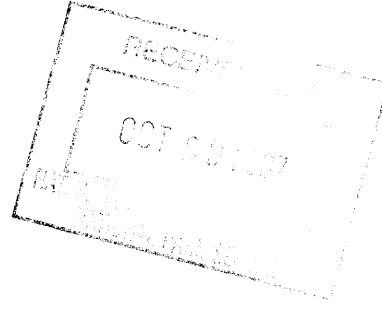


1266

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railroad Viaduct

other names/site number Bridge No. C-1156

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number Intersection of G Street Northeast and Abandoned roadbed of the St. Louis-San Francisco Railroad

not for publication N/A

city or town Ardmore vicinity N/A

state Oklahoma code OK county Carter code 019

zip code 73401

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 ___ nationally ___ statewide locally. (N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)



Signature of certifying official

10-22-07

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

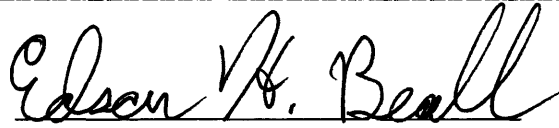
Date

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



12-16-07

___ other (explain): _____



Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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 |
|--------------|---------------------|
| <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> buildings |
| <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> sites |
| <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> structures |
| <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> objects |
| <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> 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: rail-related

Sub: _____
Sub: _____
Sub: _____
Sub: _____
Sub: _____
Sub: _____
Sub: _____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: VACANT/NOT IN USE

Sub: _____
Sub: _____
Sub: _____
Sub: _____
Sub: _____
Sub: _____
Sub: _____
Sub: _____

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Wood Trestle/Plate Girder Bridge

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation _____
roof _____
walls _____

other WOOD
METAL:steel

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

Period of Significance 1901-1913

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

Significant Dates 1902
1909
1913

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railway Company, 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: _____

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

Acreeage of Property Less than One Acre

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

| Zone | Easting | Northing | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|------|-----------|---------------|----------------|---------|----------|
| 1 | <u>14</u> | <u>673420</u> | <u>3783600</u> | 3 | _____ |
| 2 | _____ | _____ | 4 | _____ | _____ |

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 Cynthia Savage, Architectural Historian, for City of Ardmore

organization Architectural Resources and Community Heritage Consulting date June 2007

street & number 346 County Road 1230 telephone 405/459-6200

city or town Pocasset state OK zip code 73079

=====
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 Burlington Northern Santa Fe

street & number P.O. Box 961057 telephone _____

city or town Fort Worth state TX zip code 76101

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 9

Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf Railroad Viaduct

name of property

Carter County, Oklahoma

county and state

SUMMARY

The Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railroad Viaduct is a predominately wood trestle railroad bridge with two plate girder spans. The bridge is on a section of abandoned line, most recently owned by the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway but originally part of the Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf's (CO&G) line through Ardmore from Haileyville. In 1901-1902, the CO&G erected the then over 1000 foot viaduct. The purpose of the east-west bridge was to span the nearly north-south tracks of Ardmore's first railroad, the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe (Santa Fe). Seven years later, the east portion of the bridge was altered by the addition of a second plate girder span to allow G Street Northeast to continue past the railroad bridge. In 1913, the railroad filled portions of the long trestle, reducing the overall length of the bridge to about 254 feet. This was likely done for safety and maintenance reasons as the solid fill would be stronger and the bridge would have less sway and require less upkeep. While a sizeable reduction, the filling of the panels (the area between the bents), four on the west side and forty-nine on the east, does not destroy the historic integrity of the bridge. The bridge maintains both of its plate girder spans, as well as the wooden trestle design and the immense, carefully crafted, stone piers supporting the 1902 through plate girder. The wood guard rails, metal tracks and wood cross ties remain in fairly good condition on the bridge, as well as to both sides of the bridge, although they are beginning to dissipate due to lack of maintenance. The railroad abandoned the line in the 1980s with the city acquiring title to track, including the bridge. Although currently not in use, the city has discussed incorporating the bridge and track into a walking trail system.

