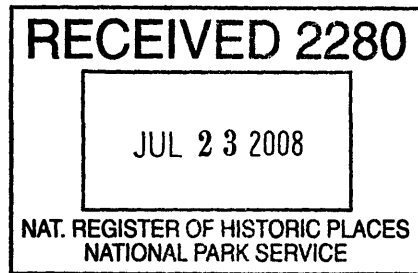


United States Department of the Interior
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name Rock Creek Bridge

other names/site number Half Moon Bridge/Structure #61N4097E1633000

2. Location

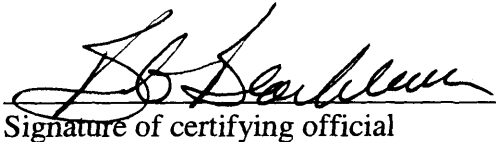
street & number Carries County Road NS-409.7 over Rock Creek not for publication N/A

city or town Blanco vicinity v

state Oklahoma code OK county Pittsburg code 121 zip code 74528

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally. (N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)


Signature of certifying official July 21, 2008
Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

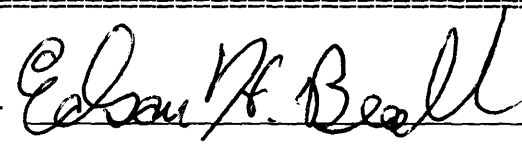
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the
National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the
National Register
- removed from the National Register

___ other (explain): _____



Signature of Keeper 9.4.08
of Action Date

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: TRANSPORTATION Sub: Road Related (Vehicular)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: TRANSPORTATION Sub: Road-Related (Vehicular)

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Steel Stringer Bridge

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

roof

walls

other STEEL

STONE: Sandstone

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====
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.)

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance 1937

=====
8. Statement of Significance (Continued)
=====

Significant Dates 1937

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Works Progress Administration (WPA), builder

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
=====

9. Major Bibliographical References
=====

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

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

Name of repository: Oklahoma Department of Transportation Cultural Resources Program

=====
10. Geographical Data
=====

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing
1	<u>15</u>	<u>249580E</u>	<u>3837300N</u>	<u>3</u>
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>4</u>	<u> </u>

N/A See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Anna Marie Eddings, Historian/Architectural Historian (edited by Kelli E. Gaston, Interim National Register Coordinator/Historian/Survey Coordinator, SHPO)

organization Oklahoma Department of Transportation Cultural Resources Program date November 9, 2007

street & number 111 East Chesapeake, room 102 telephone (405)325-8665

city or town Norman state OK zip code 73019

=====
Additional Documentation
=====

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====
Property Owner
=====

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

name Pittsburg County

street & number 115 E. Carl Albert Parkway telephone (918) 423-1338

city or town McAlester state OK zip code 74501

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 9 Rock Creek Bridge
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Description

Summary

The Rock Creek Bridge, known locally as the Half Moon Bridge, is located in rural southeastern Pittsburg County approximately eight miles southeast of the small communities of Blanco and Pittsburg. It was constructed in 1937 and overall has a curved shape, with three steel stringer spans, and north and south approaches banked with stone walls. It carries an unpaved road which is designated in the immediate vicinity of the bridge as County Road NS-409.7, meaning it follows a north-south trend and is located 409.7 miles east of Oklahoma's western border with New Mexico. However, this road does not maintain a north-south orientation for its entire length, running a diagonal and sometimes curved course. The course of the road is shaped by the mountainous terrain of the area. Beginning approximately two miles north of the bridge and moving southward, the road passes through the Brushy Narrows, a gap following Brushy Creek between Pine Mountain on the west and New State Mountain on the east. Continuing southward, the road runs through the western portion of the Ti Valley, paralleling the east side of Rock Creek for a short distance before arriving at the bridge crossing. Beyond the bridge to the south, the road begins curving around the foot of Hewitt Mountain which is located on the west. The road continues southward into the McGee Valley, with Hewitt Mountain on the west and Bald Mountain and Jackfork Mountain on the east, before reaching the small Atoka County community of Daisy. Located approximately one-half mile east of the Rock Creek Bridge, the more recently constructed four-lane, limited-access Indian Nation Turnpike roughly parallels the course of NS-409.7.

