Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

HOUSTON

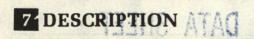
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SEE	INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO	O COMPLETE NAT	TIONAL REG	SISTER FORMS	
	TYPE ALL ENTRIES C	COMPLETE APPLI	CABLE SEC	TIONS	
NAME *	*				
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	XBEING CONSIDERED	X YES: UNRESTRICTED		_INDUSTRIAL	X_TRANSPORTAT
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CITY, TOWN				STATE	



#### CONDITION

\_\_EXCELLENT \_\_DETERIORATED
\_\_GOOD \_\_RUINS
X\_FAIR \_\_UNEXPOSED

**CHECK ONE** 

\_UNALTERED

CHECK ONE

\_XORIGINAL SITE
\_\_MOVED DATE\_\_\_\_\_

#### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The description of Union Station is best accomplished through the existing literature concerning it. Probably the best descriptions of the architecture is in Keith L. Bryant's article published in the Southwestern Historical Quarterly (April, 1976).

"The Belt and Terminal selected the firm of Warren and Wetmore to design the terminal building. Charles D. Wetmore and Whitney Warren of New York City became famous for the large hotels they designed - the Biltmore, Ritz Carlton, Broadmoore, Royal Hawaiian - and for their masterpiece, New York City's Grand Central Station. A graduate of Harvard University, Wetmore had studied architecture in New York for five years and in 1896 joined Warren to form one of the city's leading firms. Warren had gone to Paris at the age of eighteen and studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts before returning to New York in 1896. Both men believed that a railway station should be a monumental gateway. Advocating the Neo-Classical use of mass and simplified decorations, they incorporated in their buildings pedimented porticos, marble and granite columns in Greek and Roman orders, and giant rooms with soaring vaults. One critic refers the mania for mass as "elephantiasis," but in 1909 both the public and Houston Belt and Terminal wanted "monuments," and that is what Warren and Wetmore designed. Houston acquired a substantial example of the Neo-Classical Revival railway station not unlike the terminals erected in Boston, New York, Seattle, and Washington, D.C.

Construction began in December of 1909. The building rose three stories in height and covered the entire block on Crawford Street between Texas and Prairie avenues. The plain exterior of the first two stories was of white terra cotta, while that of the upper floor was of dark red brick. The brick contrasted sharply with the terra cotta below and with the gray stone cornice above. The entrances on Crawford featured a portico supported by pillars and six decorative Doric columns. A balustrade above almost concealed the three arched windows set over the entrance. The three windows were topped by light-colored brick pediments, but as the Neo-Classical style dictated, the facade lacked significant ornamental detail. The simple rear facade looked out upon a concourse leading to umbrella sheds which eventually covered twelve tracks and were capable of containing 140 passenger trains.

Warren and Wetmore continued the massive scale in the waiting room. Two stories in height, 138 feet long, and 80 feet deep, the room was decorated with fluted columns paralleling the arched windows of the Crawford street facade. French marble covered the walls, walnut woodwork framed the doors and windows, and large electric chandeliers hung from the ceiling. The building contained a Harvey House restaurant, and the third floor was occupied by the offices of the Trinity and Brazos Valley Railroad. By the end of February, 1911, the building stood ready for use, and the formal opening ceremonies were announced for March 1.

#### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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An older article appearing in the book, <u>Houston</u> compiled by the Anson Jones Press in 1942 sheds a little more light on Union Station.

"The Union Station, 501 Crawford St., a five-story brick and stone Doric structure designed by Warren and Wetmore of New York, is used by the Missouri Pacific Lines, the Gulf, Colorado & Santa Fe Railway, the Burlington-Rick Island Railroad, and the Houston Belt & Terminal Railway Company. Behind the main building are 13 tracks; to the north a three-block-long freight depot, the terminal covering ten blocks between Texas and Prairie Avenues, Crawford and St. Emauel Streets.

The first two floors of the main building are faced with concrete, and above with red brick extending to a simple gray stone cornice. A marquee supported by four square columns projects near the center of the main facade. Stone balustrades enclose the flat roof, which has three circleheaded windows topped with arched brick pediments. Interior finishings are in Italian marble.

Waiting rooms for whites and Negroes are on the first floor. The upper floors are occupied by offices of the railroads using the terminal. Approximately 30 passenger trains daily arrive and depart from the station.

