

Ashland Depot
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Ashland Depot
other names/site number Ashland Station



2. Location

street & number Pioneer Village
815 Leidesdorff Street N/A not for publication
city or town Folsom N/A Vicinity
state California code CA county Sacramento code 067 zip code 95630

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- privately owned
- on public land (Local)
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Transportation/Rail-Related/Train Depot

Museum

Agriculture/Storage/Barn

Exhibition Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

None

foundation: Wood Posts

walls: Board and Batten

roof: Rib Metal

other: Post and Beam Framing

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Narrative Description

Building Description Summary

Ashland Depot is a 50' x 24' wood building with a post and beam foundation and a side-gabled roof of low pitch. The exterior building materials of the depot include board and batten siding, ribbed metal roof panels, double-hung wood sash windows, large wooden cargo doors and a wooden entrance door. A concrete ramp (constructed in 2011) provides access to the cargo door along the south side of the depot and a painted wood sign is located along the east façade (with the text 'Ashland Station'), added in 1973 after the building's relocation. The sign is illuminated by a goose-neck light, also added after relocation. The building retains most of its original materials.

Between 1860 and 1973 Ashland Depot was located close to the northwest corner of the current intersection of Folsom Auburn Road and Greenback Lane. When a commercial center was approved on the previous railroad property in 1973, the building was donated to Folsom Historical Society and moved across Lake Natoma to Pioneer Village at the northeast corner of Folsom's Historic Railroad Block. The building is now located in between the Folsom Passenger Depot (constructed in 1906) and replicas of a blacksmith shop, a miner's cabin, a windmill and a wagon shed.

Based on the research of the *Historical Railroad Association of Folsom, El Dorado & Sacramento*, Ashland Depot is the oldest remaining railroad depot west of the Rocky Mountains. Even though the building is over 150 years old, the solid wood building has held up well over the years and few building changes have been made. After the building was relocated a raised loading dock was added close to the southeast building corner and the original wood shake roof was replaced by a standing seam metal roof. Over time patches of sheet metal have been used in some spots to secure the building from small animals. In 2011 the wooden loading dock, constructed in 1973, was replaced by a concrete ramp.

Narrative Building Description

Floor System

Ashland Depot rests on 8" x 8" posts that raise the floor of the structure 2-3' above grade. Along the lower perimeter of the building is a 10" x 12" beam. At each building corner the mortise and tenon joint of the support beam is visible below the siding. The 3" x 12" floor joists have been notched to fit over the beam and installed at 18" on center. On top of the joists, 2" x 10" planks provide a floor surface. As common with older building materials, all the lumber categories have only been rough cut and therefore remain full size. Nails used are iron cut nails typical of the mid-19th century.

Exterior Façade

Along the exterior building facades, the 3" x 4" and 3" x 6" wall studs have been covered by 1" x 12" wide vertical boards and 1" x 3" battens. The façade is 12' high along the north/south side of the building and 16' at the peak of the gables. Roof trusses with a pitch of 3:1 have been covered by 10" wide boards. Over the roof sheathing boards, a metal roof has been installed with raised ribs 8" on center. Around the main part of the building the roof overhangs by 2 feet, but in the area of the new access ramp the roof overhangs by 7 feet. Old photos show that the roof at one time was covered by wood shakes. Based on the wide spacing of the boards that cover the roof trusses, it can be assumed that the original wood shakes were oversized (similar to the 2 foot wide shakes that cover the historic buildings at the Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park).

Openings

Along each of the longer building sides, are two cargo doors constructed of diagonal wooden boards on a wooden frame. These doors are 6' wide and 7' high and slide along an overhead metal track. A barn-loft style door is located along the west façade. This hinged, double door is 9' wide and 7' high. When the building served as a freight depot, horse drawn wagons could use a ramp to access this door. A personnel door has been located close to the northeast building corner. This door is 3' wide and 6' high. The two double-hung windows (along the south and the east side of the building) are glazed with single pane glass in divided window panes, six panes per sash. Each window is 2'-9" wide and 7' high. Most of the glass panes are not smooth and could be original glass; historic photos show identical windows. All doors and windows are framed by wood trim. In each gable area a small trap door covered by siding can be opened to provide ventilation.

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Site Description

Original Location

From 1860 to 1973 Ashland Depot was located close to the northwest corner of the current intersection of Folsom Auburn Road and Greenback Lane. When the freight depot was in use (from 1862 to 1864), the railroad track to Auburn Station was located along the west side of the building (close to Hinkle Creek). After the removal of the track in 1864, farm operations dominated the area and the depot was used to store farm equipment. Historic photos of the depot are included in the Additional Documentation section of this nomination.

Current Location

Since 1973, Ashland Depot has been located at 815 Leidesdorff Street in the preservation/interpretive area of Folsom's railroad block (named Pioneer Village). This location was selected, because the railroad line to Auburn originated in Folsom and the distance between the two historic railroad stations is less than one mile. In addition, maps from 1859 and the 1860s show a freight depot in the same location. The depot is surrounded on three sides by historic buildings or replicas and along the north side a 25-foot wide landscape area separates the building from Leidesdorff Street. West of Ashland Depot are replicas of a miner's shack and a wagon shed and between the east side of the depot and Wool Street is a replica of a blacksmith shop. South of the building, a portion of the Sacramento-Folsom rail line remains (as rebuilt with standard gauge in 1865). On this track a historic railroad car housed Folsom's Railroad Museum. Across the rail line is the Folsom Passenger Depot (constructed in 1906). This building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982; the adjacent railroad cars were listed as contributors. As part of an ongoing redevelopment project, the railroad cars and track have been temporarily removed from the vicinity of Ashland Depot, but the overall redevelopment plan will return them to the site.