Rock Creek Bridge

The nominated bridge consists of three steel stringer spans under which Rock Creek flows, flanked by north and south approaches made up of stone walls containing the fill to support the roadbed and elevate it above the creek valley. The entire bridge is curved, with a concavity towards the east and a convexity towards the west. The three steel stringer spans are each 24 feet long, the north approach is 29 feet long, and the south approach is 92 feet long. Combining the steel stringer spans and approaches, the total length of the bridge is 193 feet.

Concrete deck, concrete curbs, and concrete post and beam guardrail are present on both stringer spans and approaches. The bridge's driving surface width (between the curbs) is 20 feet, and total width inclusive of curbs and guardrail is 23 feet. There are drain holes in the curb on the east side of the bridge only, indicative of the bridge being slightly tilted upward on the west, although this tilt is minimally apparent. The guardrail is one beam high, with concrete posts that have triple incised lines for decoration. The inscription "WPA 1937" within a federal shield is stamped in the concrete on the ends of the posts at the northwest and southeast corners of the bridge.

The bridge's three main spans are constructed of steel I-beam stringers, running longitudinally the length of each span, underneath the concrete deck. The I beams themselves are not curved; rather, the slight curve of the deck, curb, and guardrail in the main spans comes from changing the angle of each span at the piers, instead of having each span perpendicular to the piers as is the case in a perfectly straight bridge. Two solid wall stone piers with concrete

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footings and concrete caps support the inner span ends. Each pier is slightly wider and thicker at the base than at the top, and is squared on the west end and pointed, or prow-like, on the east (upstream) end. The east and west ends of each pier are battered, or sloped, but the slope is greater on the east end. The extreme ends of the north and south spans rest on full-height abutments—that is, abutments which each have a stone breast wall that rises the full height of the area from the creek bed to the stringers. At the tops of the stone abutments, the stringers rest upon concrete bridge seats, with concrete backwalls behind them. The stringers are set upon block-type bearings on the northern pier only; elsewhere the stringer ends appear to set directly on the bridge seats and pier caps, although thin plate or pad-type bearings which cannot be seen may be present.

Bridge wing walls are designed to extend out from the breast wall of the abutment to retain roadway fill at each side of the abutment. Wing walls are defined by the angle at which they intersect the breast wall. The stone wing walls of the Rock Creek Bridge are defined as U-shaped because they extend back from the breast wall forming a perpendicular angle to it. However, the Rock Creek Bridge's stone wing walls are much longer than is common, so they may also be looked upon as retaining walls which stabilize, support, and elevate the roadbed and bridge approaches. Concrete deck, curb, and railing is present on these approaches. The stone walls are outwardly stepped, wider at the base than at the top. The north approach is curved and 29 feet long, whereas the south approach is 92 feet long, and its deck, curb, and guardrail are divided into seven sections or spans. The southernmost span is 22 feet long, while the others average about 10 feet each. These shorter sections are positioned to produce the most sharply-curving section of the bridge, because here the foot of Hewitt Mountain is directly to the west, and the approach must carry the roadway more sharply eastward around the foot of the mountain.

The bridge's piers, abutments, and retaining walls are constructed of rock-faced, rectangular sandstone blocks laid in regular courses. The mortar joints are wide, flush with the outer face of the stone, and cleanly shaped or finished.

Alterations

There are no major alterations to the bridge and it appears that all of its original materials remain intact with only minor spalling. There are cracks in the masonry retaining walls/wing walls, behind both the south and north breast walls. There is some evidence of repairs at the north abutment in an effort to correct settling or sinking. Overall the bridge is in satisfactory condition, with a sufficiency rating of 53.8 on a scale of 100 as determined by the state bridge inspection process.