The construction of the Union Station was the culmination of railway development started locally in the 1850's, when the seven-mile-long Houston Tap Railroad to Pierce Junction was built in an effort to divert trade then going to Harrisburg. The little line joined the Buffalo Bayou, Brazos & Colorado Railroad; its first depot, erected on Commerce Avenue and Hutchins Street, was named Allen Station in honor D.O. Allen, one-time superintendent of the Galveston, Houston and Henderson Railroad.

In 1905 the Santa Fe, Trinity and Brazos Valley, the Beaumont, Sour Lake & Western, and the St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Railways united and organized the Houston Belt & Terminal Railway. A site for a union station was purchased for \$1,000,000; on it stood the residences of a number of Houston's prominent people. Included was the property of Andrew Dow, 1717 Texas Avenue, that of Baldwin Rice, on Crawford Street and Preston Avenue, the Klienfelder home on Praire Avenue, the old Garey place on Texas Avenue, and the new brick synagogue and frame buildings of the Adath Yeshurun Congregation.

Freight Terminals were built along the five-block site between prairie and Preston Avenues. The passenger station was a \$500,000 building a block lon g, and three stories in height. The station was but a small part of the terminal facilities, the total expenditure reaching \$5,000,000.

Form No. 10-300a

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 3

At the time the Union Station was completed, the International and Great Northern Railroad was advertising 28-hour service to St. Louis. Thirty years later that railroad offered the trip in 20 hours.

Trains began using the new terminal in August, 1910, and on March 2, 1911, the station was dedicated. It was soon found necessary to increase the size of the building; two stories were added. A fire in 1921 caused \$50,000 to \$100,000 damage."

Finally, when the building was dedicated on March 2, 1911 the Houston Chronicle wrote:

"Designs for the station were furnished by Warren & Wetmore, architects of New York. Nearly everything else about the building except the polished marble is of Houston production or fabrication. Construction began December, 1909, by the American Construction Co., which expected to finish in 13 months. A two-month delay with steel portponed the opening for two months.

The cost of the building is placed at \$540,000; the marble cost \$45,000. Three kinds of marble were used. A lot of Belgian marble Rouge du Rance was used for wainscoting and counters in the main waiting room; it is a richly colored reddish marble. Tennessee marble was used for floors and in the wainscotting of the Harvey dining room. A Vermont marble, verde antique, black with green veins, was used for counters in the lunch room."

Originally the station building was three stories high and had a large hip roof on it. Two more stories were added in 1912 and a flat roof substituted for the hip roof, completing the structure as it stands today.

#### 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AF	REAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	IECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	
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1500-1599 1600-1699 1700-1799	_AGRICULTURE  _ART	ECONOMICSEDUCATIONENGINEERING	LITERATUREMILITARYMUSIC	SCULPTURESOCIAL/HUMANITARIANTHEATER
_1800-1899 <b>≰</b> 1900-	COMMERCECOMMUNICATIONS	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENTINDUSTRYINVENTION	PHILOSOPHY POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	★TRANSPORTATION  _OTHER (SPECIFY)

SPECIFIC DATES

1911

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Warren and Wetmore

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

As discussed in the preceding section, this building was designed by the same firm that designed New York's Grand Central Station. It is one of the few buildings of the era left downtown, and the only train station. The atmosphere and spirit surrounding the past of this building is again best described in Bryant's article.

"In a burst of enthusiasm prior to the ceremonies, the Houston Chronicle proclaimed that "The Houston Union Station is significant of the city's confidence in its own future," a sentiment similar to many expressed at the opening of the depot. The station "is the gateway through which the millions who enter and leave the city in years to come will pass directly to or from the centers of trade." Between 7,000 and 10,000 visitors filled the building on March 1, and echoed the praises of the Chronicle's reporter. A representative of the Pennsylvania Railroad stated that no city in the nation the size of Houston had anything to compare with the new terminal. City Commissioner J.C. Gaston accepted the station on behalf of Houston, and praised the building as "one of the finest railroad depots in the South." The Herb and Lewis orchestra played as guests swarmed through the flower-decked building to be greeted by the Harvey House waitresses in their black dresses and heavily starched white aprons. There appeared to be uniform agreement that this "fine up-to-date station makes a splendid impression upon the stranger who arrives in the city for his first visit."

