

DATA SHEET

PHO 695-521

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JAN 22 1979
DATE ENTERED	APR 13 1979

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Bagby Stationhouse, ^{and} Water tanks, Turntable, ^{HABS} Yosemite Valley Railroad

AND/OR COMMON

Same

RECEIVED
DEC 8 1978

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

N/A

CA 140

OHP

CITY, TOWN

El Portal

— VICINITY OF Yosemite Nat'l Park Fifteenth

STATE

California

CODE

06

COUNTY

Mariposa

CODE

043

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

— DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

— STRUCTURE

— SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

— PRIVATE

— BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

— IN PROCESS

— BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

— OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

— WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

— YES: UNRESTRICTED

— NO

PRESENT USE

— AGRICULTURE

— COMMERCIAL

— EDUCATIONAL

— ENTERTAINMENT

— GOVERNMENT

— INDUSTRIAL

— MILITARY

— MUSEUM

— PARK

— PRIVATE RESIDENCE

— RELIGIOUS

— SCIENTIFIC

— TRANSPORTATION

OTHER: Planned for exhibit

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

Western Regional Office

STREET & NUMBER

450 Golden Gate Ave., Box 36063

CITY, TOWN

San Francisco

— VICINITY OF

STATE

California 94102

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

National Park Service/Administration Building

STREET & NUMBER

Yosemite Village, P. O. Box 577

CITY, TOWN

Yosemite National Park

STATE

California 95389

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey (Bagby Stationhouse)

DATE

1960

— FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE <u>1966</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Bagby Stationhouse is a 2-story, wood frame structure measuring 16' x 40', and is rectangular in plan. The building is tall and narrow because its original site was a thin strip of land between the tracks and the Merced River. It has a low-pitched hipped roof which overhangs 3' and provides parasol protection from the sun and weather. The roof is wood shingled. The walls are sheathed with 1" x 6" shiplap siding and painted a mustard yellow color. The building is divided into three rooms on the first floor-- at one end a waiting room, an office with a bay window in the middle, and a freight room at the opposite end. The second floor, which is reached by exterior stairs, has five rooms, a living room, bedroom, kitchen, bath, and an enclosed porch with a wall of screens. The building, while missing its platform and exterior stairs, is in good condition and has not suffered major alterations. It will be restored as an exhibit for the Transportation Museum.

The Bagby Turntable was evidently custom-built for the Yosemite Valley Railroad; it was prefabricated and assembled on-site. It is a hand-pushed railroad turntable of gallows type construction, made of heavy timbers and iron rods. The gallows is made of timbers, 16' high, and it rests on two large stringers, each consisting of four 3" x 12" bolted together. King post trusses are formed by eight 1" iron rods bent over the gallows and attached to the stringers. The iron tie rods are threaded for the turnbuckles and function as the tension members of the trusses. Timber cross ties, bolted underneath the stringers, carry the rails. The entire carriage revolved on wheels on a single circular rail about 8' in diameter, beneath the center. The timbers were in a deteriorated condition before the turntable was moved to El Portal, and the intention is for them to function as patterns for the restoration of the turntable.

The Bagby Water Tanks are a pair of wooden tanks on a supporting structure, with an overall height of 30'. The wooden tanks are strapped with metal bands, and are placed on an open platform at 4" x 5" timbers. The tanks are protected by a single, standing seam metal roof, which is gabled. The tanks are supported by a framework of heavy 12" x 12" timbers. This structure was partially dismantled when moved, but remains in good condition.

Note: Gallows-frame manual turntables of the type described above were once common on branch lines of major railroads and on short-line railroads. However, a quick survey has revealed no other turntables of this type known to be existing today except for a narrow gauge turntable of different design at Laws, California (near Bishop). Consequently, this manual gallows-frame standard gauge turntable may be the last one surviving in the United States.

Bagby Station was originally located at Bagby, California, according to a 1929 employee's timetable of the Yosemite Valley Railroad--30.0 miles westward from the El Portal terminus and 47.2 miles from the railroad's home station at Merced, California. On State Highway 49, Bagby was eleven miles south of Coulterville and 17 miles northwest of Mariposa, in Mariposa County, California. Bagby was located in the canyon of the Merced River. The name "Bagby" by which the station, water tanks and turntable structure are identified, comes from the town of Bagby at which they were historically located. Bagby

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was originally known as Benton Mills; the reason for the change of name is not known. Detailed descriptions of the historic environment of the structures at Bagby are not available today due to inundation of the site by waters from a dam, but its Merced River Canyon environment at Bagby is topographically similar to the Merced River Canyon environment of El Portal, present location of the structures, except that the types of flora and fauna differ to some degree due to the higher elevation of the latter location, thirty miles further into the mountains. At Bagby, the depot and turntable were on the south side of the tracks, the water tanks on the north. The turntable is believed to have been east of the depot, across the tracks from the water tank.

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 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

1907

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Yosemite Valley Railroad

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Yosemite Valley Railroad ran from the San Joaquin Valley town of Merced to the village of El Portal, on the boundary of Yosemite National Park, for 38 years (1907-1945). Bagby Station, built in 1907, is the only remaining Y.V.R.R. stationhouse. Along with the uniquely designed twin water tanks, the stationhouse is illustrative of an important era in Yosemite's history and thus is of local significance in transportation. The turntable shares this local associative significance of the station and water tanks, but is of at least regional, and perhaps national, significance under Criteria "C", embodying the distinctive characteristic of a type, as a rare surviving manual or "Armstrong" gallows frame turntable, a device once common on branch and short line railroads, but now exceedingly rare, only one other being known.

