

Substantive Review

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

OCT 12 1983

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic South Superior Union Hall

and/or common South Superior Union Hall

2. Location

street & number at the intersection of Main and Bridge Street not for publication

city, town South Superior vicinity of N/A

state Wyoming code 056 county Sweetwater code 037

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: recreational

4. Owner of Property

name Ron Luker

street & number 4510 Holiday Blvd.

city, town Salt Lake City vicinity of N/A state UTAH 84117

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Sweetwater County Courthouse

street & number 50 W. Flaming Gorge Way

city, town Green River state WY 82935

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wyoming Historic 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 WY 82002

7. Description

Condition

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

Check one

unaltered

altered

Check one

original site

n/a moved

date n/a

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Union Hall is a parallelogrammatic structure and may possibly be the only building in Wyoming with this distinctive configuration. It is a dominant building in the commercial section of South Superior, Wyoming. The size and scale immediately separate this architecturally significant building from the other structures of South Superior. Constructed in 1921, the Union Hall is a large two story structure with a flat roof. The building has a symmetrical appearance and is a typical example of a commercial design utilized frequently during the early twentieth century in Wyoming. The primary facade was constructed of red brick laid in common bond; buff colored brick was used on the sides and back of the structure which differs from the front facade. The side walls are stepped. The foundation consists of poured concrete. Architectural details include an attic story with eight small, square windows and a large pressed metal ornament with the letters "UMWA" located on the brick parapet. An enlarged stone cornice separates the attic story from the second floor. Brick panels, brick corbelling, and four brick pilasters with capitals and bases provide ornamental detailing on the front facade. The central doorway is recessed with a segmental arch with radiating voisoirs and a stone keystone. The words "Union Hall" are centered above the entry. During the fifties, the first story was altered, some of the original doors and windows were removed, and one portion was infilled with newer brick. Yet, this historically significant building has basically retained its architectural integrity. Unfortunately, the structure has suffered from years of neglect. Although the building is structurally sound, the South Superior Union Hall needs immediate attention. The nominated area includes only the Union Hall.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
				labor history
Specific dates	ca. 1920	Builder/Architect	Unknown	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Bituminous coal mining was a significant force in the economic development of Sweetwater County. As Union Pacific trains crossed southern Wyoming and Sweetwater County, coal was utilized as fuel for their engines. Initially Rock Springs was the leading coal producing area in the county but, as these coal mines were depleted, prospectors discovered coal twenty miles to the northeast near present day Superior. By 1906, Superior Coal Company operated five mines in the general vicinity of Superior and South Superior. Small company towns prospered in response to the needs of local miners; the towns of Superior and South Superior incorporated in 1911. As the number of miners in the area grew, the United Mine Workers started organizational activities in Wyoming. By 1908, the UMW was strongest in the southern Wyoming coal fields. When John L. Lewis was elected President of the UMW in 1920, almost half a million men belonged to this international union. In South Superior six UMW locals contributed to the construction fund for a substantial union hall in 1921. Today, the union hall remains a dominant commercial building in the town of South Superior; it may be the only parallelogrammatic structure in Wyoming. The union hall acted as host for a variety of activities from political rallies to social gatherings and recreational events. In addition, the hall also housed doctor and dentist offices. Important social, political and union events kept the building busy until the Union Pacific mines closed during the 1960's. As an integral part of South Superior's past, the union hall represents the importance that mining and unionism achieved during the town's earliest years; as an essential building for social and political events, the South Superior Union Hall made a significant contribution to the history of this coal mining community. Although not stylistically unusual, South Superior's Union Hall is architecturally significant because it possesses distinctive characteristics of construction techniques that render it unique in the surrounding area. As one of Wyoming's largest and more impressive union halls, South Superior's structure still displays its early twentieth century origins and deserves to be preserved.

ADDENDUM

Throughout the nineteenth century, numerous craft and industrial unions in the United States attempted to organize laborers at the local or regional level. Yet, national unions such as the Knights of Labor were not effective until the later part of the century. As the influence of the Knights of Labor declined, the United Mine Workers was created in 1890 as two existing groups merged. The UMW as an industrial-type union invited both skilled and unskilled workers to join their national group which planned to organize at the local level. The UMW began organizational activities in Wyoming in 1903 and the first local was formed in Sheridan County at Higby. Without management's support or endorsement, laborers in the southern Wyoming coal fields joined forces with the UMW in the spring of 1907. The UMW became strongest in the southern part of the state as many miners joined this growing labor organization. Throughout the early twentieth century, the UMW was recognized as one of the most powerful unions in Wyoming. Traditionally, unions in Wyoming have not been a strong political force, therefore, in 1963 the state legislature enacted a right to work law. At that time, Wyoming was the twentieth state to pass right to work legislation.