The bridge is located in northeast Ardmore in an area of sparse historic and modern development. Along the immediate east side of the bridge on both the north and south sides, there is a scattering of houses. To the direct west, the area is void of visible construction but heavily treed. Now abandoned, the bridge is on the original CO&G tracks which entered Ardmore on the northeast side of town. The bridge was the point at which the CO&G line crossed the Santa Fe tracks. While G Street did not originally extend north of the railroad tracks, by 1909 the bridge was modified to allow continuation of the street which now ends about two blocks to the north. Beginning roughly at the trestle bridge, the CO&G line made a sharp curve before extending south into downtown Ardmore. From a point just west of the bridge though to the center of town, the line paralleled the predominately north-south line of the Sante Fe, the rail line responsible for Ardmore's conception in the late 1880s. The Santa Fe line remains in operation to the present time, now as part of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) system. Just past Main Street, the CO&G track angled southwest away from the Sante Fe tracks and departed Ardmore on the southwest side of town. By December 1903, the northeast portion of the CO&G road through Ardmore, including the viaduct, was shared by the Arkansas and Choctaw Railway (A&C) line. The two roads split at Fifth Avenue NE with the A&C taking a more direct western route through Ardmore. From an aerial perspective, it is at about this point that the CO&G and A&C lines now fade from view. The CO&G line still appears on the USGS Quadrangle map but the A&C line is not included.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 10

Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf Railroad Viaduct
name of property
Carter County, Oklahoma
county and state

=====

DESCRIPTION

The deck of the bridge measures 254 feet long. Although not in use for some time, the wood guard rails, metal tracks and wood cross ties remain in place across the bridge. The bridge has two plate girder spans, the longer one over the railroad tracks and a smaller one over the city street. Supporting the bridge are three sections of wood trestles and, under the original plate girder span, two massive masonry piers. The piers are double-width, constructed to hold two parallel tracks. The grass- and tree-covered embankments, created in 1913 on either side of the bridge, rise steeply for quite a distance.

The 1902 plate girder section spans a forty foot swath over the Sante Fe railroad track in place prior to construction of the viaduct. (Photo #2 and #4) A metal plaque on a section of bridge reads "1902/American Bridge/Company." The metal section rests on two massive, masonry piers. At the base, the large piers are ten feet wide and forty-five feet long. The large, rusticated, stone blocks of the piers are laid in a coursed ashlar pattern. (Photo #5) The plate girder span is located towards the far north side of the piers, apparently in allowance for a second bridge for the A&C line which was never erected, and basically consists of two equal-length, plate steel, sidewalls riveted together. The outside ends of the girder has rounded edges. Notably, this section of the bridge is a through plate girder with the side walls extending above the bridge deck; this contrasts with the sides of the later plate girder section which extend below the deck. The two sides of the girder are connected by metal beams. The beams are evenly spaced along the span with wood cross ties immediately adjacent on both sides of each one. Beneath the tracks, small, crossed, metal supports extend from each of the beams. (Photo #7)

The 1909 plate girder section of the bridge extends just twenty-five feet over the black-topped city road. (Photo #1 and #3) A metal plaque located on the outside of the south plate girder reads "Built by/The Pennsylvania/Steel Co./Steelton PA./1909." The shorter span rests on a carefully stacked pile of wood beams atop a double set of wood bents located immediately adjacent to the concrete curb of the road. The double bents on both sides of the span are connected and further strengthened by boards of two different sizes riveted in a double Z pattern on each side. With the riveted girders extending below the bridge deck, the wood cross ties of the track extend over the edge. (Photo #8) The underside of the plate girder is evenly divided into small areas by metal bracing, criss-crossed with metal supports riveted in place.

Between the two plate girder spans is a sixty-five foot trestle area containing five sets of wood piers, or bents. Each set of bents consists of five, vertical, wood poles connected by an upper and lower sway brace, a diagonal board riveted in place. Between the two diagonals boards on each side, is a horizontal wood board, also riveted in place. Located in the center of the bridge and standing on relatively flat ground, these bents are identical in height. On the outer sides, at mid-level, a horizontal board connects each set of bents together.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 11

Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf Railroad Viaduct

name of property

Carter County, Oklahoma

county and state

=====

To the outside edges of the bridge are smaller sections of wood trestles. The bents vary in height according to changes in the embankment. The bents on both sides are connected in a similar pattern as the center section. There are two bents on the east side and three on the west. The approaches to the bridge are marked by wood retaining walls.