Integrity of Ashland Depot

Location:

Ashland Depot does not retain integrity of location due to its relocation in 1973.

Design:

Ashland Depot retains most of its original design elements. The four sliding access doors and wide roof overhangs resembles the railroad depots that became common in California in the early part of the 1900s. The post and beam framing, and the wide double-door along the west gable are similar to the design of early barn structures in the Sacramento area.

Setting:

The current setting of the railroad (an interpretive railroad area adjacent to downtown Folsom, California) does not match the setting of the building during its period of significance (a rural freight depot in the California foothills) but its location adjacent to other railroad-related buildings and structures, and railroad right-of-way belonging to the same railroad that constructed the Ashland Depot, gives the property some integrity of setting in its new location.

Materials:

Other than the metal standing seam roof, replacing an earlier shingle roof, all the major components of Ashland Depot are intact. Because the building frame and plank floor were constructed from old-growth timber and the climate in the Central Valley is mostly dry only minimal decay can be found. All the lumber appears to have been only rough cut, probably due to the limitations of frontier lumber mills of the era, and therefore remain full size. The siding has developed patina over the years and appears to have been stained but remains mostly intact. The glazing is not smooth and could therefore be original. The original roof framing still exists underneath the metal roof installed after the building's relocation. The building's current foundation was constructed for the relocation and is thus not original. All walls, doors and windows retain integrity of materials.

Workmanship:

Ashland Depot rests on posts and has been framed on a wide perimeter beam. At each corner of the building, the mortise and tenon joint of the support beam is visible below the siding. Most of the rectangular iron nails used for the building are original.

Feeling:

Ashland Depot continues to express a historic sense of the early railroad era in California. The rough lumber, square nails and simple vernacular design conveys a strong feeling of association with pioneer railroading in the era when California was still an extremely remote portion of the United States.

Association:

Ashland Depot is the only surviving building directly associated with California's first steam railroad, the Sacramento Valley Railroad, and its subsidiaries the Sacramento, Placer and Nevada Railroad and the California Central Railroad.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Transportation
- Commerce
- Architecture
-
-
-

Period of Significance

1862 -1864

Significant Dates

- September 1862
- December 1864

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance is derived from the years when the Ashland Depot was a functioning railroad freight depot.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Criteria Consideration B: The property was moved in 1973 but remains eligible as an exceptionally rare example of 1860s railroad vernacular architecture, prior to the completion of the first transcontinental railroad. It also represents the only surviving building directly associated with the Sacramento Valley Railroad and its subsidiary branches, the California Central and the Sacramento, Placer & Nevada Railroad. Its current setting is adjacent to other railroad buildings and historic railroad right-of-way.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Ashland Depot is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C at the local level of significance. The depot is eligible under *Criterion A* for its association with California's pioneer railroad era via its function as a freight depot for the Sacramento, Placer & Nevada Railroad, a subsidiary of the Sacramento Valley Railroad. Ashland Depot is also significant under *Criterion C* as an exceptionally rare example of railroad vernacular architecture of the 1860s, possibly the oldest surviving railroad depot building in the western United States. The period of significance from 1862 to 1864, the years when the building was an operating freight depot at Ashland Station, Sacramento County, California.

Criterion A

During the early Railroad Era in California (1855-1869), the pioneers of the industry worked hard to realize the dream of constructing a transcontinental railroad. Some of the events that allowed this railroad to become a reality are:

- a) The State of California changed the railroad financing laws;
- b) Portions of the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range were surveyed and a potential railroad alignment was identified;
- c) After intensive lobbying by railroad enthusiasts, Federal funding became available for the project;
- d) Major investors targeted the railroad industry;
- e) The Gold Rush had brought many immigrants to Northern California who were willing to work for low wages;
- f) The railroad gauge for major rail connections became standardized; and
- g) The competitive nature of the industry stimulated creativity and increased the speed of development.

When the first railroad west of the Rocky Mountains was planned and constructed (1855-1856), the *Sacramento Valley Railroad* anticipated that their railroad could become the starting point of a transcontinental railroad. However, after financial trouble forced the company to reorganize, two new companies were formed. In 1861 the original rail line was extended west (from Folsom to Lincoln) by the *California Central Railroad* and north (from Folsom to Auburn Station) by the *Sacramento, Placer & Nevada Railroad* (originally named the *Sacramento, Auburn & Nevada Railroad*). Around the same time, a separate group of businessmen with more political influence formed the *Central Pacific Railroad*.

