Form No 10-300  REV. (9'77)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME
HISTORIC
Thurber Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER
Approximately 70 miles southwest of Fort Worth, Texas along Interstate Highway 20.

CITY, TOWN
Thurber

VICINITY OF
Gordon, Texas

STATE
Texas

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY
INVENTORY

OWNERSHIP
PUBLIC

STATUS
OCCUPIED

PRESENT USE
AGRICULTURE

PRIVATE

COMMERCIAL

PUBLIC

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

STRUCTURE
PUBLIC

ENTERTAINMENT

OBJECT
PUBLIC ACQUISITION

GOVERNMENT

IN PROCESS

INDUSTRIAL

BEING CONSIDERED

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

ACCESSIBLE

OTHER

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

NO

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Mr. Randy Bennett

STREET & NUMBER
Thurber Ranch

CITY, TOWN
Thurber

VICINITY OF
Gordon, Texas

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE:
Erath County Courthouse

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Stephenville

STATE
Texas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Subject Marker

DATE
1969

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
Texas Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN
Austin, Texas

STATE
Texas
The remaining buildings and site of the mines and associated mining town of Thurber, Texas are located in the northwestern corner of Erath county 70 miles west of Fort Worth on Interstate Highway 20. The townsite is situated in one of the slope-walled shallow valleys which, timbered with young growth mesquite and post oak, are characteristic of the region's terrain. Beneath the surface of the ground is Thurber's reason for existence; a layer of the state's only bituminous coal deposit. The site is surrounded on 3 sides by mesas, one of which is made up of high-grade brick shale once used in the town's other main undertaking, the manufacture of millions of vitrified paving brick.

The boundaries of the Thurber historical district have been set to include and protect all 10 major buildings, a cemetery, 2 man-made lakes, foundations of the brick plant, and a large area blanketed with the foundations of hundreds of homes built and demolished between 1886 and 1936. The physical remains are most valuable to future documenting and mapping by historic archaeologists, architectural and social historians. Foundations, by their size, shape and arrangement, indicate a community organization unique to this completely company-owned town where building sites were chosen by carpenters and only for ease of construction instead of by individual owners competing for desirable locations and views, as in most towns. Consequently, houses were scattered about, yet often cramped: some with their front door opening directly onto a neighbor's rear door. Building styles were repetitious with many identical copies of each style. Houses were all painted the same; first gray and later, brick red.

Destined to become a community of 10,000 by 1921, the street plan evolved from early supply wagon trails and around the railroad tracks which ran from the town to the mines. An elongated quadrangle formed the central focusing element of the community, with most of the necessities of the employee's life in this remote, isolated location: business and mercantile offices, drug store, bandstand, opera house, schools, ice plant, union hall and clubhouses. The only non-residential functions distributed throughout the community were seven church buildings, supplied free of charge, and one branch of the company grocery store.

The only visual reminder of this organization is three houses and four structures on the quadrangle, and remnants of brick sidewalks and foundations. All buildings in town were one or two stories with the dominant architectural element being the extant 150 ft. tall, red brick smokestack of the now-demolished ice and power plant.

Located on the attached 1920 map by the notch in the building titled "power ho[use]", the finely crafted tapering octagonal smokestack set on a square base, has the date of 1906 near its corbeled and dentiled crown (No. 1 in photos and on overlay map). Although a vertical crack is appearing on the north side, the stack continues in its current function as a monument and visual anchor.

The "dry goods" building (ca. 1899) on the west side of the quadrangle, appears to have been built in two main parts followed by a non-historic addition in the rear (No. 4). Roughly rectangular in plan, the large red brick building has high metal ceilings in most of the large rooms even though the north facade appears to have been two stories at one time. The gently sloped roof drains to the west. Fenestration is large double-hung, one-over-one light windows occurring in triples, doubles or singles as in most existing Thurber buildings. Ten oculi line the east or quadrangle facade just below a moulded brick cornice. Two round-arched transoms were above the main entries, but are now blocked. Mostly empty or used for storage, the center portion still houses a huge vault and early toilets, part of Thurber's once complete early sewer system.