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Section 8 Page 11 Rock Creek Bridge
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Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

The Rock Creek Bridge, carrying County Road NS-409.7 over Rock Creek in rural southeastern Pittsburg County, is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its significance in the transportation history of the area and for its association with the federal work relief agency, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in Pittsburg County. The bridge represents the transportation infrastructure improvements in Pittsburg County that were crucial to fulfilling the mission of the Works Progress Administration to provide work relief to the unemployed during the Great Depression. Built in 1937, this bridge is one of the best remaining examples of a WPA road-related project in Pittsburg County.

Historical Background

Pittsburg County is located in Southeastern Oklahoma, within the historic boundaries of the Choctaw Nation. The Choctaw emigrated to southeastern Oklahoma in 1832-1834, and Pittsburg County includes what were previously the Choctaw counties of Tobucksey and Gaines. Rocky ridges and small hills, with large valleys in between, characterize the terrain. In the far southeastern corner of the county, the Ouchita Mountains give rise to higher elevations. The highly-traveled, early- to mid-1800s thoroughfares of the Texas Road, the California Trail, and the Butterfield Stage Route traversed the county, before the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad was the first to lay track through the Choctaw Nation in 1872, roughly following the route of the Texas Road. The arrival of the railroad would significantly impact the development of the area.¹

¹Alyson L. Greiner, "Reconnaissance Level Survey of McAlester, Oklahoma, 1998-1999," report prepared by the Department of Geography, Oklahoma State University, for the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, 1999, 158, 162, 164, 166; Frederick Ryan, *The Rehabilitation of Oklahoma Coal Mining Communities* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1935), 78-79; *Biennial Report of the Department of Highways* (Oklahoma City, January 1, 1913), unnumbered table between pages 28 and 29; Hiram Impson, "Our History," in *McAlester Golden Anniversary Celebration* ([McAlester, OK]: McAlester Today, [1949]), unnumbered.

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name of property
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Extensive coal deposits existed in this region. The coming of the railroad made possible the beginning of the coal mining industry, aided by enterprising businessmen such as J. J. McAlester, namesake of the town that became the county seat and largest city. The area around McAlester became Oklahoma's most productive coal region. Agriculture was also an important component of the area economy as well, with the farmland in the valleys suitable for the cultivation of cotton and corn, as well as pasture for grazing cattle.²

Arable land and mining opportunities encouraged migration to the area. As a result, there was a great increase in the non-Indian population. Existing rail service expanded and new towns formed along the tracks. For example, in 1902, the Choctaw Coal and Railway Company built track across the southeastern corner of Pittsburg County, beginning just south of Haileyville and extending southwestward through Blanco and Pittsburg. Small mining towns like these were largely dependent upon coal production.³

Agriculture and mining were the core components of the local economy, and fluctuations in those markets greatly impacted conditions in the area. Pittsburg County's economic downturn began early and only worsened with the onset of the Great Depression. In the 1920s, Oklahoma's coal industry began declining primarily because of the growing use of other fuels such as oil and natural gas. A large number of the mines closed and miners moved away. Statewide, the coal industry experienced a two-thirds decrease in production, and lost half of its labor force of 5,465 workers, between 1930 and 1935. In Pittsburg County particularly, the closure of mines around 1932 left hundreds unemployed. Although some unemployed miners had left the region for jobs elsewhere, a large number remained stranded.⁴

²Greiner, "Reconnaissance," 157, 158, 166, 168, 170-71; Ryan, *Rehabilitation*, 16, 78-79; Impson, "Our History," unnumbered.

3

Angie Debo, *The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934), 221-23; Chester M. Davis, ed., *Railroads of Oklahoma* (Oklahoma City, OK: State of Oklahoma Department of Transportation Survey Division, 1978), 42-44, 79; Ryan, *Rehabilitation*, 16, 37-38.