In 1864 the *Central Pacific Railroad* hired Chinese laborers to construct a rail line from Sacramento to Roseville. Around the same time, the *Sacramento Valley Railroad* was reorganized as the *Placerville & Sacramento Valley Railroad*. In a final effort to secure a share of a transcontinental railroad, the new company removed the track between Folsom and Auburn Station and constructed a new easterly rail alignment between Folsom and Latrobe. However, before this train route could be extended east (towards Placerville), the *Central Pacific Railroad* completed a railroad connection between Roseville and Auburn and continued the rail project east across the Sierra Nevada mountains. On May 10, 1869 the first transcontinental railroad was completed (from the west by the *Central Pacific Railroad* and from the east by the *Union Pacific Railroad*) at Promontory Summit in Utah.

Criterion C

The simple, functional design of the Ashland Depot reflects the early days of the gold rush and the railroad era in California. The post and beam building frame is similar to early barns, warehouses and other storage buildings that at one time were common in the western United States. Until 1869, shipping goods from eastern manufacturers to California required a months-long ocean voyage, or an equally long overland trek via oxcart. Limited or nonexistent industrial facilities, and the economic pressures of the Gold Rush, resulted in buildings that were often rudimentary and rough in appearance. The rough-cut board-and-batten siding, low-pitched roof with wide overhangs, and simple door and window arrangement exemplifies early American railroad buildings that were constructed cheaply and simply. The use of mortise-and-tenon joints instead of more modern balloon framing, and square iron cut nails make clear the scarcity of modern building technologies in the frontier West.

Due to the utilitarian function and simplicity of its design, the building does not have a clear architectural style; it is closest to "Pre-Railroad Folk" architecture as described in *A Field Guide to American Houses* by Virginia and Lee McAlester (p. 74.) In this context, "pre-railroad" refers to the era when California did not have permanent railroad links to the rest of the nation, thus limiting the availability of mass-produced consumer goods and rapid connections to the mainstream of American life. Contemporary railroad buildings reflected this minimalist design: the first passenger depot erected for the SVRR's competitor the Central Pacific Railroad was a small board-and-batten building with a shed roof, designed by Central Pacific board member Collis P. Huntington for expediency and low cost.

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After the completion of the first Transcontinental Railroad in 1869, frontier stations like the Ashland Depot fell out of use. Access to more sophisticated construction technologies, the developing industrial infrastructure of the western United States, and desire by Western railroad to appeal to Eastern aesthetic tastes, allowed subsequent passenger and freight depots to more closely resembled Eastern prototypes. By the end of the 19th century, Southern Pacific (the company that absorbed the Central Pacific and other California railroads) became a pioneer of vertical integration and standardized designs, with a set of pre-designed plans for passenger depots used throughout its railroad network.

The design, materials and workmanship of Ashland Depot remains representative for the time when it was constructed (1860). Because logs were harvested in the nearby foothill areas, it is likely that the wood frame of the depot was built by locally grown timber. The dense wood appears to be old-growth pine of a quality that currently is hard to find. This wood may have been processed at the Folsom sawmill (north of Folsom's railroad block).

Ashland Depot is the only remaining building directly associated with the first railroad in California and the early efforts to construct a transcontinental railroad through Folsom. It may be the oldest railroad building in the state of California.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A - Association with the Railroad Era

The gold rush started in 1848, when John Marshall found gold along the American River. This event caused the development of northern California and created the demand for railroad transportation. Only five years after gold was found in the Sierra Nevada foothills, Colonel Charles Lincoln Wilson formed the first railroad company in California (the *Sacramento Valley Railroad*). He also hired three railroad engineers from New York (Theodore Dehone Judah, Lester Robinson and John Robinson). Two years later, Captain Joseph Libby Folsom replaced Charles Wilson as the president of the *Sacramento Valley Railroad* and dedicated a railroad easement across his property along the American River ('Rancho Rio de los Americanos'). Before the end of year 1855, the *Sacramento Valley Railroad* had designed and constructed the first railroad line in the west between Sacramento and Folsom. By this time Theodore Judah had convinced many railroad enthusiasts that the first transcontinental rail line could soon become a reality. During the years that followed, many railroad companies competed to construct a rail line across California and the United States. In 1860 a freight depot was constructed in the town of Ashland north of the Town of Folsom (currently within the City of Folsom) by the *Sacramento, Placer & Nevada Railroad*. After a 13-mile long rail line had been completed between Ashland and Auburn Station (currently the Town of Loomis) in 1862, the depot served passengers and freight along one of the first extensions of the original railroad in California. After only two years of service the new rail line became obsolete when the *Central Pacific Railroad Company* provided a rail connection between Sacramento and Roseville that soon was extend to Auburn and later across the Sierra Nevada mountains. In 1964, the Ashland-Auburn Station railroad line was removed by the *Placerville & Sacramento Valley Railroad* and used to construct a new railroad connection from Folsom to Latrobe.

After a train depot was no longer needed in Ashland, the structure was mainly used to store farm equipment. In 1973, when a commercial center was approved in the area of the former train station, Ashland Depot was relocated to the northeast corner of Folsom's Historic Railroad Block. The route the building was transported at that time (along Folsom Auburn Road, Greenback Lane and Leidesdorff Street), followed approximately the same alignment as the previous railroad connection between Ashland and Folsom.