The drug store building (ca. 1899) is a large, rectangular plan, two story brick structure on the east side of the quadrangle (No. 5). The west, or quadrangle facade,
exhibits fine brickwork forming rusticated corners and pilasters with original storefront entry doors and showcase intact. A broad, corbeled parapet hides a low-slope roof draining to the east. Its architectural integrity intact, the first floor is mostly used as "The Smokestack" restaurant and part of the second floor is used as a residence. Also on the east side of the quadrangle, the fire house is a wide L-shaped frame structure, dating from the 1890's (No. 3). Now used only for storage, the twin-hip roofed building has 3 triple-section doors opening to the east and west sides which once allowed the pass-through movement of hook-and-ladder crews.

North of the smokestack is the red brick, two story building housing a water filtration plant and the Thurber Ranch office (No. 2). Built around 1900, the L-shaped structure with attached concrete water-settling tank, is still used for the ranch water supply. The first level is partially below grade and completely occupied by equipment, and the second level, with some minor alterations, is used mainly for office and storage space. The three bays on the west and north facades and four bays on the south facade second level, are expressed by recessed paired windows in large brick panels framed by brick columns, now appearing as pilasters.

Just north of the quadrangle are the only three old houses remaining in the district. Most significant is the home of W.K. Gordon, manager of the coal company between 1899 and 1920, as well as the discoverer of the huge Ranger oil field in 1917. Unidentified due to its understood importance, the house is just west of the house marked "191" on the company map (No. 7). What once was the latter's foundation is now a swimming pool (No. 8). The Gordon house was built between 1889 and 1917 with construction closer to the earlier date. Remodelings came later which added "bungalow" or "modern" flavor to the two story, hip-roofed, frame structure. For many years the company guest house, it continues in that role today.

Also a central stairway plan house, number 195 is similar to, though smaller, than Gordon's (No. 9). Number 195 now serves as the residence of Mr. Randy Bennett, owner of the Thurber Ranch. Both houses are well-maintained and contribute to the historic image of Thurber.

Located where house number 194 was on the map is a ranchworkers' house resulting from the joining of two old miners' houses, one having been removed from the path of I.H. 20 a few years ago (No. 10).

The Thurber cemetery is of historic value in its own right, while serving as a burial site for many ex-Thurberites who continue to have their remains sent there. The Thurber Historical Association estimates the number of graves at more than 3,000, many of which are unmarked and untended.

The two man-made lakes, "Big Lake" (1896) and "Little Lake", (1891) were built to serve Thurber's water needs when well water proved salty. Little Lake has been used for recreational purposes since Big Lake took over the job of supplying water to the filtration plant.

Building foundations and sidewalks remain across a large area of what was once Thurber and they are identified on the 1920 map by names referring to the one-time occupants: New York Hill, Polander Hill, Italian Hill, and Cemetery Hill. Recent tree-thinning operations by the "chaining" method have damaged foundations east of the quadrangle. Subsequent plowing has caused further damage.
The remains of the huge brick plant which operated from 1897 to 1933 appear on the map just west of "Big Lake" where six fireplugs serve a seemingly blank space. Once the biggest brick plant in Texas, producing 80,000 vitrified paving brick per day after WWI, it was dynamited and salvaged in 1936, leaving rubble and easily definable foundations of equipment, buildings, and at least 17 large kilns. The road bed for the electric motor-line railroad which brought shale to the brick plant from the quarry a mile to the north, is still visible, although now dissected by Interstate 20.

Almost all above-ground equipment and structures at the mine sites were removed in 1926. A slag heap and some tram-towers still stand near mine number 2 and New Mine number 3. As indicated by an archeological survey done in 1978, Mine number 6 and New Mine number 1, the two mines closest to the strip mine leaseings, have dumps and engine and boiler foundations above ground and should be protected. They are included in the nomination as separate sites.

The most noticeable contemporary structures are the filling station, whose observation tower imitates a coal tipple just east of the old drugstore, and the interstate highway bisecting the district from east to west at the south end of the old quadrangle. Since it echoes the general shape of the original tipple, and employs similar building materials, the modern reconstruction can be considered compatible. The highway is an obvious intrusion. On the map labeled "Coal Mining Activity", the land leased by Texas Industries for strip-mining and a processing plant appears along with locations of the 15 T & P mines. Current mining plans will not cut into old mines or disturb their surface remains.

