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NATIONAL REGISTER

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name ABILENE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD PASSENGER DEPOT

other names/site number 041-0020-0027

2. Location

street & number NORTH SECOND AND BROADWAY

not for publication

city, town ABILENE

vicinity

state KANSAS

code KS

county DICKINSON

code 041

zip code 67410

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

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

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

*Ramon Powers* STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

JUNE 29, 1992

Signature of certifying official  
KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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:)

Entered in the National Register

*Delores Byers*

9/8/92

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
 TRANSPORTATION; rail-related; train depot

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
 COMMERCE/TRADE; organizational; professional organization  
 SOCIAL; civic

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
 (enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS;  
 Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE  
 walls BRICK  
 TERRA COTTA  
 roof CERAMIC TILE  
 other WOOD

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Abilene Union Pacific Railroad Passenger Depot (c. 1928-1929) is located at North Second and Broadway Streets in Abilene, Dickinson County, Kansas (pop. 6,572). The one-story, buff brick and terra cotta, Spanish Colonial Revival depot is surmounted by three red, clay tile, gable roofs. The building maintains a northern facade orientation, measuring one hundred and eighty-five feet from east to west and thirty feet from north to south.

The depot stands in the middle of a three block long tract, on the north side of the tracks. This terminus was created in 1928 with the termination of Broadway and Spruce streets at Second Street, between Cedar and Buckeye streets. The freight depot (c. 1928-1929) stands just west of the passenger depot, at the intersection of Cedar and Second Streets, also on the north side of the tracks.

The building is composed of three main components or blocks. A taller, rectangular block stands in the center, flanked by two, lower rectangular blocks. The center block contained the passenger waiting room and the ticket office. The east block contained a smoking room for men and women, each with an adjoining wash room, and an open air waiting room. The west block contained the baggage rooms, and telephone and express offices. A basement was built below the west block.

Each block is roofed with a red, clay tile gable roof. A gable roofed, entry pavilion projects from north facade of the center block. A pent roofed pavilion projects from the south elevation of the center block. The roof tiles were repaired and replaced in 1991.

Extensive use of terra cotta trim and boarders is made on the building, substantially adding to its sleek and decorative appearance. The terra cotta is tan, accented with occasional subtle highlights of blue and red. A terra cotta frieze accentuates the north and south elevations of the center block. Terra cotta, checkerboard panels stand beneath the two window groups on the north elevation of the center block and beneath the windows which fenestrate the projecting ticket booth on the southern elevation of the center block. Terra cotta quoins outline the doorways, a simple terra cotta lintel surmounts these openings. Terra cotta columns and posts define the open-air waiting room on the east elevation. The colorful Union Pacific Railroad shield of terra cotta is incorporated into the each of the three doors which enter into the center block of the building, which served as the passenger waiting room.

The building retains its original diamond paned windows on all elevations. The wooden plank baggage doors are retained on the southern elevation, as are the metal canopies above the two doors which lead into the passenger waiting room on that elevation. However, the three doors leading into

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the passenger waiting room and the door leading from the open-air waiting room have all been replaced, as have the wooden plank baggage doors on the north elevation of the building.

The interior of the depot retains its overall form, although the baggage area of the building has been converted into offices. The passenger waiting room retains its painted ceiling beams and its wainscoting, although the ticket office partition walls have been removed. The original light fixtures in the passenger waiting room are non-extant. Other areas of the building retain less character and appear new.

"The floor of the new waiting room is of cement, divided into segments to give the effect of tiling and specially treated for color and hardness. There is wooden wainscoting for a height of three feet above the floor, the walls from there up being finished in a mottled tinting. The lighting fixtures have been especially designed." (Abilene Daily Reflector, 28 June 1929)

Gilbert Stanley Underwood (1890-1960), the building's architect, had intended that most of the area surrounding the passenger depot be landscaped with grass, shrubbery, and flowers. However, it appears that less of the intended area was landscaped with plantings and more of the area was covered with brick pavement. Period photographs show shrubbery planted along the building's foundation, and some trees planted in front of the building and along the track. A small lawn graced the building's front. A brick platform was built along the track side which extended from Cedar to Buckeye streets, parking was also provided on either side of the building. This arrangement remains extant today, but very few plantings exist.