ALTERATIONS

The bridge has not been significantly altered since 1913. During the years the bridge was in service, it was maintained by the railroad, which likely included periodic replacement of parts due to normal wear and tear. This was necessary and does not diminish the historic quality of the structure. Since the railroad abandoned the bridge in the 1980s, it has begun to deteriorate but, overall, retains its integrity of location, design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and association. Overall, the bridge ably conveys its historic significance as a notable rail-related resource in Ardmore.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 12

Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf Railroad Viaduct
name of property
Carter County, Oklahoma
county and state

SUMMARY

The Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf Railroad (CO&G) Viaduct in Ardmore, Carter County, Oklahoma, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A as a critical link in the development of rail transportation in Ardmore in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The railroad was the dominant means of mass transportation during this period and the expansion of rail services in Ardmore as represented by the CO&G was crucial to the town's continued overall development. The CO&G viaduct is the best tangible resource associated with the CO&G in Ardmore. Erected in 1901-1902, the bridge was modified in 1909 to allow G Street Northeast to continue past the CO&G track. Four years later, the expansive trestle work on the east side of the bridge and a small portion on the west were filled to make the viaduct stronger and reduce maintenance work. The bridge is also historically noteworthy as the only extant, major, pre-1915, rail-related resource in Ardmore. A horrific explosion at the Santa Fe yards in 1915 caused all buildings associated with the railroads to be rebuilt; thus, losing their connection with Ardmore's early rail history.

Due to the nature of the resource, both of its modifications are included within the period of significance. Adjustments to the roadbed were not an uncommon occurrence, particularly during the initial years of usage. The changes were made to ensure the security of the loads, as well as the safety of persons on the trains and nearby community residents. The period of significance does not extend past 1913 because, although the bridge remained in use for more than seven decades, no further significant changes were made.

According to the railroad records, the official bridge number was C-1156. Because this number would have meant little to the general public, it was determined a more appropriate name for the resource was the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railroad Viaduct. Although the line, and therefore the bridge, became a subsidiary of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific shortly after completion, the CO&G name was used on Sanborn Fire Insurance maps until 1913.

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Like numerous towns in Oklahoma, Ardmore came into existence as a result of railroad expansion in the late nineteenth century. In 1884, two subsidiaries of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company began building rail lines in Indian and Oklahoma territories. By 1887, the companies were joining their lines to form a north-south line across the Twin Territories with stations scattered along the line. One of these stations, located between the Arbuckle Mountains on the north and the Red River Valley on the south in Pickens County, Indian Territory, was called Ardmore after a railroad official's hometown of Ardmore, Pennsylvania. Under the name Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe (Santa Fe), trains began their regular runs along the line in late July 1887 and by October of that year, a post office had been formally established at the Ardmore station. The presence of the railroad continued to be a major

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf Railroad Viaduct
name of property
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factor in the economic development and well-being of Ardmore for many years.¹

The town of Ardmore quickly began to take shape with Main Street being laid out in July 1887. Rapidly becoming a center for the surrounding agricultural community, Ardmore experienced few growing pains. Located in the Chickasaw Nation of Indian Territory, individual ownership of the land was restricted, even within the city limits. However, Euro-Americans flocked to the area, attracted by the rich farmland and abundant grasslands. In addition to some sharecropping, settlers also leased land from the Chickasaw Nation. One of the primary crops raised in the area was cotton. As such, Ardmore soon gained standing as the largest inland cotton market in the world. From the late 1880s through the first couple of decades of the twentieth century, cotton was a major economic force within the community. Following the collapse of the cotton market in the 1920s, agriculture still remained important to the local economy; however, other cash and livestock crops replaced King Cotton.²

Ardmore also benefitted from another primary Oklahoma industry, oil. In 1905, oil wells were drilled northwest of town. Seven years later, the Healdton Oil Field was discovered in the western part of Carter County. This large field is credited with helping "...Oklahoma achieve national oil leadership..." by 1920. Reportedly, the Healdton wells provided fifty percent of all oil used by the Allied powers during World War I. It is noteworthy that it was during the same decade as the Healdton discovery that Ardmore experienced its greatest population boom of the twentieth century. According to the 1910 census, the community's population was 8,618. By 1920, Ardmore's population had risen to 14,181, an increase of over 5,500 residents. The next largest increase occurred in the 1950s when Ardmore's population went from 17,890 in 1950 to 21,225 by 1960, a change of 3,335 persons.³

¹Mac McGalliard, "Pioneer Spirit: The Centennial History of Ardmore," The Chronicles of Oklahoma 65 (Spring 1987), 76. See also Arrell Morgan Gibson, Oklahoma: A History of Five Centuries 2nd Ed. (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 160.

²The History of Carter County (Fort Worth, Texas: University Supply and Equipment Company, 1957), n.p. See also McGalliard, "Pioneer Spirit," 77; Oklahoma Historic Preservation Survey, "Final Survey Report: Architectural/Historic Reconnaissance Level Survey of Certain Parts of the City of Ardmore," (Available at the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: 1993), 93; and, John Dexter, "Ardmore Builds and Grows" (Available in the "Ardmore" Vertical File at the Oklahoma Historical Society Research Library, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: 4 July 1954), n.p.