At the east end of the 1920 map, about one mile from town, two tall, empty, concrete silos mark the site of the early company dairy farm, a large concern dating from the 1890's (No. 12). However, because of the distance from the main part of the district and intrusions between, the dairy farm is not included within the boundaries. Unlike the archeological sites, the silos offer little opportunity for further study. Therefore, they are not included as individual sites, either.
The town of Thurber, Texas was unique in many ways. Born in response to transportation's need for coal and paving brick, it grew to 10,000 inhabitants by 1921 only to shrink to a handful in the 1930's after railroads switched to oil and highways to asphalt. It is remarkable because the town's entire physical fabric was built before a population existed to occupy it. And, because democratic government never existed in this entirely company-owned and built town, when innovations came, Thurber was first to have them. It was the first all-union city in the nation and one of the first all electrified and to have complete water and sewage systems. Fed by the company's huge coal and brick industries and a company policy of importing labor, the citizenry was a "melting pot" in microcosm, boasting immigrants of 18 nationalities.

70 miles west of Fort Worth on IH-20, Thurber began as a coal-mining camp called "Johnson Mines" in 1866. That is the year William Whipple Johnson and his brother Harvey sank their first shaft 150 ft. into Vein #1 of the Strawn Division, the only bituminous coal seam in lignite-rich Texas. Johnson discovered the coal deposits while working for the Texas and Pacific Railroad, whose westward push prompted a reward for anyone locating a coal mine near their lines. At least four others tried unsuccessfully to meet the demand before the Johnsons managed to work two shafts for two years at a time when no coal was being mined in the state.

By 1888, the miners, encouraged by the Knights of Labor, demanded higher wages. His interest waning after the death of his brother, Johnson chose to close the mines rather than risk operating at a loss. Expecting the inevitable re-opening of the mines, the miners camped just off company land in what would come to be known as "Strike Town", or "Grant Town".

Three Eastern capitalists, Col. R.D. Hunter, Edgar L. Marston, and M.K. Thurber, formed the Texas and Pacific Coal Mining Company in November, 1888 with the sole intention of buying Mr. Johnson's mines, including the purchase of the entire 2302-1/2 acres of northeastern Erath county known as the Pedro Herrerra tract. Although no corporate connection existed, the name of the company was chosen to flatter the railroad that had agreed to purchase 100% of the coal mined. The town was named for Mr. Thurber, but it was Col. Hunter who was to be the driving force in the company and the town. Hunter offered lower wages than Johnson's and the miners refused, declaring themselves at strike with a company that had never hired them. Never seeing a place for organized labor in his town, Hunter declared "I'll run my business, and I'll run my town, or I'll run it to Hell". He built a four-strand barbed wire fence around 900 acres, including the town. With armed guards posted at the gates he prevented union "agitators" and peddlers from disrupting either his employees or his monopoly on commercial sales to them. He shipped in trainloads of miners from other areas of the country but only a group of 500 to 600 blacks would cross the strikers' lines and work the mines. Continuing to work the mines, Hunter set about the building of business and residential districts in preparation for the inevitable boom he anticipated when the "strike" was over. During 1888 and 1889
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1017 acres
QUADRANGLE NAME Gordon SW and Reddy Mountain, TX
QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

ZONE EASTING NORHTING ZONE EASTING NORHTING
A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

As described by polygon drawn on enclosed site plan and U.S.G.S. maps.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>CODE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>048</td>
<td>Palo Pinto</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Robert Steinbomer, Research Assistant
ORGANIZATION Texas Historical Commission
STREET & NUMBER P.O. Box 12276
CITY OR TOWN Austin
STATE Texas

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X 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

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer
DATE April 18, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE 8-17-79

ATTEST:

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION
he spent $56,494.94 building stores, a boarding house, offices, stables, churches, school houses, and over 200 two, three, four and five room houses. His actions set the trend for the unique future of Thurber. Only in a completely monopolized atmosphere could the physical structure of a town be built before the communal structure came to occupy it. Even before it was a town, Thurber existed as a response to the railroad’s insatiable appetite for coal.

