

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received OCT 12 1983

date entered NOV 25 1983

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Hotel Higgins

and/or common Hotel Higgins

2. Location

street & number 416 West Birch not for publication

city, town Glenrock vicinity of N/A

state Wyoming code 056 county Converse code 009

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" 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	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a being considered	<input checked="" 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 D. Jack and Margaret Doll

street & number 416 West Birch

city, town Glenrock vicinity of N/A state Wyoming 82637

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder's Office - Converse County Courthouse

street & number 107 North 5th

city, town Douglas state Wyoming 82633

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date November, 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Wyoming Recreation Commission, 1920 Thomas Avenue

city, town Cheyenne state Wyoming 82002

. Description

Condition excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moveddate N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Hotel Higgins is located on a small lot close to the commercial area in Glenrock, Wyoming. Architecturally, the exterior of the building is typical of other Wyoming hotels constructed during the period, yet the interior of the Higgins has elements of Victorian ornamentation. Basically, the structure has retained its integrity since its construction in 1916. The nominated area includes only the building and its closest surroundings.

The Hotel Higgins is a 2½ story, U-shaped building with a one-story covered entry and a one-story, rectangular addition in the rear. The roof is hipped with two pent shaped dormers, and the eaves are exposed. The hotel's seven bay front has a centrally located, single door, with six large double-hung windows, accented by shutters only on the primary facade. Aluminum storm windows were added in the early 1960's, but the original wood sash windows remain intact underneath.

When constructed in 1916-1917, the hotel's exterior was lap-sided, painted brown with white trim. Today, the hotel is covered with green asbestos siding, applied in 1953-54. Although the original lap-siding is no longer evident, the Hotel Higgins has retained its integrity in terms of location, design, setting, feeling and association. With the exceptions of the storm windows and asbestos siding, the hotel still appears as it did when constructed.

Similarly, most of the architectural integrity of the hotel's interior still remains. The original mahogany trim remain in place throughout the hotel, as does the hand-laid hexagonal terrazo on the floors of the lobby, dining room, and all bathrooms. The ceilings are 11 feet high with an elaborate, plaster of paris cornice.

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/
<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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1916 **Builder/Architect** Edward Reavill

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Hotel Higgins was built during Glenrock's oil boom of 1916–1917, when central Wyoming experienced unprecedented growth. Built on the site of the Deer Creek trading post and stage station, Glenrock was at the center of the oil development activity. The Hotel Higgins, having been in continuous operation since it was opened, has witnessed the growth of this area. As the scene of social affairs and civic meetings, even providing office space for the Glenrock city government, the Hotel Higgins has been instrumental in the maturing of the town itself. The Higgins is the only early twentieth-century hotel that remains operating in Glenrock, a reminder of its "boom town" period, and is of great local significance. Despite some alterations to the hotel's exterior, the Higgins has maintained its historical integrity, and is worthy of enrollment on the National Register.

SEE ADDENDUM

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE ADDENDUM

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Glenrock, Wyoming

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

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Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property includes only the building itself which is part of Block 4, Lots 12-15 in Glenrock, 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 Jack and Margaret Doll/Michael Gorman

organization owners/SHPO Historian date March 15, 1982/August, 1983

street & number 416 West Birch/1920 Thomes Avenue telephone 307-436-2612/307-777-6301

city or town Glenrock/Cheyenne state WY 82637/82002

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 9/28/83

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

[Signature] date 11/25/83
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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The town of Glenrock grew up at the Deer Creek Crossing of the Platte River, a popular rest stop for travelers on the California-Oregon-Mormon Trail. The Latter-Day Saints Emigrant Guide, published in 1848, described the area as a "lovely place to camp. Swift current. Clear water and an abundance of fish. Nice grove of timber on banks and a coal mine about a quarter of a mile upon the east side." Because the Mormon migration was not to be a single movement, but one extending over a period of years, until all Mormons had reached their new home in Utah, detailed plans were made for every part of the journey. Ferries were established and storehouses were built; such a supply station was located at Deer Creek. The site also served as a mail station for the Independence to Salt Lake mail service.

In 1855, Thomas Teviss, government agent to the Arapahoe, Sioux, and Crow tribes established the Upper Platte Agency at Deer Creek station. During the next decade, a trading post and telegraph station were located at the site; the Pony Express and Ben Holladay's stage line used Deer Creek for their operations. In 1865, the Federal Government purchased the post, and Deer Creek became an Army post until abandoned three years later.

A small settlement gradually developed at Deer Creek. Originally named Mercedes, the village later took the name of Nuttall, after William Nuttall, discoverer and developer of a nearby coal deposit. When the Wyoming Central Railroad moved west from Douglas in the late 1880's, a station was built at Deer Creek and the stop was named Glenrock. A second railroad, the Burlington, arrived in Glenrock in 1913.

The railroads brought miners, who worked the soft coal deposits of the region; while the mines were at peak production. Glenrock's population remained steady at about five hundred. The town was incorporated in 1908. Within a few years, however, the demand for the region's coal had fallen sharply and the mines began to close. By 1916, the last coal pit had been shut down, and most of the mines' employees had left the area. The population of Glenrock fell to 200; the citizens who remained realized that if Glenrock was to survive at all, it would do so on a much smaller scale than earlier envisioned. But, Glenrock was about to enter the most prosperous period of its history.

