Form 10-300 (July 1969) UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

As late as 1930 one could still locate a heap of chimney stones in a small clearing beside an abandoned road - the last physical evidence of Blackburn's Station, No. 6 of the twelve stands established by the Butterfield Overland Mail along its slashing 192-mile route across Indian Territory from Fort Smith to Red River. Today even the site itself cannot be located precisely with absolute certainty. And, ironically, one inhibiting factor is the terrain changing that has accompanied construction of the Indian Nations Turnpike, a smooth, multi-laned communications great-grandchild of the "rough and stony" Butterfield route itself.

Indications of the latter can still be found in this area, however. And, as mentioned in No. 8, the all-but-obliterated Brushey Cemetery gives a clue as to the location of the Brushey community. A short distance to the southwest, in the same section, is the Colbert crossing on Brushey Creek. But such permanent materials as were used in the various buildings of the town and stage station have long since been scattered, some to be removed and re-used in other structures in the area.





NIFICANCE			
PERIOD (Check One or More as	Appropriate)		
Pre-Columbian	16th Century	☐ 18th Century	20th Century
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SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicat	ole and Known) 1851	8-1861	
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

So far as the written word is concerned, Blackburn's Station depends primarily on the prose of Waterman L. Ormsby. In 1858 the doughty New York Herald Tribune correspondent rode the inaugural west-bound stage of the Butterfield Overland Mail on its contracted 2,795-mile mail/passenger route between St. Louis and San Francisco. Ormsby had left Sept. 16 and by the night of Sept. 19, he writes, "I had travelled continuously without accident, both night and day, at a pretty rapid rate." Then, a few miles out of Blackburn's, all that changed. And he admits to thinking "all hopes for a quick trip of the first overland mail were at an end."

The trouble, apparently, was "a splendid team of horses" -hitched up at the last station, Pusley's -- and "our driver's ambition
to make good time." Ormsby records what followed like this:

We . . . had been spinning over the rolling prairies at a rapid rate . . . We now came to a patch of woods through which the road was rough and stony. But our driver's ambition to make good time overcame his caution. The moon shone brightly, but its light was obstructed by the trees, and the driver had to rely on his knowledge of the road for a guide. To see the heavy mail wagon whizzing and whirling over the jagged rocks, through such a labyrinth, in comparative darkness, and to feel oneself bouncing now on the hard seat, now against the roof, and now against she side of the wagon, was no joke I can assure you, though I can truthfully say that I rather liked the excitement of the thing. But it was too dangerous to be continued without accident, and soon two heavy thumps and a bound of the wagon, that unsested us all, and a crashing south denoted that something had broken. We stopped and examined, but found no damage except a broken seat, and proceeded to the station. Here a further examination, to our astonishment, disclosed the fact that the pole or tongue of the wagon was badly split. It was a mystery to me how we ever reached the station without completing its destruction. took more time to mend it than our ambitious driver saved. Moral, - "make haste slowly."

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Conkling, Roscoe P. and Margaret B., The Eutterfield Overland Mail 1857-1869, The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1947, pp. 257-259

Ormsby, Waterman L., The Butterfield Overland Mail, Edited by The Huntington Library, 1942

Wright, Muriel H., "Historic Places on the Old Stage Line from Fort Smith to Red River," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. XI (1933), p. 811

--- Report on the Butterfield Overland Mail, A Special Committee Report, The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. XXXVI (1958), pp. 459-460

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Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

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COUNTY	
Pittsburg	
FOR NPS USE ONL	Υ .
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(Number all entries)

No. 8 Significance

Blackburn's Station

When they traced out the Butterfield route in 1930, the Conklings could find only some chimney stones and a nearby cemetery. They put down their findings this way:

As early as October, 1858, a small settlement known as "Brushey," evidently named for the near-by flowing creek, existed in the vicinity that may have included Blackburn's within its borders. In a thick wood southwest of the station site are a number of old graves. This is said to be old Brushey cemetery. In 1858, one J. G. Blackburn kept a store at Brushey, and judging from the numerous consignments of merchandise to him at that place, waybills of which were found among the records of the old commission house of O. C. Wood & Company of Fort Smith, he carried on an extensive trade for that day.

Blackburn's Station, however, perhaps a half-mile northeast of the cemetery, was at the home of Casper B. Blackburn. A Missourian, he had moved to Indian Territory some years before, married a Choctaw woman. The Civil War ended Butterfield service, of course. And after the war Blackburn acquired a ranch near present-day Kiowa, some miles to the northwest. Brushey in the meantime did acquire a post office, in July 1869, with Friederick Schmallfield appointed postmaster.

Today Blackburn's Station has virtually disappeared, and even the nearby community it helped to support is not easy to find in what is still a relatively rugged, hilly section of old Indian Territory. Yet a century and more ago it was an important link in a continent-spanning chain of communications that still represents of the nation's most dramatic commercial ventures. As such it would seem worthy of National Register designation.