The miners eventually reached agreement with Hunter in July, 1899, and mining commenced in earnest. Mining was by the "long wall advancing" method in which four or more large tunnels would start out like spokes from the "hub" or shaft linking the mine with the surface. Between these shafts were formed the miner’s low tunnels through which they brought coal back to the mule carts in the larger tunnels. As the miners extracted coal, their tunnels would move away from the hub, forming a concentric circle of long walls of coal until about 640 acres had been covered, all this hundreds of feet below the surface. By 1896, 1000 to 1500 miners were removing between 1500 and 2000 tons of bitum daily. With the addition of the largest brick plant west of the Mississippi River in 1897, Thurber's future seemed secure and Hunter was able to take advantage of both the high grade brick shale on company land and the undersized coal for which the miners were not paid.

Thurber brick were made mostly by the "stiff-mud" process where moist clay is extruded under pressure in a continuous column which is then sliced up in brick-sized units, dried, and fired in kilns. Thurber had at least 17 large rectangular kilns; 8 updraft and 9 downdraft. All produced vitrified, top quality, maroon colored brick by the thousands. The plant was closed in 1933 when asphalt finally replaced brick as a paving material and the owners found no reason to try competing in the already sagging building brick market. After sale to salvagers in 1936, the kilns were dynamited and mostly removed but immense foundation rubble still clearly marks the outline of kilns and buildings.

The town lacked nothing. Due to its remoteness from other American coal mining communities and its difficult, narrow 27" coal seams, Hunter was obliged to make Thurber as attractive and self-reliant as possible over the first few years. This caused the building of a 17 ton ice plant in 1896, a meat packing plant, an electric plant in 1895 (making Thurber one of the first cities in Texas to have electricity in every house), a dairy and herds, drug store, smelter, mortuary, gin, the only public library in the county, and a 655 seat opera house playing host to top roadshows with steam heat and electric lights by 1900. No employee of the company was allowed ownership of any property or building. Texas Pacific owned everything. Hotel Knox, with room for 200 boarders, was billed as the best hotel between Fort Worth and El Paso. The high school had 15 teachers. Of the two saloons, the "Snake" and the "Lizard", the latter boasted room for 1200 miners with 100 at the horseshoe bar.

Hunter's policy of importing miners included sending recruiters to Europe. As a result, Thurber became a clearing house for the immigration and nationalization of people of at least 18 different nationalities, although Italian and Polish predominated. With only four levels of rent and absolutely no private ownership, the population was distributed according to economic strata rather than strictly ethnic. But among those
areas of town, nationalities tended to aggregate, in "Italian Hill", "Polander Hill" and "New York Hill". Hunter passed the reigns to W.K. Gordon in 1899 and Gordon ran the town until he moved to Fort Worth in 1920. Under his management, Thurber supplied half the coal mined in Texas and became totally union in 1903; the first town to have every person drawing a paycheck paying dues to their respective union. John L. Lewis, the great organizer, was called to town to help settle disputes on occasion, as was Texas Ranger John Sullivan. Another famous visitor to Thurber was Eugene C. Debbs, four-time Socialist presidential candidate who came to address the miners.

In 1917, when T.P. had 2500 men employed in coal mining alone, W.K. Gordon's persistence in drilling resulted in the discovery of the great Ranger oilfields. The discovery of a wealth of oil and gas on company land saved the company from financial ruin, but ultimately sealed the fate of Thurber. Texas Pacific Coal Co. stock went from $100 a share to $1900 a share after recapitalization and incorporation as the Texas Pacific Oil Company in April of 1918. T.P. brought in hundreds of new employees and executives for oil operations. Many were from the Northeast, so when the first 31 fine brick homes were built at a cost of $250,000 in 1918, the subdivision came to be known as "New York Hill". The Ranger field was producing over $100 million a year by 1920 and Thurber's population had swollen to at least 10,000. The town had grown up as a mining camp, but it boomed on Ranger oil. In 1920 the railroads, which used 90% of Thurber's annual production of 700,000 tons of coal, switched to oil-fired locomotives. The miners and the company couldn't reach agreement on wages and the mines were closed in 1921. "Grant Town" bloomed again with rows of tents as miners awaited the re-opening, but coal mining in Thurber was over with an estimated 137,000,000 tons still to be mined. Population dropped rapidly until it stabilized with about 800 oil and brick plant related employees about 1926. The company then systematically set about the sale and dismantling of the hundreds of vacant houses and unwanted equipment. Utility lines, water and sewage lines, even plants and trees were sold to the highest bidders. All above-ground equipment was sold, but only a couple of mine shafts were stripped, leaving the rest of the 15 total virtually untouched. Even the waste heaps were sold.