Both of Houston's major newspapers took cognizance of the opening of the station as an example of the boom in construction. On March 2, the city also dedicated the new County Court House, and a new Post Office would be opened in April. The Municipal Auditorium was nearing completion; the sixteen-story Carter Building was to be dedicated soon; a twelve-story bank was under construction; and over \$2,000,000 in navigation and road projects were underway. To many people, the Union Station symbolized the destiny of Houston.

The railways which joined together to erect the Houston station sought to construct the most perfect railroad passenger terminal in the Southwest and ranking with any in the entire South in size, convenience and architectural beauty." Only a monumental edifice would suffice for the largest railroad center in Texas and the Southwest.

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Form No. 10-300a (Rev. 10-74)

CONTINUATION SHEET

#### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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Houston grew rapidly from 1880 to 1910, and the city's rail network helped to establish its economic base. By 1910 the area was served by sixteen rail companies, and railroading constituted the city's largest industry. Houston's population almost doubled between 1900 (44,633) and 1910 (78,800), and soared to 138,276 by 1920. A number of developers and boomers came to the city to participate in its spectacular growth, and none with more ambition than railroad magnate B.F. Yoakum. Tirelessly building a rail empire in the southwest, Yoakum organized the Houston Belt and Terminal Railway on August 31, 1905, to create freight and passenger terminals for his lines. Chaos in freight transfers and the inconvenience resulting from many small passenger depots led other railways to join Yoakum in his project. The Texas affiliate of the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe, purchased a one-forth interest in the Belt and Terminal and then became the prime mover in the project when Yoakum himself in financial difficulties. The Belt and Terminalcompleted a seventy-eight mile-long switching network around Houston and proposed to allocate forty city blocks for a new union station and office building. Progress was slowed by delays in land acquisition, but with the aid of condemnation proceedings, the site was acquired and cleared of existing buildings. Bonds in the amount of \$5,000,000 were sold to pay for the new terminal. The site selected for the station pleased Houston civic leaders, for the location at Texas Avenue and Crawford Street was quite near the heart of the business district. By the time the Belt and Terminal managers were ready to select an architect for the proposed building, the tenants and participants in the venture included the G.C.& S.F., Brownsville and Trinity, Trinity and Brazos Valley, International and Great Northern (Missouri Pacific), and San Antonio and Aransas Pass. Only the Southern Pacific and the M-K-T refused to participate, preventing the depot from becoming the true "union" Station.

Declining passenger use, with the exception of a brief revival during World War II, left only one passenger train operating by 1969. The once hectic activity could not be revived by "modernization" of the terminal in which the forty-five foot ceilings were lost to 10 foot ceiling and air conditioning duct work. The final train was diverted to the Amtrak station in 1970, and the station area of the old building was converted to office space, still occupied by various railroads.

Tentative plans for adaptive reuse of the Union Station are pending. The city of Houston is currently planning to acquire the building for use as a transportation center.

#### 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES Bryant, Keith L., Jr; "Railway Stations of Texas", Southwestern Historical Quarterly, April, 1976 Houston Chronicle 3/3/11, 6/23/12, 9/24/67, 4/21/68 Houston Post 12/31/40 Houston Historical Society 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY One (1) UTM REFERENCES VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION This property is in Subdivision - South side Buffalo Bayou (SSBB) Block - 102 Lots - 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES STATE CODE COUNTY CODE STATE CODE COUNTY CODE II FORM PREPARED BY NAME / TITLE Barry M. Goodman, Administrator May 26, 1977 DATE (713) 222-5541 Office of Public Transportation, City of Houston STREET & NUMBER TELEPHONE 2400 City Hall Annex, 900 Bagby CITY OR TOWN STATE 77001 Houston Texas 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS: STATE X LOCAL \_\_\_\_ NATIONAL \_\_\_\_ 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 FOR NPS USE ONLY I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY NCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE

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Union Station Houston, Harris County, Texas

Texas Historical Commission, 6-10-71 THC

Southwest oblique

Photo #1 / 10 JUN 15 1977



Union Station Houston, Harris County, Texas

Texas Historical Commission, 6-10-71 THC

Southeast oblique

Photo #2 of 10

JUN 15 1977



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Union Station Houston, Harris County, Texas