Among the skilled engineers that allowed the early railroad industry to develop are Theodore Judah, Lester Robinson and John Robinson. Theodore Judah surveyed and designed the first railroad in California between Sacramento and Folsom in addition to the early extension to Marysville and the rail line between Sacramento and Auburn. As a part of these projects, he also planned and surveyed the Town of Folsom and the Town of Lincoln. In addition, he surveyed a railroad connection between Folsom and Auburn and a route across the Sierra Nevada Mountains. As a part of his legacy he raised funds and purchased materials on behalf of several different railroad companies and convinced the federal government to support the construction of the first transcontinental railroad. Lester and John Robinson were in charge of the construction of the railroad between Sacramento and Folsom, Folsom and Auburn and Folsom and Placerville. The two brothers also used their engineering skills to design equipment used for mining and water conveyance projects and their business skills to invest in a variety of mining and agricultural operations both in California and in Mexico.

Criterion C - Distinctive characteristics of type, period and method of construction

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The design of Ashland Depot is simple and functional and does not appear consistent with the more standardized building designs favored by the railroad industry at a later date. The post and beam framing, board and batten siding and the oversized cargo doors resembles a barn structure while the raised foundation, low pitch roof line and wide roof overhangs suggests a different use. Because the early railroad buildings in California were often designed by railroad engineers, it is likely that the engineers for *Sacramento, Placer and Nevada Railroad* were involved with the design and construction of the building.

Ashland Depot was originally located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Folsom-Auburn Road and Greenback Lane. At the time the railroad to Auburn Station was located west of the building (closer to Hinkle Creek). The railroad to Lincoln that existed at the time was located south of the building. It appears that horse-drawn wagons had access to the east side of the building (close to Folsom Auburn Road) and that the train was loaded from the west side (two large sliding doors are located on each of the longer sides of the building). Along the south gable, a horse could pull a wagon into the building through a large double door with a ramp. The depot does not appear to have included interior walls but it is likely that the north end of the building (where a personnel door and two windows are located) was used for ticket sales.

The 150-year-old wood structure is well constructed and preserved. Among the notable details of the building design are the post foundation, the large perimeter beam with mortise and tenon joints and the square heads of the iron cut nails. In addition to providing information about California's railroad era, Ashland Depot may also provide information about the available building materials in the Folsom area during the 1850's. It is likely that the wood frame of the depot was built by locally grown timber. The dense wood appears to be old-growth heart-wood of a quality that currently is hard to find. This wood may have been processed at the Folsom sawmill (north of Folsom's railroad block).

Additional Comments

As a first step towards the extension of the first rail road in California (between Sacramento and Folsom), the *California Central Railroad Company* (created by railroad engineer Theodore Judah) built a large railroad trestle across the American River in 1858. Only pictures remain of the once impressive structure along the north boundary of the original Town of Folsom.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Historic Context

In the early months of 1848 the Mexican territory of Alta California became a part of the United States (in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo) and gold was found in the foothills of Sierra Nevada (by James W. Marshall). Soon after these events, gold-seekers arrived from all parts of the world and the development of the future State accelerated dramatically. The Native American culture that had evolved in the area over thousands of years quickly became marginalized and many of the Spanish/Mexican land grants that had been issued over the last one hundred years were confiscated or abandoned.

Gold was first discovered along the South Fork of the American River (later named Coloma). The area were the main gold vein (the Mother Lode) was located was under the control of the United States government. According to mining laws, prospectors could stake claims and operate mines within public land, provided that mining taxes were paid. Today, the same laws are still in force but rarely invoked.

During the early Gold Rush (1848-1855), 300,000 people immigrated to California from the American Continents, Asia and Europe. Many of the prospectors arrived by boat to San Francisco where they purchased supplies before they traveled east. From the San Francisco Bay, the main route to the Gold Country followed the delta, then continued through the central valley along the Sacramento River and went into the foothills of Sierra Nevada along the American River. All the waterways along this route could be navigated by boat. (Until 1888, steamboats traveled as far as Folsom).

The last settlement that the early prospectors encountered along the route to the gold fields was located at the confluence of the Sacramento River and the American River. Here, Swiss pioneer John Sutter had developed 'New Helvetia' on land he was granted by the Mexican government in 1841. The settlement depended on the coerced labor of local Nisenan tribes. New Helvetia was centered around a large farm and an armed fort (Fort Sutter). In 1850, Sutter's New Helvetia grant was subdivided into building lots and sold to pay Sutter's debts, creating the City of Sacramento.

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East of New Helvetia, the first gold seekers traveled through another Mexican land grant under the name of Rancho Rio de los Americanos. This land was granted by the Mexican government to William Leidesdorff in 1844. After Leidesdorff's death, the land was sold to Captain Joseph Folsom in 1849. In the east part of the property, large granite formations ended the navigable part of the American River (close to the confluence of the North Fork and South Fork of the river). At this site, African-American prospectors developed the mining camp 'Negro Bar' in 1849 and in 1856 some of the adjacent land was subdivided into the Town of Folsom.

As an alternative to the hard labor in the mining camps, some fortune seekers became merchants and brought supplies to the camps on mules. Within a short time, stores were opened along the prospector routes and in the gold country. Later mining companies were formed and most of the excavation operations were done by hired labor and machines. Roads were built around the developing areas and routes were established for stagecoaches and freight wagons. However, these improvements did not satisfy the transportation needs of the growing population within California or the new territory's desire for better connections with the east coast. In the early 1850's, a group of businessmen from the San Francisco area, led by Charles Lincoln Wilson, started to explore the opportunities for a local railroad system that over time could be connected with a transcontinental railroad line.