In 1933, another change in transportation, from brick to asphaltic road surfacing, caused the closure of the brick plant which had so carefully specialized in the manufacture of high grade paving brick. Thurber's streets were never paved, but Thuber brick was used by the millions all over Texas and neighboring states from streets in the capital city of Austin to the building of Fort Worth stockyards. Also in 1933, the mercantile store closed and T.P. moved all offices and executives to Fort Worth. Although company land around Thurber had reached 71,000 acres, the town's population was only a handful in the late 1930's. Ex-residents, many of whom still return for annual reunions, viewed the dynamiting and salvage of the 160 ft. brick plant smokestack in 1937 as the ultimate death knell of Thurber. It proved the company's ability to completely wipe away the physical remains of an entire community.

Although company-owned and therefore never incorporated, Thurber once boasted the largest population between Fort Worth and El Paso. It had the reputation of being a "tough town" but its residents remember it as harmonious and as being fascinating to live with so many different cultures in an atmosphere where they could express their heritage,
if not govern their own community. The immense cemetery draws many visitors and some ex-Thurberites still have their remains sent there for burial. Both are evidence of the strong sense of belonging and origin felt by former residents and their descendants.

Today, only a few buildings and a blanket of foundations mark the site on either side of Interstate 20 which now slices through the community within yards of the once-bustling town square. The finely crafted, 150 ft. tall 1906 brick smokestack of the long since removed power and ice plant is now a solemn sentinel above the town and its environs.

Texas Pacific, purchased by Seagram's Distilleries in 1963, retained ownership until about 1966 when it was acquired by a Mr. Bennett, an officer in the company. Upon his death in the summer of 1978, he passed it to his son Randy Bennett who now lives in the house marked #195 on the 1920 map (No. 9), and manages the "Thurber Ranch" properties. Most existing structures are still in use, including the water filtration plant and the old drug store building with a restaurant on the first floor and residence on the second floor. The mercantile group and fire station are used principally as storage, but all contribute to the feeling of being in the boom town of 1920, especially for the many ex-Thurberites who reunite there each July 4th. Only two principle residences remain, the already mentioned #195 and one which was originally Mr. Gordon's residence, now used as a guest house. Mr. Bennett intends to maintain the buildings and re-use them as the need arises.

The boundaries for the district were arranged to include and protect the significant above and below ground structures and archaeological remains.
UTM References:

A 14 555850 3597590
B 14 556330 3596760
C 14 556340 3596570
D 14 556120 3596420
E 14 555860 3595970
F 14 555090 3595490
G 14 554790 3595490
H 14 554860 3595920
I 14 554240 3595920
J 14 553270 3596610
K 14 553270 3597160
L 14 553690 3597300
M 14 552210 3596080
O 14 552210 3595770
P 14 551900 3595770
Q 14 551900 3596080
R 14 551010 3594260
S 14 551010 3593940
T 14 550700 3593940
U 14 550700 3594260
UTM Reference points:

M 14/554575/3597405
N 14/552340/3596040
O 14/552449/3595728
P 14/551895/3595725
Q 14/551900/3596040
R 14/550850/3594098

Verbal boundary description justification:

From on-site inspection and historic research, it was determined that the map provided by T & P is not absolutely accurate, but can provide valuable information on the relationship between architectural and archeological remains and the structures they represent. Therefore, although some vital elements may appear to be outside the boundary as drawn on the modern map, they are actually within the boundary. The new district map and the USGS quad should be used as the legal authority.

