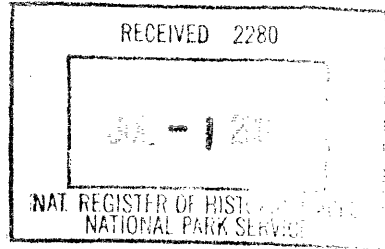


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



739

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Nevada Central Turntable
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number Off Austin Roping Arena road, S. side US 50 N/A not for publication
city or town Austin N/A vicinity
state Nevada code NV county Lander code 015 zip code 89310

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ronald M. Ginn SHPO 6-26-03
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other (explain):

Edson H. Beall 8/14/03
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category

Subcategory

TRANSPORTATION

rail-related (turntable)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category

Subcategory

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone
 walls Stone

roof N/A
 other Concrete
 Metal

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past fifty years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1880-1938

Significant Dates

1880

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Northwestern Construction Co. (contractor)

McDonald, D. (builder)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 0.1 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing
1	11	492870	3	11
2	11	4371750	4	11

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>J. Daniel Pezzoni</u>	date	<u>June 1, 2003</u>
organization	<u>Landmark Preservation Associates</u>	telephone	<u>(540) 464-5315</u>
street & number	<u>6 Houston St.</u>	zip code	<u>24450</u>
city or town	<u>Lexington</u> state <u>VA</u>		

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name	<u>Joe Ramos</u>		
street & number	<u>P. O. Box 2</u>	telephone	<u>775-964-1113</u>
city or town	<u>Austin</u>	state	<u>NV</u> zip code <u>89310</u>

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET7

Section 7, 8 Page 1

Nevada Central Turntable, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 7 Description

The Nevada Central Turntable is located in Austin, Lander County, Nevada. Austin is situated at an elevation of approximately 6,600 feet above sea level in Pony Canyon near the northern end of the Toiyabe Range and near the geographic center of the state. Pony Canyon lies in the watershed of the Reese River, a tributary of the Humboldt River. The turntable is located at the mouth of Pony Canyon to the northwest of the built-up section of Austin in an area that was occupied by the now vanished community of Clifton in the early 1860s. The turntable occupies a low terrace--perhaps in whole or in part artificial--at the foot of the south bluff of the canyon. The turntable and its immediate surroundings are overgrown with sagebrush and juniper scrub.

The turntable is a relatively simple construction. It is circular and pit like in form, measuring approximately 70 feet in diameter, and is constructed with an outer ring on which the rotating arm of the turntable rolled and an inner ring of granite retaining walls. At its center is a drum like poured concrete pivot mount with a riveted sheet iron casing (the casing may have served as the form for the pouring of the mount). Four bolts project from the top of the pivot; these formerly secured the turntable's rotating arm, which is thought to be buried nearby. Close to the turntable on its east side are concrete foundations associated with a former engine house. Farther off and to the west are concrete foundations associated with a long frame railroad building.

Integrity Statement

The Nevada Central Turntable possesses good integrity as a site. Its circular sunken form is clearly visible, and it retains its central pivot mount. Although the several buildings that once formed the depot complex are now missing, the rail bed leading west and east from and past the turntable is still evident. Within view of the turntable are the partly ruinous ca. 1890 Austin Mining Company mill and modern resources including the Ramos garage, the Austin Roping Arena, and the Austin Gun Club.

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The Nevada Central Turntable is a key resource associated with a small line that served Austin and Lander County, Nevada. The Nevada Central was completed in 1880 to link silver mines in the Austin area with the Central Pacific line at Battle Mountain. The turntable was a part of a depot

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET 7

Section 8 Page 2

Nevada Central Turntable, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

complex that formed the line's southern terminus. The Nevada Central provided Austin with its principal economic link to the outside world until the line was abandoned in 1938.

Applicable Criteria

The Nevada Central Turntable meets Criterion A and is eligible in the transportation area of significance for its association with the transportation history of Austin, Nevada. The period of significance extends from the construction of the turntable in 1880 until the cessation of rail service in 1938. The Nevada Central Turntable is eligible at the local level of significance. The site is located in the Austin Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1971. Information in support of eligibility appears throughout this section.

