

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received SEP 30 1982
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Medicine Bow Union Pacific Depot

and/or common Medicine Bow Depot

2. Location

street & number 405 Lincoln Highway ^{Highway} not for publication

city, town Medicine Bow vicinity of

state Wyoming code 56 county Carbon code 007

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	n/a in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	n/a being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Town of Medicine Bow

street & number

city, town Medicine Bow vicinity of state Wyoming 82329

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Carbon County Courthouse

street & number Third and Pine Streets

city, town Rawlins state Wyoming 82301

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wyoming Historical Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records Wyoming Recreation Commission, 1920 Thomas Avenue

city, town Cheyenne state Wyoming 82002

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____ n/a _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Built in 1912-19, the depot is a classic example of the type of train station constructed in Union Pacific towns. The building is a single-story, white clapboard structure, rectangular in shape. The hip roof, rounded with red baked clay shingles, features flaired eaves and large stylized, bracket supports. The building also features wood frame windows of one over one lights, spaced evenly along the sides of the building. A chimney extends from the eastern hip and a second from the center of the decorative flashing ridge. A station platform is located on the west side of the structure along one narrow end. On the south long side side of the building a bay window breaks the symmetry. The bay window allowed the station master to see incoming trains on the tracks some 75-100 feet south of the structure. The frame building rests on a concrete foundation. The interior is basically unchanged from the original design. The west half was the baggage room, business office and passenger waiting room. The east half is quarters for the station master and his family. The depot has retained its architectural integrity.

It is a unique survivor from the wrecking ball - the fate that befell similar stations in Hanna and Rock River. Featured last year on Dixon Paper Company calendar, photos and drawings of the depot have been used on the literature distributed by the town's Chamber of Commerce and figure prominently in photographic essays appearing in the Medicine Bow Post. While the Virginian Hotel, directly across the highway, reflects the town's crossroads heritage on the Lincoln Highway (now U.S. Highway 30), the depot, which stands between the highway and the railroad tracks on the south side of town, symbolizes the railroad's role in the town's life. Local residents and others closely identify with both structures for those reasons.

The Medicine Bow Depot was abandoned by the Union Pacific Railroad in May, 1981. In early 1981 the building was transferred to the Town of Medicine Bow.

The Town of Medicine Bow officials indicate a desire to locate town offices in part of the structure and perhaps allow the west end for use as a community museum. The Wyoming State Archives, Museums, and Historical Department has offered to serve as consultants on the museum portion. No major architectural interior changes would be necessary to modify the structure to a museum use.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1912 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

While Medicine Bow's history seems to be inextricably linked to the book, The Virginian, and the romance of the American cowboy, in actuality Medicine Bow is a product of the railroad. Founded 20 years before Owen Wister visited the town, Medicine Bow began as a general store and saloon in July, 1868. Both structures anticipated the coming of the Union Pacific Railroad by a short time and when the railroad finally pushed across the Laramie Plains, a five-stable roundhouse, service facilities and a watering tank for the locomotives were built there. Medicine Bow developed into an important freight center and in 1912 - after the first depot burned, the Union Pacific constructed a new one. This structure served the Medicine Bow area for 68 years until the railhead closed it in May of 1981. The Medicine Bow Depot remains as a reminder of events and people which made a significant contribution to our history, and also embodies the distinctive characteristics of plains railroad construction at the town of the century.

See Addendum

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Addendum, Item #9, Page one

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre
Quadrangle name Medicine Bow, Wyoming

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	3	4	0	0	4	6	8	4	6	3	8	6	3	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H

Zone			Easting					Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

The railroad depot is located between a main artery, Highway 287-30, and the railroad tracks. The nominated area includes the depot and a buffer zone of 15' on each side of the building.

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

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Philip J. Roberts, Senior Historian

organization Archives, Museums and Historical Dept. date March 26, 1982

street & number Barrett Building-State of Wyoming telephone 307-777-7518

city or town Cheyenne state Wyoming 82002

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national 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 *Jan Helson*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date September 27, 1982

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

Linda Hunt McClelland date *10/1/82*
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet Addendum

Item number 8

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The Medicine Bow River, flowing north and west about one mile east of the town, was used for flotation of ties during the construction of the Union Pacific. Timber was unavailable on the plains so the railroad contracted with individuals and small companies to supply logs for ties. Timber was plentiful in the Medicine Bow Mountains south of the town and the tie hacks and wood contractors floated their products down the river during the spring run-off. This activity continued into the middle of the century.