Mine Number 6 and New Mine Number 1 were recommended for inclusion in the nomination by Dr. S. Alan Skinner, the archeologist that performed the survey. These two were chosen because of their fine state of preservation, extent of physical remains, and opportunity for further investigation. None of the other individual T & P mine sites were determined to have these qualities. The acreage for each was also recommended by Dr. Skinner, as encompassing all the known resources and areas of likely further discoveries, while remaining a manageable figure.

Acreage: By adjusting the acreage of the 2 mine sites, the total has been reduced to approximately 1006 acres.
Notes on accompanying documentation:

Photographs 1 - 18 portray Thurber as it is now; photos 19 - 32 show the town during various phases of its development and concentrate on its heyday. All the structures appearing in the historic photos have been demolished, except as noted in item 7, photos 1 - 18, and the maps.

Sent under separate cover are 4 maps: 2 USGS 7.5' and 2 district. The map labeled "Thurber Historic District" is to be laid over the other site map, drawn in 1920 and showing all structures extant at the time. The scale printed on the modern map is the correct one.
Property: Thunder Historic District

State: TX  Erath Co.  Working Number: 4.26.79.881

TECHNICAL

Photos: 38
Maps: 2

CONTROL

HISTORIAN

Significant as first totally union town. Several commercial associations—growth during dependence on coal and brick, and decline following decreased dependence. Community showed amazing self-reliance economically. Oil boom important, but nomination does not state why 100 million dollar annual industry (1921) declined a decade later.

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

District of important historical value as company town (1st all-union town in country). Good photo documentation of historic town. Archival value in the recovery of information relating to the industrial practices—mining and brick manufacturing—and to the diverse variety of cultural groups (immigrant workers) who lived there. Rich historical investigation could yield evidence of similarities/differences in socio-economic status, living conditions.

Boundaries not totally justified—especially in the two discontinuous mine areas. Needs historian review.

ARCHEOLOGIST

Accept

July 11, 1979

OTHER

Significance of site is now primarily archaeological. It is obviously of great significance in the history of the region.

HAER

Inventory

Review: 6/29/79

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

This district has major significance for reasons stated above. Boundaries, though, seem to exclude resources, i.e. part of the cemetery and several of the now defunct mines. Call/hold.

National Register Write-up  Send-back  Entered

Federal Register Entry  SEP 4 1979  Re-submit  AUG 17 1979

United States Department of the Interior - Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo by Robert Steinbomer, 1978

Panorama looking northwest at Thurber from Brick Plant Hill (Spread photos, matching features, with la to left, lb in center, lc on right).

Brick plant ruins in foreground, modern Thurber to the left. Light-colored water tank on rise is "Standpipe" (Map ref. 11) on Graveyard Hill.

Photo 1a 38  APR 25 1979
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo by Robert Steinbomer, 1978

Photo # 38

APR 2 5 1979

AUG 17 1979
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo by Robert Steinbomer, 1978

Thurber Ranch office/water filtration plant. View from the southwest. (map ref. 2).

Photo #3/38

APR 25 1979

AUG 17 1979
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo by Robert Steinbomer, 1978

Fire station, from the west (map ref. 3). Smokestack in background (map ref. 1).

Photo #4138
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo by Robert Steinbomer, 1978

Quadrangle and mercantile store complex from the east (map ref. 4)

Photo #5/38

AUG 17 1979
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo by Robert Steinbomer, 1978

Smokestack Restaurant in the old drugstore building. View from the south (map ref. 5).

Photo #6/38

AUG 17 1979
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo by Robert Steinbomer, 1978

W. K. Gordon residence, from the southwest (map ref. 7).

Photo #7138

APR 25 1979

AUG 17 1979
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo by Robert Steinbomer, 1978

View from the northwest, showing brick sidewalk in front of Gordon residence, fire station and water plant. The road up New York Hill is visible right of the tree.

Photo #8138

[Stamp: APR 25 1979]

[Stamp: AUG 17 1979]
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo by Robert Steinbomer, 1978

House labeled #195 on 1920's map, view from the south. Now the home of Randy Bennett. (map ref. 9).

Photo #9

APR 25 1979

AUG 17 1979
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo by Robert Steinbomer, 1978

Brick plant ruins - air tunnels for kiln draft.

Photo #10438
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo by Robert Steinbomer, 1978

Brick plant foundation ruins.