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE ADDENDUM

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Superior, WY

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UTM References

A

1	2	6	6	8	9	5	0	4	6	2	5	2	0	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 Only the South Superior Union Hall itself is included within the nomination's boundaries. The building is located on the south 40' of Lot 9 in Block 9 and a piece parcel being a portion of Lot 10 in Block 9 in the original town of South Superior, Wyoming.

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 Citizens of South Superior and Eileen Starr

organization WRC-SHPO

date April, 1983

street & number 1920 Thomes Avenue

telephone 307-777-6301

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 Alvin J. Bastrom

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 9/29/83

For NPS use only

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

Bruce Van Dyke
Keeper of the National Register

date 11/25/83

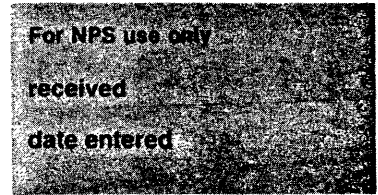
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Significance

Item number 8

Page 2

The constant demand for coal in the early twentieth century encouraged geologic exploration in the Rock Springs area. In 1900, prospectors discovered thick seams of coal northeast of Rock Springs and Superior Coal Company had opened five mines by 1906. The coal camp of Superior, originally named Reliance, developed close to the mines to supply laborers with housing and goods. As the mines prospered and more miners settled in the area, the town of White City or South Superior incorporated in 1911. Life in these early coal camps at 7000' was rigorous yet the railroad from Thayer Junction to Superior provided a necessary link to Rock Springs and other Wyoming towns. Superior Coal Company merged with Union Pacific Coal in 1916 but the daily lives of the miners did not change. The mines of Superior became second only to those of Rock Springs and through the twenties the Superior region prospered.

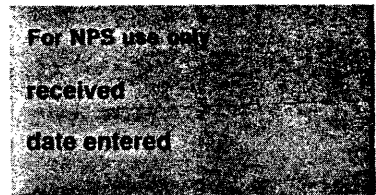
In response to the need for a recreational center in the South Superior area, six UMW locals in 1921 decided to build a substantial brick facility. Loans from two local banks helped to finance the structure and the members were asked to donate \$2.00 per month until the construction loan was paid. In 1922 ownership of the hall was transferred from the UMW to the Superior Mine Workers Temple. During that same year the UMW organized a successful national strike. Over 400,000 workers belonged to the international UMW and 7,000 members lived in Wyoming. The completion of the formidable union hall visually expressed the strength the UMW had reached in Superior.

The union hall quickly became a social center for the region. Various portions of the building were utilized as a bowling alley, grocery store, saloon, skating rink and meeting hall. The dance hall on the second floor became known as one of the finest in the area. Traveling theatrical companies performed on the union hall's large stage on the second story. Political and union meetings kept the hall busy during the twenties, thirties, and early forties. As the use of coal declined nationally after World War II, laborers were forced to leave the South Superior area. During the early fifties, the union hall was remodeled and a portion of the first story was used as a doctor's office. The Union Pacific mines continued to close so the UMW locals sold the hall in 1964.

The new union hall owners, Mary and Olga Knezovich, converted a part of the facility into a cafe. As residents of South Superior moved away, the hall could not support a business and the structure fell into disrepair. South Superior's economy was revitalized during the seventies when the Jim Bridger Power Plant brought new residents and money into the area. Unfortunately, the union hall did not benefit from the economic "boom." Currently the union hall, one of South Superior's most significant buildings, is threatened with demolition. Today only four UMW locals remain active in Wyoming yet the South Superior Union Hall still symbolizes the prosperous past of the union and town.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Addendum

Item number 9

Page 1

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

BOOKS

History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines, 1868 to 1940. The Colonial Press, 1940.

Larson, T.A. History of Wyoming. University of Nebraska Press, 1978.

ARTICLES

Swann, C.E., "Discovery of the Superior Coal Field." Employees' Magazine: The Union Pacific Coal Company. 3 (May, 1926), pp. 153, 154.

UNPUBLISHED ESSAYS AND MANUSCRIPTS

Fletcher, Erma A., "A History of the Labor Movement in Wyoming." Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Wyoming, 1945.

Kathka, David., "Sweetwater County: A Brief History." Unpublished essay, 1980.

Knezovich, Mary., "A History of the Union Hall in South Superior." Unpublished essay, 1982.

INTERVIEWS

Alley, Homer. UMW State Representative. April 4, 1983.

Prevedel, Frank Sr. Former Mayor of South Superior. April 26, 1983.