Texas Historical Commission, 6-10-71

Looking east---trainyard & boarding area

Photo #3 of \$10

JUN 15 1977



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Union Station Houston, Harris County, Texas

Texas Historical Commission, 6-10-71 THC

Interior view of rear (passenger area)

Photo #4 / 10

JUN 15 1977



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HOUSTON CHRONICLE
512-520 TRAVIS
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77002

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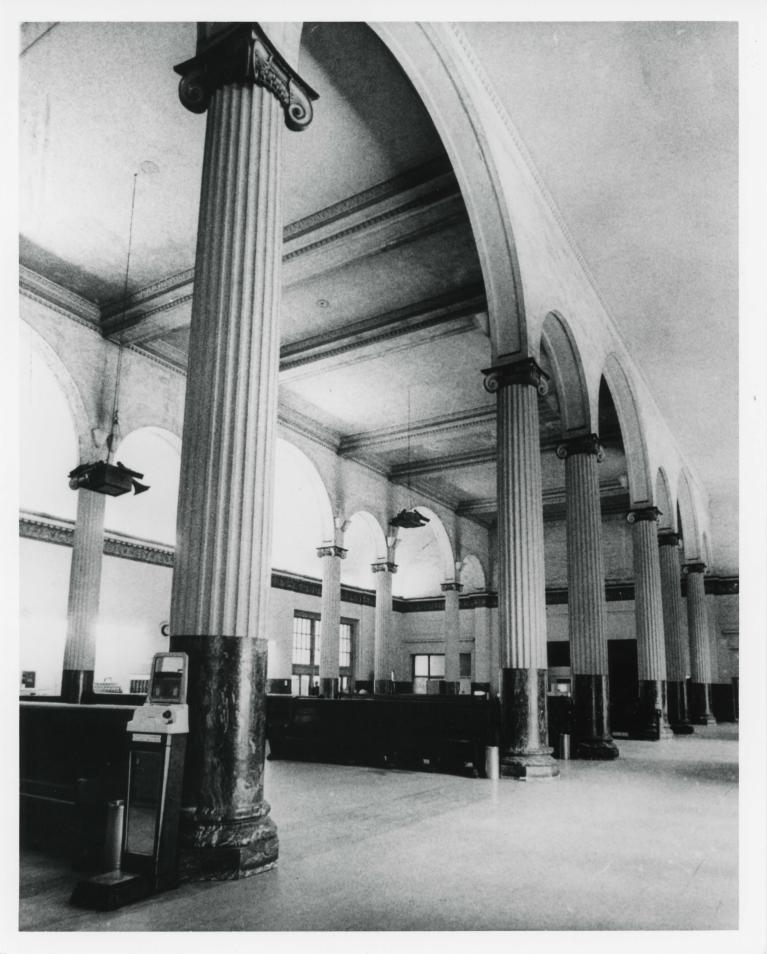
Union Station Houston, Harris County, Texas

Houston Chronicle, 1960's Houston Chronicle Library

Interior of Station--Waiting room (Alterations are beginning in the background)

Photo #5 of (0

JUN 15 1977



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## PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Union Station Houston, Harris County, Texas