The Early History of California's Railroad Era

When the *Sacramento Valley Railroad Company* was formed in 1854, Charles Lincoln Wilson became the first president. Charles Wilson owned a steamboat company that operated between San Francisco and Sacramento and a plank road in San Francisco. It was therefore his goal to provide a rail connection from the Folsom goldfields to Sacramento's harbor. After securing local financing, Wilson traveled to New York and hired railroad engineer Theodore Judah to design a railroad connection between Sacramento and Marysville. Later the same year, *Sacramento Valley Railroad* signed a contract with Robinson, Seymour and Co. from New York. As a part of the agreement, the brothers Lester and John Robinson came to Sacramento to lead the railroad project. In 1855, the presidency of the company was transferred to Captain Joseph Libbey Folsom. Folsom granted a right-of-way corridor to the *Sacramento Valley Railroad* across his property along the American River (Ranch Rio de los Americanos). He also hired Theodore Judah to create a new town named Granite City around the railroad's terminus (close to the Negro Bar mining camp). When Joseph Folsom unexpectedly died the same year, the construction of the Sacramento Valley Railroad had already begun. The railroad between Sacramento and Negro Bar/Granite City was completed in the early part of 1856 and the new community that was subdivided around the terminus was renamed the Town of Folsom.

In the years immediately after the railroad's completion, *Sacramento Valley Railroad* expanded its route through the creation of new subsidiary railroad companies. The *California Central Railroad* extended the road to the north, starting with a trestle across the American River built in 1858. This company also continued railroad construction to the newly established community of Lincoln, with plans to extend the route farther north to the city of Marysville (never completed.) Another spinoff company, the *Sacramento, Placer and Nevada Railroad* was formed to finance a northerly rail line from Folsom to Auburn.

In 1861, a new railroad coalition based in Sacramento, with better finance opportunities and more political connections emerged in California. This group (led by Leland Stanford, Collins Huntington, Mark Hopkins and Charles Crocker), formed the *Central Pacific Railroad*. When the U.S. Congress voted to support the construction of a railroad to the Pacific in 1862, the new railroad company was positioned to compete for the project. While cities across the Pacific coast all vied for the opportunity to become the western terminus of a Pacific railroad, it soon became evident that the contract for the western part of the first transcontinental railroad would be awarded to the *Central Pacific Railroad* and that this railroad would bypass Folsom. In 1865, the *Central Pacific Railroad* acquired the *Sacramento Valley Railroad* and dismantled the railroad shops in Folsom built by the *Sacramento Valley Railroad*, in favor of their own new shops complex in Sacramento.

Among the contributing factors to the change of leadership for California's early railroad industry was the establishment of a standardized rail width (gauge). The first railroad companies in California selected a broad gauge (5 feet) for the rail lines from Sacramento to Folsom, Lincoln and Wildwood. However, the first transcontinental railroad was based on the new standard gauge (4 feet - 8 ½ inches). In 1865, Central Pacific Railroad converted the SVRR rails to standard gauge and in 1866, standard gauge became the norm in the United States.

The Temporary Railroad Connection between Ashland and Auburn Station

As the first step towards a northerly extension of the rail line between Sacramento and Folsom the *Sacramento, Placer & Nevada Railroad* constructed a freight depot in the small town of Ashland (year 1860). The building site was close to the

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west end of the recently constructed railroad trestle across the American River and less than one half mile from the boundary of Folsom. Ashland had developed around the Big Gulch mining camp and before the gold rush, this general area had been occupied by the Native American Village Anapee.

The new depot was built to shelter passengers and store freight carried by the railroad. A connection was provided between the new railroad line and the railroad line towards Marysville (constructed by the *California Central Railroad*). The alignment of a new railroad line between Ashland and Auburn was originally surveyed by Theodore Judah. County surveyor S. G. Elliott and Engineer M. M. Stangroom completed the survey and Engineer Sherman Day designed the railroad project. In 1862, 13 miles of the railroad had been completed and the line was open for traffic to Auburn Station (close to the current site of the city of Loomis). However, in 1864, the *Central Pacific Railroad* completed the first portion of its route between Sacramento and Union (later renamed Roseville) that was soon extended to Auburn and across the Sierra Nevada. This railway became the western leg of the first transcontinental railroad (completed in Utah on May 10, 1869). Central Pacific's more direct connection to Union and Auburn made the California Central route redundant. As a result, the wide gauge track (5 feet wide) between Ashland and Auburn Station was abandoned after only two years of service.

In the aftermath of the railroad line closure, the *Central Pacific Railroad* and the *Placerville and Sacramento Valley Railroad* (subsidiary of the *Sacramento Valley Railroad*) fought over the abandoned rails and ties. Demand for materials was high, especially considering the scale of materials needed for completion of the Central Pacific, California's lack of iron fabrication facilities, and the wartime demand for metals. After the *Placerville and Sacramento Valley Railroad* company secured the right to the materials, the track was pulled up and used for an expansion of the P&SV that would provide a train connection between Folsom and Latrobe, completed in late 1864. That railroad was continued to Shingle Springs in 1865 and to Placerville in 1888, after acquisition by Central Pacific. The freight depot at Ashland was left undisturbed and later served as a barn for farm operations. When the property around the depot was approved for development into a shopping center in 1973, the depot was relocated to the Historic Folsom Station.