The depot was closed in the mid-1980s, with the Union Pacific Railroad retaining ownership of the building. After successfully arranging to lease the building from the Union Pacific Railroad, the City of Abilene embarked on a rehabilitation project of the depot. In 1987, the depot became the home of the Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau Office, the Chamber of Commerce Office, and the Abilene Civic Center. In 1991, the Tourist Information Office also opened an office in the building. The rehabilitation resulted in the removal of the ticket office in the passenger waiting room, the installation of offices, toilet facilities, and a kitchen in the baggage rooms, and the removal of the walls which defined the mens' and ladies' lounges. The Abilene Union Pacific Railroad Passenger Depot maintains a high degree of architectural and structural integrity.

## 8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1928-1929

1928-1942

Significant Dates

1928-1929

1928-1929

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

UNDERWOOD, GILBERT STANLEY- Architect

JOHNSON, G. A. AND SONS- Contractor

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Abilene Union Pacific Railroad Passenger Depot (c. 1928-1929) is being nominated to the National Register under criteria A and C for its historical association with the growth and development of Abilene and for its architectural significance as an example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style depot type constructed by the Union Pacific Railroad in the 1920s. The brick and tile depot stands as the Union Pacific Railroad's third depot in Abilene, and was designed by California architect Gilbert Stanley Underwood. Underwood designed a freight depot of similar construction as part of the Abilene project, this building is extant and is being studied for future nomination.

G. A. Johnson and Sons of Chicago constructed the passenger depot and the freight depot. The project was overseen by G. T. Kuntz of Denver, who served as the General Superintendent of Construction for the Union Pacific Railroad.

"Completion of the new Union Pacific freight and passenger stations provide a point of special interest in the business and citio-history of Abilene. Representing a steady past growth in railway traffic, as well as a promise of future stability and increase, the structures also exemplify the change from the conventional to the artistic in buildings designed first for utility- a change which manifests the new point of view of business generally. Art has been brought from the studio and is being embodied in the structural outlines of Main Street." (Abilene Daily Reflector, 28 June 1929)

The Union Pacific Railroad was incorporated as the Leavenworth, Pawnee and Western Railroad by the legislature of the Territory of Kansas in 1855, although construction on the line did not begin until 1863. The charter was acquired by John Fremont and Samuel Hallett. During the eight years that followed its incorporation, the Leavenworth, Pawnee and Western Railroad Company organized and sought purchasers for its securities. The legislature of the Territory of Kansas had granted fifty-one charters to railroad companies by 1861, but only one company had laid any track. The companies were largely designed to help promote settlement.

The Pacific Railroad Act of 1862 revitalized construction interest among the various companies which had received charters. Under the terms of this act, the Union Pacific Railroad was chartered to build westward from the 100th meridian in the territory of Nebraska to the west boundary of the territory of Nevada while the Central Pacific Railway, an existing California corporation, was to build eastward from the Pacific coast. The Pacific Railroad Act of 1864 amended the charter, restricting

See continuation sheet

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET.

### 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

### Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

### Specify repository:

KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property LESS THAN ONE ACRE.

### UTM References

A 

1	4	6	5	4	7	6	0	4	3	0	8	8	2	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

C 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

D 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description THE NOMINATED PROPERTY IS LOCATED ON THE NW 1/4, SE 1/4, SE 1/4, SW 1/4, SW 1/4, S. 16, T. 13S, R. 2E, in ABILENE, DICKINSON COUNTY, KANSAS. THE PROPERTY IS BOUNDED BY NORTH SECOND TO THE NORTH, CEDAR STREET TO THE WEST, BUCKEYE STREET TO THE EAST, AND THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD TRACKS TO THE SOUTH. THE PROPERTY STANDS IN THE CENTER OF A TRACT OF LAND MEASURING 205' by 50', A 10' PERIMETER BOUNDS THE BUILDING ON ALL SIDES. THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD TRACKS WHICH BOUND THE PROPERTY TO THE SOUTH ARE ACTIVE.

See continuation sheet

### Boundary Justification

THE BOUNDARY INCLUDES ALL PROPERTY HISTORICALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE DEPOT, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE PAVED PARKING LOTS THAT FLANK THE BUILDING AND WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE ADJACENT RAILROAD TRACKS. THE FREIGHT DEPOT MENTIONED IN THE TEXT WILL BE NOMINATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER.

See continuation sheet

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title MARTHA HAGEDORN-KRASS, ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

organization KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY date JUNE 29, 1992

street & number 120 WEST TENTH telephone 913-296-5264

city or town TOPEKA state KANSAS zip code 66612

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the Central Pacific Railway from extending more than 150 miles into Nevada.