Photo #1/34

APR 25 1979

DOE

AUG 17 1979
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo by Robert Steinbomer, 1978

Sidewalk in front of homes on New York Hill, looking south. Foundation ruins to left of fence.

Photo #12/38

APR 25 1979

AUG 17 1979
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo by Robert Steinbomer, 1978

Looking east from observation tower, showing pipe cradles in foreground, used during oil boom. Middleground—plowed field with foundation rubble. Background—2 silos of dairy farm (map ref. 12)

Photo #13/38

APR 25 1979
AUG 17 1979
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo by Robert Steinbomer, 1978

Looking west from Graveyard Hill, showing mine slag heaps.

Photo #147 38

APR 25 1979

AUG 17 1979
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo by Robert Steinbomer, 1978

Thurber Cemetery, looking west.

Photo #15938

APR 25 1979

AUG 17 1979
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo by Robert Steinbomer, 1978
Thurber Cemetery, looking west. Detail of single grave.

Photo #16/58

APR 25 1979

AUG 17 1979
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo courtesy of Texas Tech University History of Engineering Program, 1975

Smokestack (map ref. 1).

Photo #17/38

AUG 17 1979

APR 25 1979
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo by Robert Steinbomer, 1978

Modern observation tower and service station, imitating coal tipple. (map ref. 6)

Photo #18938

APR 25 1979

DOC

AUG 17 1979
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

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Panorama of Thurber in 1910. (Spread photos, matching features, with 19a to the left, 19e to the right). All extant structures appear in this panorama.

Photo # 194/38 APR 25 1979

08E
AUG 17 1979
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo courtesy of Texas Pacific Oil Co. and Texas Department of Highways and Public Transportation. Negative on file at Highway Dept.

Brick plant, date unknown

Photo #20/88
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

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Brick plant in 1902

Photo #21 1/38

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Photo courtesy of Texas Pacific Oil Co. and Texas Dept. of Highways & Public Transportation. Negative filed at Highway Dept.

Brick plant detail; interior of a kiln
Date unknown

Photo #22/38

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Photo courtesy of Texas Pacific Oil Co. and Texas Dept. of Highways & Public Transportation. Negative filed at Highway Dept.

View of Thurber, c. 1910
Top: center portion of town
Bottom: quadrangle (map ref. 13)

Photo #23/38

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Looking northwest from Brick Plant Hill, c. 1905

Photo #24 138

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Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

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Unidentified street, c. 1910.

Photo #25/38

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Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

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Railroad spur through Thurber and various commercial establishments, including Hotel Knox. c. 1910

Photo #26438
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo courtesy of Texas Pacific Oil Co. and Texas Dept. of Highways & Public Transportation. Negative filed at Highway Dept.

Livery stable, c. 1910

Photo #27 of 38

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Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo courtesy of Texas Pacific Oil Co. and Texas Dept. of Highways & Public Transportation. Negative filed at Highway Dept.

Worker in position for "long wall" mining method.

Photo #28/36

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AUG 17 1979
Thurber Historic District  
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Photo courtesy of Texas Pacific Oil Co. and Texas Dept. of Highways & Public Transportation. Negative filed at Highway Dept.

Opera House

Photo#29438  

APR 25 1979

Doe  

AUG 17 1979
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo courtesy of Texas Pacific Oil Co., and Texas Dept. of Highways & Public Transportation. Negative filed at Highway Dept.

"The Colonel" coaltaripple, engine room, and boiler room for one of the mines.

Photo #304738

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Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo courtesy of Texas Pacific Oil Co. and Texas Dept. of Highways & Public Transportation. Negative filed at Highway Dept.

One of two saloons in Thurber, showing box where miners wiped their feet.

Photo #31738

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Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo courtesy of Texas Pacific Oil Co. and Texas Dept. of Highways & Public Transportation, Negative filed at Highway Dept.

Interior of unidentified building, showing a labor negotiation meeting. John L. Lewis is seated at the table, holding a pen and wearing a bow tie. W.K. Gordon may be the man seated to Lewis' right. Date is probably 1903.