The original location of Ashland Depot is close to the northwest corner of the current intersection of Greenback Lane and Folsom-Auburn Road. Portions of the old railroad embankment became the base for Folsom-Auburn Road, Oak Avenue, Lakeside Way and Inwood Road. Between Oak Avenue and Oak Avenue Parkway, the railroad embankment has been used for a bicycle/pedestrian trail. Plaques to commemorate the previous railroad connection are located at Oak Avenue Parkway (close to Baldwin Dam Road) and Lakeside Way (close to Dam Road) in Folsom. The remains of a railroad shed foundation is located at the intersection of Folsom-Auburn Road and Whisky Bar Road in Loomis. A large portion of the more dramatic part of the railroad alignment is currently covered by Folsom Lake. Ashland Depot is the only surviving building directly associated with the pioneer railroad era prior to the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad.

Railroad Engineers Associated with the Early Railroad Era in California and the Sacramento, Placer & Nevada Railroad Company

Theodore Dehone Judah

As a young engineer Theodore Dehone Judah worked on the Niagara River Gorge Railroad. When Charles Wilson offered him a position with the *Sacramento Valley Railroad* he saw an opportunity to be involved with an eventual Transcontinental Railroad. He arrived in Sacramento on May 15, 1854 and immediately went to work on the business prospects of the railroad company. In 1855, he was hired by Joseph Folsom to lay out the new town of Granite City centered on the planned railroad station at the eastern terminus of the SVRR. After Judah completed the survey and design of the Sacramento Valley Railroad, he became a consulting engineer in Sacramento. In this capacity he surveyed and designed the railroad between Folsom and Lincoln for the *California Central Railroad Company*. He also surveyed a railroad alignment between Ashland and Auburn that became the *Sacramento, Placer & Nevada Railroad*. In 1861, Charles Wilson hired Theodore Judah to lay out the town of Lincoln, again around a railroad station. When the 'Big Four' (Leland Stanford, Collins Huntington, Mark Hopkins and Charles Crocker) organized the *Central Pacific Railroad Company* in order to complete a rail line across the Sierra Nevada, Judah surveyed a route and traveled to Washington D. C. where he was able to convince federal legislators that this project was possible. When it became clear to Judah that the principals of the Central Pacific did not intend to include him as a major shareholder of the railroad, he made plans to gather funds and political support to buy the *Central Pacific Railroad* from its principals. However, on a fundraising trip to the east coast, he contracted malaria in Panama. In 1863, Theodore Judah died in New York at the age of 37.

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The Robinson Brothers

A year after the *Sacramento Valley Railroad* had hired engineer Theodore Judah to survey and design a railroad between Sacramento and the Gold Country, the construction of the first railroad in California was ready to begin. In November of 1854, *Sacramento Valley Railroad* signed a contract with Robinson, Seymour and Co. from New York. As a part of the agreement, the brothers Lester and John Robinson came to Sacramento to lead the project. Lester Robinson became chief engineer for the railroad project and John Robinson became a railroad superintendent. The two brothers were soon deeply involved with California's early railroad industry. When financial problems prevented *Sacramento Valley Railroad* from providing regular payments, Lester Robinson placed the company under deed of trust but allowed the railroad project to proceed. On January 1, 1856 the rail line between Sacramento and Folsom was completed.

In order to raise funds to continue the railroad project Theodore Judah formed the *California Central Railroad* company and the City of Auburn sponsored the *Sacramento Placer & Nevada Railroad*. In 1858 *California Central* constructed a railroad trestle across the American River on the north side of Folsom and in 1861 a rail line was constructed to Lincoln. The *Sacramento Placer & Nevada Railroad* hired John Robinson as chief engineer and Lester Robinson secured the purchase of 550 tons of rails for the new railroad project (the same tracks had originally been shipped from the east coast by Theodore Judah on behalf of *California Central Railroad*). By 1862, the railroad company had constructed a 13 mile railroad between Ashland (on the north side of Folsom) and Auburn Station (six miles south of Auburn). However, all these efforts came to a halt when the well connected *Central Pacific Railroad* was awarded a federal contract for the first transcontinental railroad. When this project started in 1864, the previously constructed railroad system was not included.

At this time, Lester and John Robinson turned their attention to the *Placerville & Sacramento Valley Railroad* (originally named the *Placerville & Sacramento Railroad*). Lester Robinson was hired as an engineer for the company and also became a major stockholder. The first effort of the new railroad company was to construct a rail line from Sacramento to Newport. Lester Robinson then challenged the *Central Pacific Railroad* to consider an alternate route through Sierra Nevada that would also provide a connection to the Nevada silver mines. The proposed alignment would continue east from Folsom through Latrobe, Shingle Springs and Placerville. Lester Robinson with the support of El Dorado County and the City of Placerville also formed an additional railroad company in order to finance the easterly extension of the rail line to Virginia City (named the *San Francisco and Washoe Railroad*). However this project was never started.