In 1864, the Leavenworth, Pawnee and Western Railroad was renamed the Union Pacific Railway Company Eastern Division. The company changed its name again in 1869 to the Kansas Pacific Railway Company, the line reached Denver in 1870. From Denver, the Kansas Pacific Railway built to Cheyenne, Wyoming over a subsidiary road, the Denver Pacific Railway. The main line of the Union Pacific Railway and the Central Pacific Railway met at Promontory, Utah in May, 1869.

After a five year battle to gain control of the Kansas Pacific Railway, Jay Gould acquired the railroad in 1879. Gould combined the Kansas Pacific Railway with the Union Pacific Railway and the Denver Pacific Railway to form the Union Pacific Railway in 1880. The company went into receivership in 1893, and was reorganized into the present Union Pacific Railroad Company in 1898.

The Union Pacific Railroad reached Abilene in March, 1867, and was the only railroad to serve Abilene until 1887. "The first train that carried passengers passed through Abilene in June, 1867. The country seemed a barren waste. There was nothing to ship either in or out. In 1870 the Kansas Pacific sold about 45,000 acres of land to settlers from various parts of the east, Dickinson county getting but few of the new comers....." (Abilene Daily Reflector, 28 June 1929)

Between 1868 and 1872 Abilene was the center of the Texas longhorn cattle trade, and was Kansas' first railroad cow town. The first Union Pacific Railroad shipment of Texas longhorn cattle from Abilene was in September, 1867. About 35,000 Texas longhorn cattle were driven to Abilene in 1867, most of these were shipped to the Chicago markets on the Union Pacific Railroad line. Between 1867 and 1872 three million head of Texas longhorn cattle were shipped from Abilene to Chicago and other eastern markets along the Union Pacific Railroad line.

In February 1872, the Farmers/ Protective Association circulated a petition to stop Abilene's cattle trade; three-quarters of the citizens of Dickinson County signed the petition. The petition requested that the Texas drovers "seek some other point for shipment, as the inhabitants of Dickinson county will no longer submit to the evils of the trade." (Abilene Chronicle, 22 February 1872)

Newton, and then Wichita, replaced Abilene as the principle cattle market after Abilene's definitive rejection of the drovers and their herds. Both communities had a direct connection to Chicago and were served by the the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. The continuing colonization of the railroad lands shifted the shipping points farther and farther west. In the mid-1870s Ellsworth served as a shipping point along the Union Pacific line, but was surpassed by Hays in the late 1870s. Along the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe line, Great Bend served as a major shipping point in the mid-1870s, but was surpassed by Dodge City in the late 1870s. The Kansas cattle trails were closed by 1885, henceforth all cattle was shipped to Kansas by rail.

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After 1872 Abilene's financial base shifted to a diversified, agriculturally dependent economy. By 1880 Abilene boasted a population of 2,360. The town boomed again in 1887 with the arrival of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway lines, Abilene's population rose to 5,000 residents in 1888. However, the bottom fell out of the local economy in 1888, causing inflated land values to plunge. Abilene recovered from its economic setback by the mid-1890s, establishing a solid foundation for future development. In 1929, the year that the Abilene Union Pacific Railroad Passenger and Freight depots were completed, livestock, grain (wheat, oats, and corn) and its products, poultry, melons and dairy products comprised the basis of Abilene's agricultural economy.

Abilene's first Union Pacific Railroad depot was a small frame structure located north of Texas Street. The depot was constructed in 1869, the year that Abilene was incorporated as a third class city. In 1880, the Union Pacific Railroad replaced the depot with a four story, frame hotel that included a restaurant and a depot. The Henry House Hotel, later Stanton House, was razed along with the original depot (the baggage and express depot), and the freight house in 1928. Union Pacific Railroad president Carl R. Gray wrote of the hotel in a 1928 memorandum that, "This structure is now in poor condition and is very unsatisfactory for handling passenger business. It is also unsatisfactory for hotel business and is used very little. Other hotels have been built in the city and one owned by the Railroad Company is no longer necessary." (Memorandum by President, 3 March 1928)

President Gray further explained the rationale for constructing new facilities in Abilene in the 1928 memorandum:

Abilene is a good revenue producing station, both in freight and passenger, and justifies modern facilities.