Photo #32/38

APR 25 1979

AUG 17 1979
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo #19b 33 of 38

APR 25 1979

AUG 17 1979
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo #olec 34 of 38

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Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

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Photo #36 138

APR 25 1979

AUG 17 1979
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo by Robert Steinbomer, 1978

Photo 37/38

APR 25 1979

AUG 17 1979
Thurber Historic District
Thurber, Erath/Palc Pinto Counties, Texas

Photo by Robert Steinbomer, 1978

View northwest from road up New York Hill. Cemetery appears on hill between Exxon sign and smokestack (map, ref. 1).

Photo #38/38

APR 25 1979

AUG 17 1979
Thurber Historic District; Thurber, Erath/Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

1. BRICK STACK
2. WATER PLANT (BRANCH OFFICE)
3. FIRE HOUSE
4. DRY GOODS/WAREHOUSE GROUP
5. DRUG STORE (RETAIL UNIT)
6. SERVICE STATION
7. GORDON HOUSE
8. POOL
9. BENNETT HOUSE
10. PARNELL HOUSE
11. STANDPIPE
12. SPARK SLOB
13. TOWN QUADRANGLE

SCALE: 1:700
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20243

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, $300

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
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REASON CHECKED
Unclear
Refused
Address unknown
Insufficient address
No such street
No such office in state
Do not remit in this envelope
Dear Property Owner:

The property you own is located in a historic district that has been nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is the government's official list of historic buildings and other cultural resources worthy of preservation. This nomination is pending in our office.

If your property is depreciable and the district is listed in the National Register, there are certain benefits and provisions of the Tax Reform Act of 1976 that may apply to you. We are enclosing information about this law and a general description of the National Register program.

Soon we will be considering whether the district should be listed, using as our guidelines the "Criteria for Evaluation" shown in the enclosed material. If you wish to comment on whether the district should be listed, we would be pleased to hear from you. Send your comments within 30 days of the date of this letter to me, Dr. William J. Murtagh, Keeper of the National Register, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, Department of the Interior, Pension Building, 440 G Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20243 (Attn: NOM). Please include the name of the district (as shown on the address label on this letter) and property address. If you have questions about the National Register program or the enclosed material, you should also address them to me.

In the enclosed material you will note references to standards for rehabilitating old buildings. These standards are a list of do's and don'ts for people who are fixing up old buildings. If the owner of a building listed in the National Register, either individually or as part of a district, wishes to take advantage of the Tax Reform Act benefits, these standards must be followed. A copy of these standards is available from Technical Preservation Services, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, Department of the Interior, Pension Building, 440 G Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20243. Questions about the standards should also be addressed to that same office.

Sincerely,

William J. Murtagh
Keeper of the National Register
NAME OF PROPERTY  Thurber Historic District

STATE  TEXAS

Date Information Requested/Date Put in "Hold" Drawer:  July 25, 1979

Date to Be Pulled from "Hold" Drawer:  August 24, 1979
   (30 Days from Date Requested)

Information Requested From:  Lissa Anderson

Information Requested/Reason Nomination Is Being Held:

For a Statement Justifying Boundaries.

Gale Brooks
Reviewer
August 13, 1979

Dear Herb:

Gale Brooks told me you would be the staff person assigned to Texas now. I'm sorry to lose Gale, but I look forward to working with you also. Please let me know whenever I can shed some light on our arcane doings here.

Enclosed is the additional material for the Thurber Historic District nomination (Erath County). Note that both the acreage and the UTM's have been adjusted. Your rapid approval would be appreciated by many. I regret my oversight. New quad maps are also included, reflecting the changes.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Lissa Anderson
Coordinator of Nominations
National Register Programs in Texas

:LA

Mr. Herb Brito
National Register Review Staff
HCRS, Department of the Interior
Pension Building
440 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20243

The State Agency for Historic Preservation
ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE TEXAS

Date Entered: AUG 17 1979

Name: Thurber Historic District
Location: Thurber vicinity
Erath County

Also Notified:
Honorable Lloyd M. Bentsen
Honorable John G. Tower
Honorable Charles W. Stenholm

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mr. Truett Latimer
Executive Director
Texas State Historical Commission
P.O. Box 12276, Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711

NR Byers/bjr 8/21/79

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.