The town furnished services for the railroad and this brought to Medicine Bow another industry directly dependent on the rails - freighting. The U.S. Army established a supply depot at Medicine Bow in 1869. Supplies shipped by rail from the east were unloaded at the town and transferred to freight wagons bound for Fort Fetterman and other ports in the Powder River country. The town was garrisoned by as many as 75 soldiers whose mission it was to protect the station from roving bands of Indians. On June 25, 1870, the station was attacked by Indians but the detachment from Company I, 2nd Cavalry, was able to turn back the attack. The 1870 census, taken the month of the attack, lists 35 civilians and 65 soldiers at Medicine Bow. Nearly everyone listed had a connection to the railroad. No stockmen or cowboys were listed.

During the decade of the 1870's cattle ranches were established in the vicinity of the railroad town. Soon Medicine Bow boasted of stockyards built to handle the shipments of cattle east on the railroad. As many as 2,000 cattle per day were shipped from the Medicine Bow stockyards during the 1870's and 1880's. The 1880 census listed a population of 54, 15 directly employed by the railroads as locomotive engineers, section foreman, and laborers.

It was the trading center and shipping point that Owen Wister visited in 1885. His journal included the now-famous inventory of the town's 29 buildings. The first train depot is listed:

- 1 Depot house and baggage room; 1 coal shooter;
- 1 water tank; 1 store; 1 billiard hall; 1 feed stable;
- 2 eating houses; 2 tool houses; 5 too late for classification;
- 6 shanties; 8 gents and ladies walks

By 1890 Medicine Bow was home to 105 people, the majority of which still listed railroad-related occupations. Still a shipping center for cattle, the town's economy was augmented by the introduction of sheep into the area. Sheep shearing pens were constructed at Medicine Bow and by the turn of the century, over 1,000 tons of wool was shipped per year from Medicine Bow. The 1900 population of 236 still showed a predominance of railroad-related occupations.

The Union Pacific Railroad transferred the ownership of streets and alleys in the town when Medicine Bow was incorporated in June, 1909. That same year, the First Mayor August Grimm and a partner began construction of the Virginian Hotel, named for the Wister novel. Transcontinental travelers on the newly designated Lincoln Highway brought tourism as an industry to Medicine Bow.

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With the exception of the Virginian Hotel, the majority of structures in the town were of wood. Fire was a frequent problem and in 1911, the first Union Pacific depot burned to the ground. Because of the importance Medicine Bow had as a rail shipping center, the Union Pacific constructed the present depot building on the same site in 1912-1913. For the next 68 years the depot served the Medicine Bow area until the railroad closed it in May, 1981.

Historically, Medicine Bow and the railroad are entwined. The depot is the symbol of that historic long standing relationship.

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Continuation sheet Bibliography