The Santa Fe serves this town with a branch line. Last year they opened a new freight and passenger station costing \$125,000, which is located considerably farther away than our facilities from the business district. Our facilities are right uptown, and we have worked out a splendid arrangement for the new freight and passenger stations which will become an integral part of the business district.

The citizens of Abilene have been pressing us for a number of years for new station facilities but we have been holding them off now for about as long as their patience will endure. If we construct new stations they have agreed to close three traveled street crossings, two of which are paved business streets. (Memorandum by President, 3 March 1928)

The 1927 construction of the new Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad facilities evidently provided the stimulus for the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad's new Abilene facilities. Additionally, the company could afford the expenditure. During the 1920s, the "rich and powerful"

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Union Pacific Railroad "erected high quality and architecturally attractive stations throughout Kansas and its far-flung system....creating custom designs for both combinations and passenger-only facilities." (Grant, 1990, p. 71)

The Los Angeles, California architectural and engineering firm of Gilbert Stanley Underwood and Company was retained by the Union Pacific Railroad to design the new complex. Underwood's firm designed at least twenty small or moderately sized depots for the Union Pacific Railroad between 1924 and 1931, including the extant passenger depots in Topeka (c. 1928) and Marysville, Kansas (c. 1930). In a 1930 article entitled "The Design of Small Railway Stations" written for Architectural Forum Underwood states that, "Our own firm has developed a great number of standards, but each of them may be changed by differing conditions on one railroad or by different railroads....On the Union Pacific system, for instance, we have developed a somewhat different style for each of the different railroads forming the system." (Underwood, 1930, pp. 695-696)

In "The Design of Small Railway Stations" Underwood outlines the concept which was used for the new Abilene facility. "There is publicity value in the location of a station at the end of a main street, and there is the more important advantage of allowing approaching traffic to divide naturally, the passenger motor traffic going to a parking space at one end of the building, the baggage and express traffic to the opposite end, and the passenger pedestrian traffic directly to the waiting room at the center..." (Underwood, 1930, p. 695)

The Underwood plan for the new Abilene facility created such a terminus, with the passenger depot at the end of two main streets. Broadway and Spruce streets were terminated at Second Street, resulting in a three block long tract of land north of the railroad tracts between Cedar and Buckeye streets that would contain the passenger depot. The freight depot was moved north across the tracks to stand just west of the passenger depot, at the intersection of Cedar and Second Streets.

Underwood had intended that most of the area surrounding the passenger depot be landscaped with grass, shrubbery, and flowers. However, it appears that less of the intended area was landscaped with plantings and more of the area was covered with brick pavement. Period photographs show shrubbery planted along the building's foundation, and some trees planted in front of the building and along the track. A small lawn graced the building's front. A brick platform was built along the track side which extended from Cedar to Buckeye streets, parking was also provided on either side of the building.

In "The Design of Small Railway Stations" Underwood wrote that, "The most carefully designed structure looks raw and naked without landscaping. We on the Union Pacific have solved that problem by turning over the work to a nationally known landscape architect, Daniel R. Hull, who has provided planting curbs around the base of the building for foundation planting, and has developed parked areas at either end." (Underwood, 1930, p. 700)



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The new Abilene Union Pacific Railroad facility included the construction of the passenger depot, the freight depot, a brick platform which ran from Cedar to Buckeye streets, landscape gardening, and some changes to the tracks and paving. The project cost the railroad approximately \$150,000.

A brick platform or walk twelve feet wide extends over the whole distance from Cedar to Buckeye. For the length of the station, it is 40 feet wide, this being the distance at which the building is placed from the track. Since it is of brick, it is attractive and enduring. A line of decorative standards provide ample illumination along the platform.

The structural material of the new buildings is light buff brick trimmed with terra cotta and roofed with light red tile. The windows have been strikingly designed, the glass area being divided into many diamond-shaped segments. The colors and lines of the buildings, when set off against an expanse of green lawn and shrubbery, will provide a place of outstanding beauty in Abilene.

The passenger depot is 184 1/2 feet long and 31 1/2 feet wide, form most of its length. The waiting room, occupying the central portion, is 51 feet, 5 inches long. The ticket office extends into this from the south side next the tracks.

In the east end of the depot are smoking room for men and a rest room for women, each with a wash room adjoining. An open air waiting room, included under the main roof of the depot, lies at the extreme east of the building.

The baggage rooms, telephone and express offices are in the west portion. A basement has also been constructed under this part housing the heating plant and coal supply.