Acknowledgments

A number of organizations and individuals assisted in the preparation of this report. The nomination was sponsored by Lander County and the Austin Historical Society with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding from the Nevada Commission of Economic Development, and it is one of ten nominations prepared for prominent historic landmarks in Austin in 2003. Assistance was provided by Joe Ramos, owner, Allen D. Gibson, Deputy District Attorney, Lander County; Christy Caronongan, Administrative Assistant, Lander County Executive Director's Office; Ray H. Williams Jr., Ray and Irene Salisbury, Phillip "Poncho" and Joan Williams, and Joy Brandt with the Austin Historical Society; Ray H. "Ramey" Williams III, Austin; Dee Helming and Herbert Wallace "Wally" Trapnell, The Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce; Steve Frady, Nevada firefighting historian; the Comstock Firemen's Museum, Virginia City; and Mella Rothwell Harmon, Architectural Historian/National Register Coordinator, Nevada State Historic Preservation Office.

Historic Context

Silver was discovered in Pony Canyon in May 1862 and within a year the population of the nascent community of Austin and its immediate vicinity stood at nearly 1,000. Austin was made the seat of Lander County on September 2, 1863, and in November 1864 the town's population was reliably estimated at approximately 6,000, briefly making Austin the state's second largest community.

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CONTINUATION SHEET⁷

Section 8 Page 3

Nevada Central Turntable, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

Austin rapidly passed through the three incipient developmental stages identified by the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office as characteristic of the state's mining towns: the settlement stage (provisional architecture and haphazard organization), the camp phase (more permanent frame buildings and town platting), and the town phase (masonry construction, public buildings, established infrastructure, and stylistic sophistication).¹

By the end of 1866 Austin boasted two substantial brick churches (Austin Methodist and St. Augustine's Catholic), several banking houses, the *Daily Reese River Reveille* newspaper, the International Hotel (moved from Virginia City), and hundreds of brick, stone, wood, and adobe mining structures, commercial buildings, and dwellings. Native-born whites constituted the majority of the population; Chinese, English/Welsh, Irish, and "civilized Indians" were important groups as well. Austin also experienced, to a degree, a fourth phase of Nevada mining town development: partial abandonment, as the silver played out and the town's economy and population contracted at the end of the nineteenth century. Austin's status as a trade center for central Nevada prevented it from becoming a ghost town, but the town's population declined to 702 by 1900 and stands at about 300 today.²

Austin was situated near the route of the Pony Express and was on the later Overland stage road, but it lies approximately ninety miles distant from the Humboldt River valley, the principal early wagon path through Nevada and the route chosen for the Central Pacific Railroad. Shortly after completion of the transcontinental line in the late 1860s, Austin's business community began work toward the construction of a branch line to connect with the Central Pacific at Battle Mountain. Legislative efforts began in 1872 and the projected line was incorporated as the Nevada Railway several years later. A key figure during this period was Michael J. Farrell, the secretary of the Manhattan Mining Company, Austin's foremost mining concern during the 1870s and 1880s.

¹ Neu, "Austin Historic District;" Abbe, *Austin*, 56; Hulse, *Silver State*, 79; and Harmon, "How to Prepare Nominations," 8-9. One authority claims a peak Austin population of 10,000 in the summer of 1863 (Nevada State Historical Society, *Nevada*, 259). Another suggests a peak population of approximately 8,000 (Smith, "Austin, Nevada," 7).

² Neu, "Austin Historic District;" Abbe, *Austin*, 58-59; and Harmon, "How to Prepare Nominations," 9.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 4

Nevada Central Turntable, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

Farrell secured financing from Eastern capitalists and in August 1879 the Nevada Central Railway was formed to build the line.³

Construction began in September 1879 with the Northwestern Construction Company of James H. Ledlie as contractor. Horse-drawn scrapers were used to build up the rail bed, and as many as 350 men worked on the project at any given time. The line was completed to Austin in February 1880, and it was reported that the depot at Clifton (Austin) would be ready for use in July. The individuals responsible for the initial work at the Austin terminus are not noted by Sharon Edaburn, a historian of the Nevada Central line, although she states that "D. McDonald took over the carpenter shop in early August and saw the Clifton depot turntable and engine house to completion." McDonald may have been related to the Virginia City builder J. A. McDonald, who built the first Lander County Courthouse in Jacobsville in 1862 and who moved the building to Austin the following year. Irish-born stonemason John Wholey (1848-1925) was probably involved in the construction of the Nevada Central line and perhaps also the turntable, as it is known that he did railroad-type work and that he was active in the Austin area by 1880.⁴