⁴Greiner, "Reconnaissance," 174-75; "Architectural/Historic Intensive Level Survey of Coal Mining Related Resources of Pittsburg County: Historic Context and Predictive Model Document," report prepared by the Oklahoma Historic Preservation Survey, Department of History, Oklahoma State University, for the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, 1990, 55, 57; Jim Gabbert, "Keel Creek Bridge," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, (On file at the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, 2006), 11; "Unemployment Survey of Oklahoma: Causes, Effects, Trends," Works Progress Administration for Oklahoma, Ron Stephens, Administrator, November 20, 1937, in the Elmer Thomas Collection, Projects Series, box 20, folder 163, Carl Albert Congressional Research and Studies Center Congressional Archives, University of Oklahoma, Norman, p. 1 and unnumbered; W. David Baird, "Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.) Public Buildings, Recreational Facilities, and Cemetery Improvements in Southeastern Oklahoma, 1935-1943," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, (On file at the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, 1985), section 8, page 2; County Commissioners' Letter, in "United States Community Improvement Appraisal Report," State of

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Falling agricultural prices in the 1920s placed hardships on farmers as well. By 1930, the population of Pittsburg County had decreased from 52,570 in 1920 to 50,778. With the nationwide economic collapse of the Great Depression in the 1930s, conditions continued to worsen. Southeastern Oklahoma, some argue, suffered more than other parts of the state. The amount of farmland in southeastern Oklahoma was small in proportion to its total area and population; the soil suffered from low fertility, and there was drought and boll weevil infestation. Yet, many whom the mining industry decline left unemployed attempted to support themselves by farming, and people were moving into the area from the western Great Plains "dust bowl" region as well. Southeastern Oklahoma had the state's highest percentage of tenant farmers. The only sizeable industries in Pittsburg County—coal mining and agriculture—were both failing and the number of unemployed and needy people grew.⁵

The purpose of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), created in May of 1935 as one of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs, was to provide employment on public works projects to aid the unprecedented number of people without work during the Great Depression. Projects were sponsored by public entities such as local governments or school districts, who had to pay 10 to 25 percent of a project's cost, while the WPA, aided by its state and district offices, provided the matching funds for projects and administered the program. The magnitude of the amount of construction done under the program nationwide and the number of people it employed attest to its far-reaching influence. One researcher calculated that as of June 1941, if all of the new buildings constructed by the WPA could be evenly divided among the nation's 3,000 counties, each county would have approximately ten.⁶

WPA projects helped to reduce the amount of poverty in southeastern Oklahoma significantly during the depression. In Pittsburg County, with its population of approximately 50,000, over 6,000 applied for work at the beginning of the relief program. By mid-1937, in Pittsburg County the WPA program had employed approximately 3,500 people on projects totaling \$2,199,312.01 in value. However, according to a WPA report on unemployment in Oklahoma dated

Oklahoma, Department of Government, Area No. 13, McAlester, Oklahoma, 1938, Documents Section, Edmon Low Library, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, p.1; Telegram, WM Jones Jr., County Judge, to Hon. Elmer Thomas, US Senator, in the Elmer Thomas Collection, Subjects Series, box 31, folder 67, Carl Albert Center.

⁵Gabbert, "Keel Creek Bridge," 11; Leonard M. Logan, *An Economic Base Study: McAlester, Oklahoma*, report prepared by the Institute of Community Development, University of Oklahoma, Norman, 1959, 35; Baird, "Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.) Public Buildings," section 8, pages 1-2; "Unemployment Survey of Oklahoma: Causes, Effects, Trends," in the Elmer Thomas Collection, Projects Series, box 20, folder 163, Carl Albert Center, page 1 and unnumbered.

⁶*Final Report on the WPA Program, 1935-1943* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1943), 9, 7, 11; William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963), 125; W. David Baird, "Final Report, WPA Structures Thematic Survey (Phase III), Management Regions 1, 6, 7," report prepared by W. David Baird, Oklahoma State University, for the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, 1987, 11; Donald S. Howard, *The WPA and Federal Relief Policy* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1943), 128.

