
X	10	689060	5169440
Y	10	689480	5169440
Z**	10	689500	5169790

*Naches River Bridge
**Selah Line Terminus