Houston Chronicle, 1960's Houston Chronicle Library

Interior of Station--Waiting room

Photo #6 of \$ 10

JUN 15 1977



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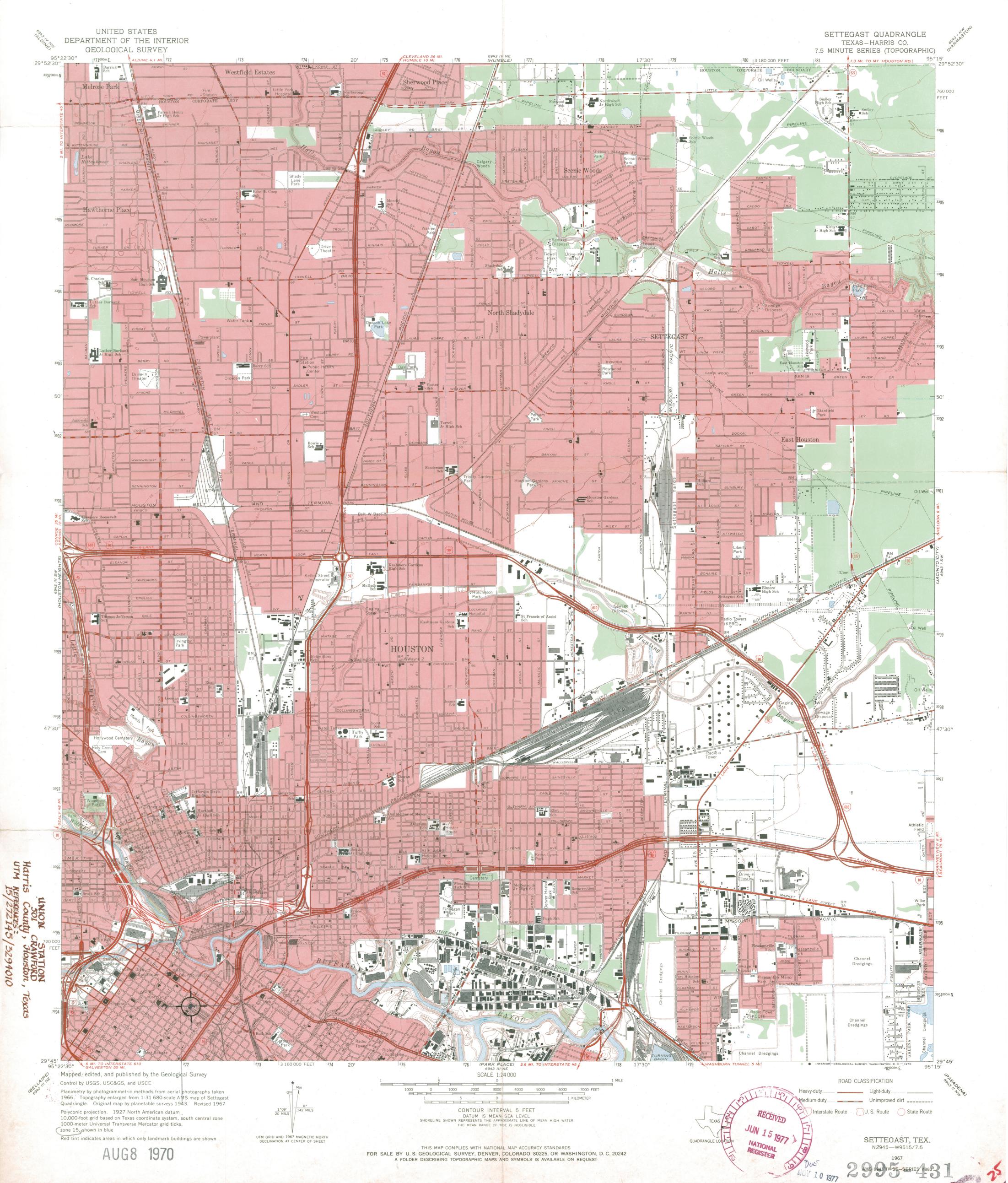
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#### ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE

TEXAS

Date Entered

NOV 1 0 1977

Name

Location

Union Station

Houston Harris County

Also Notified

Hon. Lloyd M. Bentsen

Hon. John G. Tower Hon. Barbara C. Jordan

Regional Director, Southwest Region

880

Mott/js

11/15/77

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

## NATIONAL REGISTER DATA SHEET

NAME as it appears on federal register: Union Station	OTHER NAMES:		Ñ	OV 1 0 1977 201	
501 Crawford St. City / town	vicinity of	TX Harris	county	®NPS REGION:	
OWNER PRIVATE STATE MUNICIPAL COUNTY MULTIPLE FEDERAL (agency name)			8 ADMINISTRATO	OR:	
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AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE:   ENGINEERING-11   LANDSCAPE	RELIGION - 22 - 17 SCIENCE - 23 8 SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN - 24 SOCIAL/CULTURAL - 30	□ RECREATION -28 □ SETTLEMENT-29 □ URBAN PLANNING-31	*CLAIMS: 'first'□  'oldest'□  'only'□		
WHEN HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT: CURRENTLY:	dates of initial construction: major alterations: historic events:			SETHNIC GROUP ASSOCIATION	
architectural style(s):	tect:	naster builder:	(a) (a)	ngineer:	
andscape architect/garden designer: interior decorator:	artist:	artisan:	3 builder	/contractor:	
NAMES give role & date  PERSONAL:  EVENTS:  INSTITUTIONAL:					
SONATIONAL REGISTER WRITE-UP					