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November 20, 1937, Pittsburg County still had an estimated 5,864 people in need of employment. Yet, there was still great benefit in putting added funds into circulation in the local economy, and these WPA projects served various useful purposes. They ranged from construction projects such as schools-- in the towns of Pittsburg and Kiowa, for example-- to projects for drainage of swamps which aided in malaria control, to sewing rooms where women made clothes to distribute to the needy.⁷

Although the WPA's legacy of public buildings and recreational improvements is more well known, it was road improvements that made up the majority of this agency's work. As stated in a WPA progress report: "Work on highways, roads, and streets always has been and continues to be the predominant activity of the WPA program."⁸ The majority of workers on WPA relief rolls were unskilled. These types of workers were well suited to the needs of road projects that did not require significant previous training. In fact, over 75 percent of the workers on WPA road projects were unskilled laborers and in Oklahoma, over half of WPA workers were actually farmers. Most transportation projects focused on badly deteriorated rural farm to market roads, thus providing employment for farmers near their homes. It had long been noted that improved roads in rural areas made it easier for farmers to transport crops to market and to patronize businesses in nearby towns.⁹

In the 1930s, conditions on Pittsburg County roads were deplorable. Secondary dirt roads that led from the main highways to the smaller communities were in poor repair. The Ouachita Mountain region, that includes the southeastern corner of Pittsburg County, was described by a contemporary observer as having the poorest transportation system in the state because of the mountains and the sparse population. Funding from the WPA offered a solution that helped put local people to work improving road conditions. Materials costs for road projects were relatively low, allowing for more of the project money to be spent on wages. In Pittsburg County, the County Commissioners were able to sponsor a standing, year-to-year farm to market road WPA project that included various roads throughout the county, in addition to separate projects for work on certain roads. Several tabulations of the county's WPA work illustrate the magnitude of the road improvement program. For example, as of March 12, 1936, the farm to market road project had employed 1,648 people and had a funding allocation of \$174,671--by far the

⁷Baird, "Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.) Public Buildings," section 7, page 3, section 8, pages 1, 3; County Commissioners' Letter, in "United States Community Improvement Appraisal Report," p. 1; "Unemployment Survey of Oklahoma: Causes, Effects, Trends," in the Elmer Thomas Collection, Projects Series, box 20, folder 163, Carl Albert Center, unnumbered.; *McAlester Democrat*, 15 October 1936, 17 June 1937; "Report on Works Progress Administration Projects in Oklahoma 1937," in the Elmer Thomas Collection, Projects Series, box 20, folder 80, Carl Albert Center, p. 13.

⁸Works Progress Administration, *Report on Progress of the WPA Program* (n.p., June 30, 1938), 69.

⁹*WPA Projects: Analysis of Projects Placed in Operation Through June 30, 1937* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1937), ix; *Final Report on the WPA Program, 1935-1943*, 9, 47-48, 53; S.F. Charles, *Minister of Relief: Harry Hopkins and the Depression* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1963), 144; *Accomplishments: Works Progress Administration for Oklahoma, July 1, 1935-March 1, 1937* (Oklahoma City, OK: WPA, 1937), 22.

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largest project in the county—indeed, well over double the amount of any other project. Culvert and bridge construction was included in conjunction with road projects.¹⁰ In a letter written in appraisal of the WPA in early 1938, the Pittsburg County Commissioners stated that before the WPA program they customarily planned “a few permanent culverts and possibly a bridge or two” each year. However, since the WPA program began, they had been able to build over one thousand culverts and twenty bridges.¹¹

Rock Creek Bridge

Research revealed no evidence of an individual WPA project for the Rock Creek Bridge, but rather indicates that it was included in the blanket farm to market road project that the Pittsburg County Commissioners sponsored for 1937. This is confirmed by the bridge’s “WPA 1937” inscription. An article in the March 11, 1937 *McAlester Democrat* refers to the construction of a 64 foot concrete bridge with a 100 foot stone approach on the Daisy Road. The article, though, states that the bridge is over Coal Creek, but maps show that there is no Coal Creek in the vicinity of the road leading to Daisy. The road that the Rock Creek Bridge carries links the communities of Pittsburg and Blanco with Daisy (in Atoka County); an earlier article referred to this road as the Pittsburg-Daisy Highway.¹² The long stone approach is one of the unusual features of the Rock Creek Bridge, which increases the likelihood that it is in fact the bridge described in that article. There were probably no other bridges like it in Pittsburg County.