After the *Placerville & Sacramento Valley Railroad* had purchased the property of the *Sacramento Placer & Nevada Railroad*, ties and rails along the Ashland-Auburn line were relocated to a new railroad connection between Folsom and Latrobe. However, before the rail line had been extended to Placerville, *Central Pacific Railroad* had completed the west portion of the first transcontinental railroad at Promontory Summit in Utah (on on May 10, 1869). As a result, it became hard to find investors for a secondary rail connection through Sierra Nevada. The confiscated property of the *Placerville and Sacramento Railroad* was sold to William Alvord on July 21, 1871. On the same day he transferred the ownership of the property to the major stockholders of the *Central Pacific Railroad* (Huntington, Sanford and Hopkins).

The Robinson brothers did not limit their efforts to the railroad industry. During the 1960s Lester Robinson became a partner in several hydraulic mining companies. He was also involved with many water transportation and irrigation projects for mining and agriculture. Among the varied industries that the brothers invested in were oil wells, tin production and insurance companies. The engineering skills, entrepreneurial spirit and boundless energy of Lester and John Robinson contributed to the early settlement of the west.

On February 22, 1856, *Sacramento Valley Railroad* opened a 22-mile long rail line between Sacramento and Folsom. This was the first railroad that operated in the State of California. However, by this time the railroad company was already experiencing financial problems and increasing competition. As a result, a new railroad company; the *California Central Railroad*, was organized by the principals of SVRR to extend the rail line west across the American River and towards Marysville. This development frustrated the citizens of Placer County, who had been involved with an earlier, separate effort to construct a rail line from Folsom to Auburn and Grass Valley.

In the early summer of 1859 the City of Auburn appointed a committee to study the feasibility of a rail line between Folsom and Auburn. Based on an early survey (completed by railroad engineer Theodore Judah) and the recommendations of the committee, a new company with the name of *Sacramento, Placer and Nevada Railroad* was formed (originally named the *Sacramento, Auburn and Nevada Railroad*). President for the company was attorney James E. Hale (also a member of the research committee) and John P. Robinson was hired as the company's chief engineer (earlier associated with

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Sacramento Valley Railroad). The estimated cost for the project was \$850,000 and company shares were sold for \$100 each. By July 25, 1859, the company had enough financial backing to start construction.

County Surveyor S. G. Elliott and engineer M. M. Stangroom completed the fieldwork and engineer Sherman Day designed the road grade. By most accounts, the railroad project started in 1860 with the construction of a freight depot in the Town of Ashland on the north side of Folsom and the American River. No record has been found regarding the design and construction of the depot. However, because the early railroad buildings in California often were designed by railroad engineers, it is likely that chief engineer John Robinson was involved with the design of Ashland Depot. By 1862 a rail line had been completed between Folsom and Auburn Station (six miles south of Auburn) and between 1862 and 1864, trains owned by the *Sacramento Valley Railroad* operated along this line.

During two busy years, the trains between Ashland and Auburn Station transported lumber, granite, alabaster, silver and lime (some of these materials originated in neighboring counties and states) in addition to prospectors and laborers. Two trains covered the distance from Ashland to Auburn Station and back each day. The trains originated in Sacramento and provided connections to stagecoaches and freight wagons in Folsom, Wildwood and Auburn Station. North of Folsom, the railroad connected many small developments that by now are forgotten (including Rose Springs, Wild Woods, Union House, Daly's, Franklin House and Mountaineer House). The entire railroad system operated on broad gauge track (5 feet on center).

In 1858, a new railroad coalition with better finance opportunities and political connections had emerged in California. This group (led by Leland Stanford, Collins Huntington, Mark Hopkins and Charles Crocker), formed the *Central Pacific Railroad*. When the U.S. Congress voted to support the construction of a railroad to the Pacific in the early 1860's, the new railroad company was well positioned to compete for the project. It soon became evident that the contract for the western part of the first transcontinental railroad would be awarded to the *Central Pacific Railroad* and that this railroad would bypass Folsom. By 1864 the *Sacramento, Placer & Nevada Railroad* had exhausted its capital and was forced to sell the company to the Central Pacific.

In the aftermath of the rail line closure, the *Central Pacific Railroad* and the *Placerville and Sacramento Valley Railroad* (subsidiary of the *Sacramento Valley Railroad*) fought over the abandoned rails and ties. After the *Placerville and Sacramento Valley Railroad* company secured the right to the materials, the track was pulled up and used for a new rail project that provided a train connection between Folsom and Latrobe in 1864. The railroad was continued to Shingle Springs in 1865 and to Placerville in 1888.