Item number 9

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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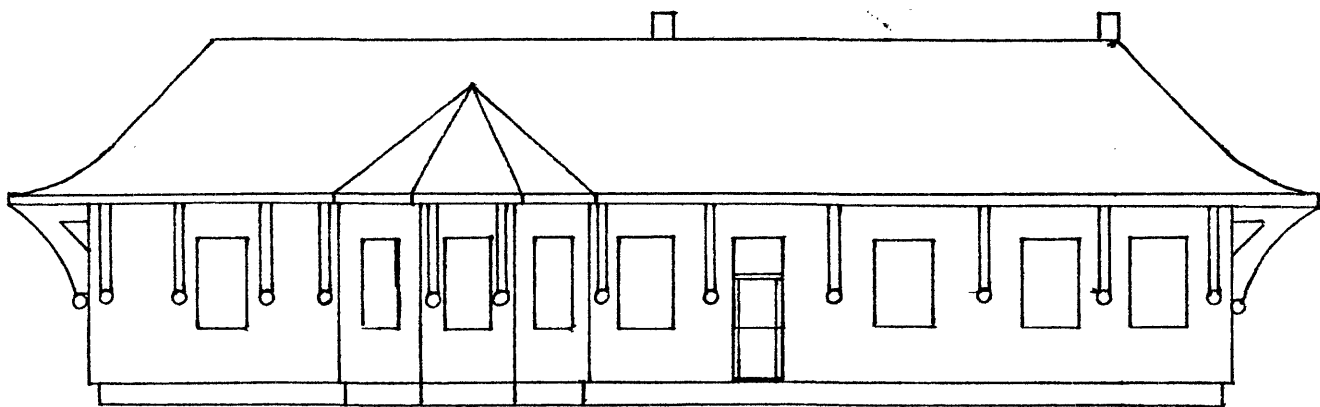
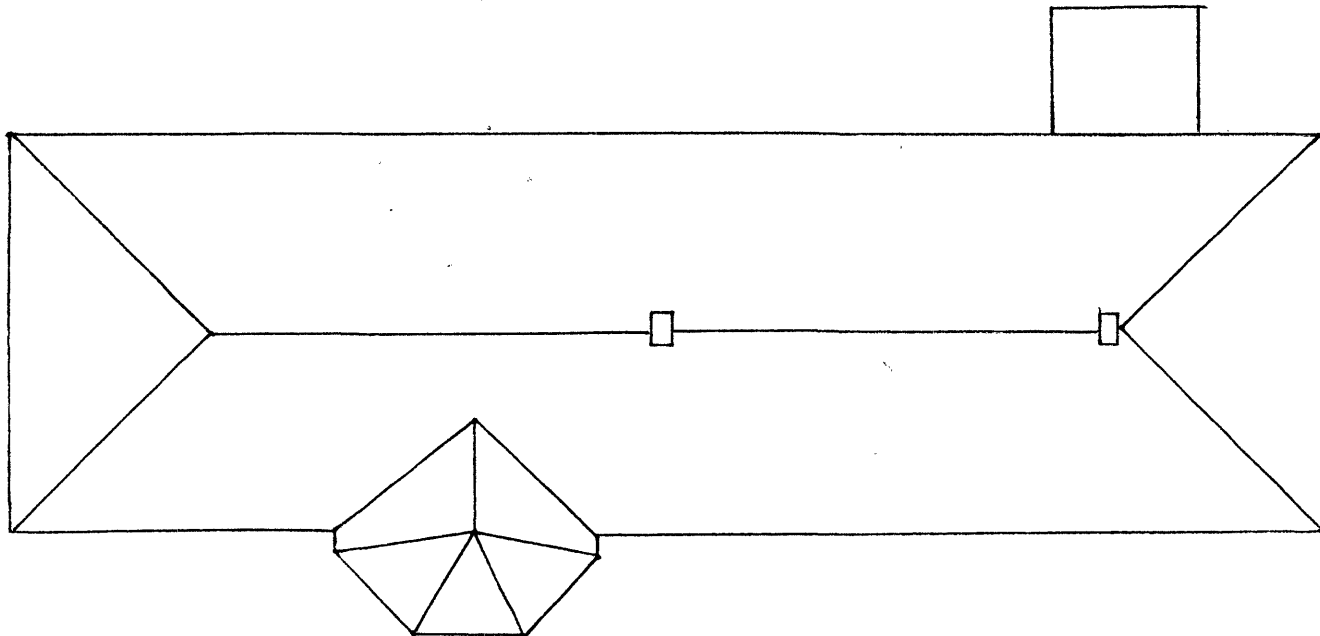
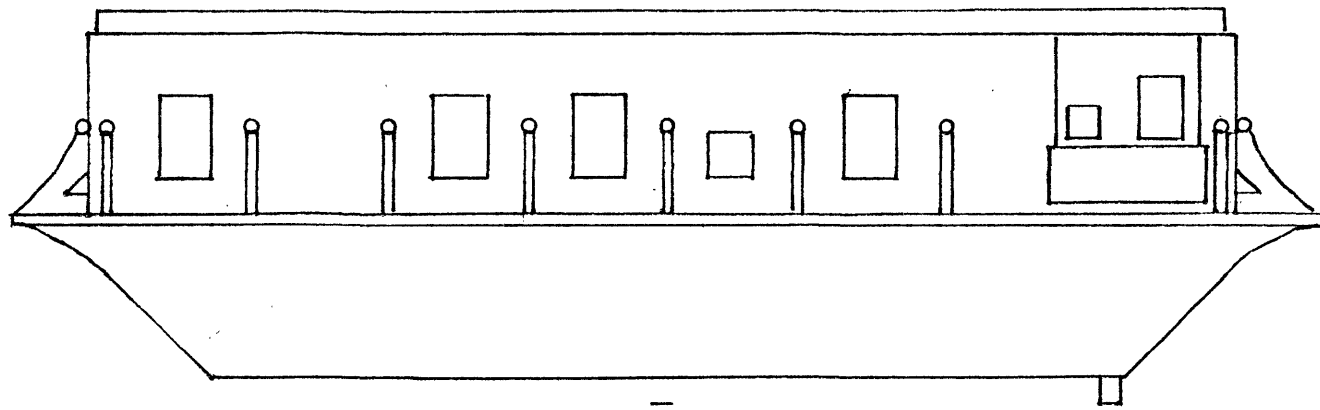
Ellis, Charles, Mrs. "Medicine Bow." Annals of Wyoming. Vol 9, #1 (July, 1932), pp. 673-677.

Ibid. "Oscar Collister." Annals of Wyoming. Vol. 7, #1 (July, 1930), pp. 343-346.

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Research memorandums by Pat McKnight, Intern, Summer, 1982.

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MEDICINE BOW DEPOT

Drawing by Pat McKnight, 1981.