The design of the bridge and the materials used in its construction are characteristic of WPA bridge projects in the area. The design of the bridge exhibits a considerable degree of technical skill in using a curve to surmount the obstacle of carrying the road over the creek bed and around the foot of a mountain. The entire bridge is curved, but the south ninety-two foot approach, constructed of stone walls containing fill used to elevate the roadbed, is more sharply curved to the east as it carries the road around the foot of Hewitt Mountain. This unusually long approach constructed of stone, as well as the bridge’s stone piers and abutments, display craftsmanship that is characteristic of WPA construction. The County Commissioners (and other Pittsburg County project sponsors) could only afford to sponsor as many projects as they did because they used locally abundant native stone. This stone was available in part because a different WPA project supported the quarrying of native stone, allowing project sponsors to obtain this important building material at a lower cost. As a result, more WPA funds could be applied directly to wages. Masonry construction is also labor intensive and suited to the WPA mission of employing a large number of

¹⁰ *Accomplishments: Works Progress Administration for Oklahoma, July 1, 1935-March 1, 1937*, 22; *McAlester Democrat*, 15, 29 October 1936, 25 March 1937; “Report on Works Progress Administration Projects in Oklahoma 1937,” in the Elmer Thomas Collection, Projects Series, box 20, folder 80, Carl Albert Center, p. 13; Ryan, *Rehabilitation*, 80; Federal Civil Works Administration of Oklahoma, *The Civil Works Administration Program in Oklahoma: November 15, 1933 to March 31, 1934* (Oklahoma City, OK: n.p., 1934), 21-22.

¹¹ County Commissioners’ Letter, in “United States Community Improvement Appraisal Report,” p. 1.

¹² *McAlester Democrat*, 11 June 1936, 11 March 1937.

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people.¹³

No engineer can conclusively be attributed to the design of the Rock Creek Bridge. It may be possible to credit its design to the Pittsburg County engineer at this time, Eben Magoffin, because it was generally true that local WPA project sponsors supplied the design plans for their projects to federal WPA officials. If this speculation is incorrect, another possible designer of the bridge is Paul W. Loy, the WPA's resident engineer over Pittsburg County projects.¹⁴

There are some WPA bridges in the county that approach the size of the Rock Creek Bridge's three main spans and have the same level of integrity, but they are in the minority—most of the WPA bridges in the county are much smaller structures. Compared to other WPA bridges in Pittsburg County, the Rock Creek Bridge's curved design and its long stone approaches make it unique as an expert adaptation of bridge design to surmount difficult terrain and make excellent use of the materials and labor force that the WPA program provided. As such, it is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the areas of Transportation as well as Politics/Government for its association with the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in Pittsburg County.

¹³

Baird, "Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.) Public Buildings," section 7, page 3; *McAlester Democrat*, 29 October 1936.

¹⁴*McAlester Democrat*, 11 June 1936, 11, 25 March 1937.

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Bibliography

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“Architectural/Historic Intensive Level Survey of Coal Mining Related Resources of Pittsburg County: Historic Context and Predictive Model Document.” Report prepared by the Oklahoma Historic Preservation Survey, Department of History, Oklahoma State University, for the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, 1990.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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name of property
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Verbal Boundary Description

The bridge is located in the SW 1/4 of NW 1/4 of NE 1/4 of Section 16, Township 2 North, Range 15 East. It carries county road NS-409.7 over Rock Creek. The boundary of the nominated property extends twenty-five feet on either side of the centerline of the road as it crosses the bridge, and ten feet from each end of the paved deck on the stone approaches.

Boundary Justification

This boundary includes the area historically associated with the bridge.