The structures were moved to the historic railhead of El Portal in 1966 prior to the inundation of Bagby by the raising of Exchequer Dam and the expansion of Lake McClure. The significance of the stationhouse, as the last of its kind on the Y.V.R.R., was recognized and funds were appropriated to salvage it. (The building was recorded for H.A.B.S. on its original site.)

The advent of railroad travel to Yosemite National Park signaled the end of the stagecoach era and significantly altered patterns of tourism and commerce within the park. With the arduous 2 to 3 day stagecoach ride reduced to a comfortable 4 hour journey, visitation increased rapidly. At the same time, visitors stayed in Yosemite for a much shorter duration, causing a high turnover rate and need for expansion of guest accommodations. Yosemite Valley businessmen were able to meet the needs of visitors with greater facility than in the past as the Y.V.R.R. brought supplies as well as passengers, eliminating the 10 to 14 day wait for the horse-drawn freight wagons.

Stagecoaches were still needed to transport passengers from El Portal to the valley floor as the final eight miles up the Merced River Canyon had proven impassable to the railroad. In 1913, auto "stages" replaced the horse-drawn vehicles and set in motion the eventual decline of railroad travel.

The completion of the All Year Highway, across the Merced River from the train tracks, occurred in 1926 and the Y.V.R.R. began to depend primarily on revenue from transporting freight for the various lineside industries that had developed during its heyday.

A disastrous flood in 1937 destroyed miles of track and the expense of replacing twisted rails and missing roadbed added to the financial difficulties caused by the loss of passenger traffic. These facts, combined with the loss of freight revenue when the Yosemite Sugar Pine Lumber Company sold its major holdings, put the railway out of business.

"In 1945, wrecking crews took up the track and another pioneer railroad disappeared."

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Johnston, Hank. 1963. Railroads of Yosemite Valley. Long Beach. Johnston-Howe Publications.
- Johnston, Hank. 1962. Shortline to Paradise. Long Beach. Johnston-Howe Publications
- El Portal Transportation Museum Prospectus. Yosemite National Park Research Library.
- "Historic Structures Report, Moving and Preservation, Bagby Station (Stationhouse, Watertanks, Turntable) To Pioneer Yosemite Transportation Center", NPS, 1966

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than 1
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1 1 1	2 5 14	8 15 10	4 1 7 3	1 1 0 1 0	B					
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	
C						D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the nominated properties are defined by the size and shape of the building or objects. The boundaries constitute three rectangles: for the station, 14 x 40 feet; for the turntable, 14 x 60 feet, and for the water tank, 12 x 24 feet, although the latter is presently disassembled and the components occupy a space of 20 x 95 feet, or an aggregate of a maximum 3,380 square feet. (continued on last page)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Leslie Starr Hart/Historian
Merrill Ann Wilson/Historic Architect

ORGANIZATION	DATE
<u>National Park Service/Denver Service Center</u>	<u>7/76</u>
STREET & NUMBER	TELEPHONE
<u>755 Parfet, P. O. Box 25287</u>	<u>(303) 234-4509-Hart</u>
CITY OR TOWN	STATE
<u>Denver</u>	<u>Colorado 80225</u>

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

DEC 15 1978

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES NO NONE

Kenneth E. Ellm
 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE Asst. Dir. Cultural Resources DATE 1/11/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 ATTEST: Bill Tolson
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 4/13/79
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 DATE March 30, 1979

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As indicated above, the three structures were moved to El Portal because they were about to be destroyed on their original sites when those sites at Bagby were inundated by a reservoir. There was no alternative to moving them from their original sites if they were to be preserved. As the last three structures of that kind from the historic Yosemite Valley Railroad, they possess significance even though no longer on their original sites, and their present location was historically a part of that railroad complex. One of them, the turntable, now stored partially dismantled, lies only a couple of hundred yards from the pit site of the identical El Portal turntable of which only the concrete-lined pit survives. The station, Bagby turntable and partly disassembled water tanks stand on land which historically was the Yosemite Valley Railroad yard at El Portal. Their location, therefore, is an appropriate one for structures which had to be moved from their original sites in order to be preserved. Furthermore, there were no historic values at El Portal which were affected by the placement of these three structures there.

Furthermore, the station and water tanks are considered significant as examples of Yosemite Valley Railroad structures which were distinctively different in design from comparable structures on other railroads. The twin tanks, with gable roof, on a platform, differ significantly from the usual single tank with cylindrical roof. The two story depot is similarly of an uncommon design. They possess, therefore, a type of design significance which, while perhaps not strictly architectural significance, is comparable to it. This quality qualifies the structures for National Register listing even though they lack integrity of site.

Thus, these structures are significant both for architectural value and because they are the three surviving structures most importantly associated with the historically significant Yosemite Valley Railroad.

Continuation sheet: Bagby Station Item Number 10 Page 2

The location is pinpointed by the UTM coordinates; it is not in a location where it can be defined by street intersections, although all are on the north side of the Yosemite all-year highway.