A 1908 photograph, published in Stanley Paher's *Nevada Ghost Towns & Mining Camps*, depicts the turntable and depot area. The turntable is shown as a shallow circular depression with what appears to be sagebrush growing on its floor (then as now). The rotating arm is shown with a simple rectangular framework arching over the midpoint. On the east side stands the engine house, a small gabled frame building with large hinged doors at the west end and room for one locomotive. On the west side stands a small water tank, cylindrical in form and apparently wooden in construction, on a low trestle-like support. Past the turntable and engine house the tracks arced northward across the canyon floor to the passenger and freight depots. The view shows other features of the area such as the Clifton Ball Park, the Austin Mining Company mill, and the tracks of the Austin City Railway. The latter line was built in 1880 and extended in 1884 to provide rail service from the Nevada Central terminus through Austin to the Manhattan Mining Company

³ Edaburn, "From Dream to Reality," 4-7; Abbe, *Austin*, 51-52.

⁴ Edaburn, "From Dream to Reality," 7-12; *Reese River Reveille*, September 8, 1871; Albert, *Odyssey of a Desert Prospector*, 117-118; and Pezzoni, "St. George's Episcopal Church."

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CONTINUATION SHEET⁷

Section 8 Page 5

Nevada Central Turntable, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

improvements at the upper end of Austin. At first the Austin line's cars were pulled by mules, but in 1881 a locomotive known as the "Mule's Relief" was placed in service.⁵

The Nevada Central provided Austin with a direct connection to national rail networks. Prior to its construction, goods were freighted to and from Austin by mule train at exorbitant rates. The first shipment to Austin included merchandise for Gage & Curtis and the Manhattan Company and may also have included lumber for the yard of A. Nichols. In October 1880 the mails began to travel over the line, a boon to its profitability. The Nevada Central came under the control of the Union Pacific Railway and in 1887 it was acquired by New York financier Anson Phelps Stokes and others, who renamed it the Nevada Central Railroad. Stokes had been involved with the line as far back as 1879. The line prospered during the 1890s but was adversely affected by a mining downturn at the end of the decade. Over the following decades the Nevada Central experienced mixed fortunes. The introduction of motorcars allowed more cost-effective service, but according to Sharon (Edaburn) Taylor the line led a "marginal existence" for much of the period. In the 1920s stage lines (truck-bus service) developed as a threat, and by the 1930s J. G. Phelps Stokes, who had acquired control of the line from his father, made plans to abandon the line. The fatal decision occurred in September 1937, and the following year the track was taken up and the equipment sold.⁶

Some Nevada Central rolling stock has been acquired by the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento and put on display. The Austin engine house was dismantled and placed in storage in the late twentieth century. Older Austin residents remember the last years of rail service and, after the line was abandoned, playing at the turntable, which could be turned on its pivot manually. Local preservationists hope that the turntable and other vestiges of the Nevada Central line can be preserved for the edification of present and future generations.⁷

⁵ Paher, *Nevada Ghost Towns & Mining Camps*, 172; Edaburn, "From Dream to Reality," 15-17. A ca. 1883 view of the complex from another angle appears in Taylor, "Nevada Central Railroad Company, 1888-1938" (Part 1), 2.

⁶ Edaburn, "From Dream to Reality," 12, 18; Abbe, *Austin*, 51-52; and Taylor, "Nevada Central Railroad Company, 1888-1938," (Part 2) 15, 20-23.

⁷ Taylor, "Nevada Central Railroad Company, 1888-1938," (Part 2) 23; Ray H. Williams Jr. and

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Section 9 Page 6

Nevada Central Turntable, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

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Wally Trapnell personal communication.

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CONTINUATION SHEET 7

Section 9, 10 Page 7

Nevada Central Turntable, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

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Section 10 Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the nominated area correspond to the outer edge of turntable, a circle approximately seventy feet in diameter. The turntable is not indicated on USGS maps, hence the UTM coordinates are determined as accurately as possible from associated features which are indicated and from historic photographs.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 8

Nevada Central Turntable, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 10 Geographical Data, continued

Boundary Justification

The boundaries are defined so as to encompass only the turntable, the subject of this nomination.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photographs Page 9

Nevada Central Turntable, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. 1. Subject: Nevada Central Turntable (same for all photos)
2. Location: Lander Co., Nv. (same for all photos)
3. Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni (same for all photos)
4. Photo date: March 2003 (same for all photos)
5. Original negative archived at the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office,
Carson City, Nv. (same for all photos)
6. Description of view: Interior and south wall of turntable. View looking south.
7. Photograph number appears at beginning of entry (same for all photos)