Ashland Depot has been moved less than one mile south and across the American River (currently Lake Natoma). The building is now located on the historic railroad property in Folsom where the railroad between Ashland and Auburn Station originated. In 1859 and the early 1860s, a freight depot was operated from the same location (close to the Folsom Passenger Depot). When the building was relocated in 1973, it was transported approximately along the same alignment as the previous railroad connection between Ashland and Folsom (along Folsom-Auburn Road, Greenback Lane and Leidesdorff Street). In the new location, Ashland Depot has retained integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

At the time when Ashland Freight Depot was constructed in 1860, the Town of Ashland consisted of miner's cabins and salons while the Town of Folsom across the American River featured a large railroad block with a machine shop, a sawmill, general stores and hotels. However, the two adjacent towns were located along the same wide-gauge railroad corridor. The first leg of this railroad was constructed by the *Sacramento Valley Railroad* in 1856 (between Sacramento and Folsom). By 1861, the *California Central Railroad* extended the rail line west to Lincoln and the *Sacramento, Placer & Nevada Railroad* extended the rail line north to Auburn Station. Ashland Depot is the only remaining building that is associated with the first railroad system in California and the pioneer railroaders that financed, designed and constructed these wide-gauge railroads.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

These Lonely Hills by John N. Wilson
First printed 1986

Ashland Depot
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First in the West; The Sacramento Valley Railroad
Prepared by PAR Environmental Services in 1996 and published by the City of Folsom
Folsom; The Hub of the Mother Lode
Published by the Folsom Historical Society
Supplement to the Draft EIR for the American River Bridge Project
Prepared by Jones and Stokes Associates in October 1993
Cultural Resource Study for the Hinkle Creek Nature Area
Prepared by PAR Environmental Services in 2006
The Internet Site for the Sacramento, Placer & Nevada Railroad

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Folsom History Museum
Folsom Railroad Museum
Auburn Museum Archives
Sacramento Railroad Museum

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>10</u> Zone	<u>6 58 700</u> Easting	<u>42 82 400</u> Northing	3	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing
2	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing	4	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (*Describe the boundaries of the property.*)

Ashland Depot is located at the northeast corner of Folsom's Historic Railroad Block, bounded by Leidesdorff Street to the north and Wool Street to the east, north of former SVRR right-of-way (currently being replaced on the site.) South of the depot building across the railroad right-of-way is Folsom's Passenger Depot (listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982).

Boundary Justification (*Explain why the boundaries were selected.*)

Because Ashland Depot was relocated, the boundary of the nominated property has been limited to the physical footprint of the historic freight depot.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lisbet Gullone/Volunteer and Nancy Percy/Board Member
organization The Heritage Preservation League of Folsom date 11-08-11
street & number P. O. Box 353 telephone 916/965-0866 (L. Gullone)
916/985-2707 (Nancy Percy)
city or town Folsom state CA zip code 95763-0353
e-mail lgullone@gmail.com or nanpercy@gmail.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **map** of Folsom's Historic Railroad Block (Including the location and view of all photographs)
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)
Attachments 1 through 6:
 1. a) Floor Plan of Ashland Depot at Pioneer Village
b) Site Plan of Folsom's Historic Railroad Block (Folsom Station) including both existing and approved buildings
 2. a) Map of the Railroad Block 1856-1859, 1860's and 1870-1891
b) Railroad alignment through the original Town of Folsom
c) Photograph from 1860 - Historic Railroad Trestle across the American River north of the Town of Folsom
d) Railroads in the vicinity of Sacramento 1855-1887
 3. Information Regarding the Town of Ashland:
 - a) The archives of Folsom History Museum
 - b) Excerpt from *These Lonely Hills* by John N. Wilson first published in 1986
 4. Previous Environmental Assessment of Ashland Station/Ashland Depot
 - a) Excerpt from the *Supplement to the Draft EIR for the American River Bridge Project* prepared by Jones and Stokes Associates, Inc. in October 1993
 - b) Excerpts from the *Cultural Resource Study for the Hinkle Creek Nature Area* prepared by PAR Environmental in 2006
 5. Newspaper articles regarding Ashland Depot published in the Sacramento Bee and Folsom Telegraph 1961-2005

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Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Folsom's Historic Railroad Block

City or Vicinity: Folsom

County: Sacramento State: California

Photographer: Lisbet Gullone

Date Photographed: July, 2010 and November, 2010

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 11: Southeast façade of Ashland Depot - facing Wool Street and the Railroad Museum
- 2 of 11: North façade of Ashland Depot - facing Leidesdorff Street
- 3 of 11: Walkway south of Ashland Depot – westerly view towards the replicated wagon shed,
- 4 of 11: Wind mill and miners shed - in front of west façade of Ashland Depot
- 5 of 11: Folsom Passenger Depot and Railroad Museum – south of Ashland Depot
- 6 of 11: Blacksmith Shop - screening the view of Ashland Depot from Wool Street
- 7 of 11: Interior detail: Freight scale
- 8 of 11: Interior detail: Hand cart with luggage
- 9 of 11: Wall plaque at southeast entrance to Ashland Depot - close to the raised loading dock
- 10 of 11: Historic Marker along the former Folsom-Wildwood rail line - close to the intersection of Lakeside Drive and Folsom Dam Road
- 11 of 11: Close-up of Historic Plaque along the former Folsom-Wildwood rail line - close to the intersection of Lakeside Drive and Folsom Dam Road

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

Name David Miller, Community Development Director, City of Folsom

street & number 50 Natoma Street telephone 916/355-7200

city or town Folsom state CA zip code 95630

Property Owner:

Name Folsom Historical Society

street & number 823 Sutter Street telephone 916/985-2707

city or town Folsom state CA zip code 95630

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.