In late 1916, the firm of Humphrey and Whiteside made a major oil discovery in the Big Muddy field west of Glenrock; other discoveries followed, in the Deer Creek and Dry Creek fields. These finds caused a wild excitement in Glenrock, and within a few months, the town's population had swelled to five thousand, as speculators and oil field workers rushed in. Town lots were sold at twenty times their real value. The oil boom had other affects on the economy of Glenrock. During a two-year period, 1916-1918, a new grade school and high school were built, as well as a light plant, sewer system, churches, and office buildings. When the Mutual Oil Company built a refinery near Glenrock, the town's future seemed secure.

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In response to the oil boom and the influx of new citizens, the Hotel Higgins was built in 1916-1917. John E. Higgins, an Illinois native, was a rancher, oil speculator, and former state legislator. His wife, Josephine Amoretti Higgins, had been born in Italy and educated in France. One Glenrock resident remembered Mrs. Higgins as the driving force in the couple's business dealings. "She had the sharpest mind I have ever known in anyone and she used it to make a million dollars, when millionaires were about the scarcest commodity in Wyoming. Of course her husband... was a working partner in all their business ventures, yet it was conceded by all that she was the financial genius of the family."

A contemporary newspaper account called the new Hotel Higgins "one of the most elaborate and finely furnished hostelries in the entire Rocky Mountain region." The architect and builder was Edward Reavill, who constructed a 2½ story, 38 room hotel. The building was U-shaped, with a rectangular, one-story addition at the rear, which housed the hotel dining room. The exterior was covered with lap-siding, painted brown with white trim. Each of the hotel's rooms was trimmed with mahogany, and was ornately furnished. The floors of the lobby, dining room, and bathrooms were finished with terrazo tile. Construction costs exceeded \$65,000.

The grand opening of the Higgins took place on May 9, 1917; the hotel's success was immediate. The dining room was the scene of several receptions for visiting dignitaries, including Wyoming Governor Joseph Carey, and politician William Jennings Bryan. In the early 1920's, the dining room was converted to a ballroom, and became a popular meeting place for the citizens of Glenrock.

By the mid 1920's, the oil boom had ended, and Glenrock entered a second recession. Two companies remained in the area: oil refineries which continued to process crude oil from the Big Muddy field. The Glenrock economy received another boost in 1923, when the Sinclair Tank Farm was built. Although the boom had ended, Glenrock would survive.

Josephine Higgins was killed in 1924, in an auto accident near Casper, Wyoming. When her husband died two years later, the Higgins estate, including the Hotel, became the subject of intense litigation. In his will, John Higgins stated that this estate was to be held in trust for fifty years, at which time it was to become the property of the State of Wyoming. The ensuing legal battle between the estate's heirs and various politicians and municipalities took two decades to resolve. In the process, the estate was depleted to one-fifth of its original value; many of the furnishings, tapestries, and fine pieces of art in the Hotel Higgins disappeared during this time. The hotel continued operations under the name "Higgins Estate Hotel," and an etched glass window bearing this name remains on the structure.

In August, 1942, the Higgins estate was put on auction. Dr. and Mrs. Leonard Tabor of Glenrock were the successful bidders for the hotel, acquiring

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it simply by paying the back taxes. The hotel's name was changed to the "Tabor Hotel." After Dr. Tabor died, his widow leased the hotel to various individuals. This operation was not successful and, in 1958, the hotel was sold again. After several further changes of ownership, the present owners, Jack and Margaret Doll, purchased the property in August, 1974, and the hotel reverted to its original name.

Although there have been several alterations to the hotel over the past 65 years, the integrity of the building remains intact. In 1953-54, the Tabors added green asphalt siding to the structure, and, in the early 1960's, aluminum storm windows were installed. The original wood sash windows remain intact under the storm windows. These have been the only major alterations to the hotel. The interior of the Hotel Higgins is much the same as it was in the 1920's. The present owners have been quite successful in effecting the return of many of the hotel's original furnishings.

Glenrock today is a thriving town; oil, gas, and uranium production, as well as agriculture, form the economic backbone of the area. Originating as a way-station in the infancy of western travel, Glenrock became a vital part of the industrial development of central Wyoming. The Hotel Higgins has been a witness to this growth; despite many changes of ownership, the hotel has remained in continuous operation since its founding. As a participant in the rich history of Glenrock, and as a symbol of the town's determination to survive, the Hotel Higgins deserves to be enrolled in the National Register of Historic Places.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

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Glenrock Gazette. July 29, 1920.

Kimball, Allen R. "Ancient History and Some Unforgettable Characters." Ms. #684. (Cheyenne: Wyoming State Archives, Museums and Historical Dept.)

Walkinshaw, Mabel Thayer. "A Way of Life," Glenda Hadley (ed), Times Past: Memories from the Early Days of Glenrock, Wyoming. (Cheyenne: Frontier Printing, 1982), pp. 236-238.

CORRESPONDENCE

Jack and Margaret Doll, August 13, 1982.

INTERVIEW

Jack and Margaret Doll, August 19, 1982.