The floor of the new waiting room is of cement, divided into segments to give the effect of tiling and specially treated for color and hardness. There is wooden wainscoting for a height of three feet above the floor, the walls from there up being finished in a mottled tinting. The lighting fixtures have been especially designed.

The new freight station is 154 feet long, and has an office 32 feet long and 30 feet wide located at the east end, with the entrance at Cedar street. The steps leading to the office provide an attractive feature, and have a decorative iron railing.

A point of popular interest about the new station is that the drinking fountain of Sand Springs water has been left east of the new station. It will continue to flow and refresh travelers, as it has for so long. The water has long been famed as "99.99 per cent pure." Many persons have taken bottles of it with them when passing through, some even mailing bottles of the famous water to friends in other states. (Abilene Daily Reflector, 28 June 1929)

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Underwood chose the Spanish Colonial Revival style for both the passenger and freight depot at Abilene. Influenced by the Panama-California Exposition of 1915 and his apprenticeship with California architect Arthur Benton, Underwood worked frequently with the Spanish Colonial Revival style in depot design. It was a style that he "handled....exceptionally well." (Zaitlin, 1987, p. 114)

Gilbert Stanley Underwood (1890-1960) spent his youth in San Bernardino, California. He joined Arthur Benton's southern California architectural practice as an apprentice in 1911, and enrolled in the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana the following year. He did not complete his studies at Champaign-Urbana, rather he received his bachelors in architecture from Yale University in 1920. Awarded a scholarship to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, he could not afford to take his family to Paris with him, and instead, pursued graduate study at Harvard University, winning the Avery Prize and receiving his masters degree in architecture in 1923.

Underwood moved to Los Angeles with his family in 1923 and established Gilbert Stanley Underwood, Architects and Engineers, at 408 Spring Street. During the next nine years Underwood's small firm established itself as a designer of railroad depots and National Park lodges.

Underwood applied very effective interpretations of the Spanish Colonial Revival and the Art Deco styles to the railroad depots designed for the Union Pacific Railroad between 1924 and 1931, although he also worked well with the Classical Revival style. Underwood's most prominent railroad commission is the Omaha Union Pacific Railroad Passenger Station (c. 1930). "As the country's first Art Deco station, it naturally attracted attention for both the railroad company as well as its designer and, as planned, gave the Union Pacific the image of a company involved with the very latest technology." (Zaitlin, 1989, p. 126)

Underwood is best known for the Ahwanee Hotel (c. 1927) at Yosemite National Park. His firm also designed the lodges at Bryce, Zion, and the Grand Canyon National Parks during the 1920s. These structures were designed according to the principles of Rustic Architecture developed by the National Park Service in 1916. "Underwood worked closely with the directors of the Park Service to produce a unique architectural interpretation of that agency's goals." (Zaitlin, 1989, p. xi)

In 1932 Underwood became a consulting architect for the federal government, and later served as Supervising Architect for the United States between 1945 and 1949. Over the course of his twenty year career with the federal government, he designed over 20 post offices, two large courthouses, a mint, an appraiser's building, and the War Department building. However, throughout his years with the federal government, Underwood "continued to seek commissions unrelated to his federal employment" such as the lodges at Sun Valley, Idaho and Williamsburg, Virginia. (Zaitlin, 1989, p. 133) Of Underwood's career with the federal government Zaitlin writes that, "the longer Underwood remained with the federal government the more his work displayed the lean and efficient characteristics of the federal architecture than popular." (Zaitlin, 1989, p. 144)

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In 1929, Union Pacific Railroad passenger service to Abilene consisted of seven trains daily. Passenger service to Abilene along the Union Pacific Railroad line was transferred to Amtrak in 1971 and discontinued shortly thereafter. The depot was closed in the mid-1980s, with the Union Pacific Railroad retaining ownership of the building. After successfully arranging to lease the building from the Union Pacific Railroad, the City of Abilene embarked on a rehabilitation project of the depot. In 1987, the depot became the home of the Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau Office, the Chamber of Commerce Office, and the Abilene Civic Center. In 1991, the Tourist Information Office also opened an office in the building.

The Abilene Union Pacific Railroad Passenger Depot maintains a high degree of architectural and structural integrity. The depot stands as a symbol of the growth and development of Abilene and as an architecturally significant example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style depot type constructed by the Union Pacific Railroad in the 1920s.

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