³Gibson, Oklahoma, 271. See also O.H.P.S., "Final Survey Report," 102 and McGalliard, "Pioneer Spirit," 84.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

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Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf Railroad Viaduct
name of property
Carter County, Oklahoma
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In the mid 1920s, United States Highway 77 was constructed from Kansas through to Texas. Importantly, this north-south route linked Oklahoma City and Dallas-Ft. Worth, Texas with Ardmore located at the mid-way point. This was followed by the completion of the east-west United States Highway 70 through Ardmore. Auspiciously located on two major thoroughfares as automobile travel replaced rail transportation as the dominant means of passenger travel, Ardmore was set to benefit from this significant economic development.⁴

In addition to being an economic center within south central Oklahoma, Ardmore throughout its history has also been a political mainstay. Within three years of the founding of the town, Ardmore was named one of three federal court towns for Indian Territory. At that time, the federal court system in Indian Territory had jurisdiction over all criminal cases except those which carried a sentence of hard labor or death and civil cases if at least one hundred dollars and one U.S. citizen was involved. Increasing the importance of the federal court system, the Curtis Act of 1898 abolished tribal courts and declared Indian law unenforceable in federal court. With the advent of statehood for the Twin Territories in 1907, the United States District Courts replaced the Territorial District Courts but Ardmore remained a federal court town. Statehood also resulted in the naming of Ardmore as county seat of the newly designated Carter County.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

At the turn of the century, the railroad was the dominant means of transportation for people, as well as goods and supplies. Thus, it was also a major indicator of the ability of a community to thrive. Throughout Oklahoma, before and after statehood, construction of railroads was rampant and towns boomed or busted in direct response to the location of the new lines. If the community was in close proximity to the tracks, it was assured some degree of success, at least until the railroad was surpassed by the automobile in the 1920s. If the town was not in the path of the railroad, community members often literally put their buildings on wheels and relocated to a site in proximity to the railroad. Ardmore, like many Oklahoma towns, was initiated by the railroad and enjoyed a notable prosperity for years due to its prominent location on the Santa Fe line. However, Ardmoreites were aware that a second, and even third, line would raise Ardmore's standing as an important center within Indian and Oklahoma territories, as well as provide connections to major centers outside of the Twin Territories.

By late October 1900, the town was abuzz with railroad news. In a conference between "...representative citizens of Ardmore..." and officials of the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf (CO&G) Railway Company at the office of Ledbetter and Bledsoe, an offer was made to make Ardmore the terminus of the road then being constructed by the CO&G

⁴The Daily Ardmoreite, (Ardmore, Oklahoma), 28 July 19??, (Available in the "Ardmore" Vertical Files, Research Library, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma).

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

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Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf Railroad Viaduct
name of property
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“...from a point near South McAlester.” In return for the road, the city had to guarantee land for the right-of-way and depot grounds. The benefits of the line included direct communication with Memphis and St. Louis; reduction in freight rates due to competition; “...command of a fertile section for jobbing trade...;” and, direct connections with the coal and lumber regions of the Choctaw Nation and Arkansas. The last benefit was touted as likely providing “...a reduction of about 50 per cent in the price of coal and of about 33 1/3 per cent in the price of lumber.” Businessmen in the town expressed the general view that raising the funds necessary to guarantee the payment for the right-of-way and depot grounds would be “...no trouble.”⁵

Within three days, a corp of CO&G surveyors, as well as the railroad’s general solicitor, were in Ardmore to run lines and investigate “...conditions with a view to locating the right-of-way and depot grounds for the proposed line...”. With rail officials expressing “...certainty that the line will be built...,” the only question seemed to be if Ardmore would secure the line. It was publically acknowledged that the railroad would accept inducements offered by other towns if Ardmore refused to meet the terms of the proposition. The local newspaper urged that “The proposition should be accepted as speedily as possible in order to shut out possible rivals for the new road.”⁶

Just days after the CO&G representatives presented the proposition to community leaders, officials from the Santa Fe Railway also arrived in town. While reticent about their exact doings, rumors flew about the town that the object of their visit was “...in regard to extending the dimensions of the freight depot and the erection of a new brick passenger depot.” Both proposals were deemed “...essential requisites...” for Ardmore. Also within a week of the CO&G’s proposal, the town received word that the president of the Arkansas and Choctaw (A&C) Railway Company was hard at work securing the financing for construction of a line from southeast Arkansas through the Choctaw and Chickasha nations to the town of Comanche via Ardmore. It was believed that “The building of this road would bring Ardmore’s jobbing trade into direct connection with some of the finest trade territory in the Chickasaw Nation.”⁷

Obviously believing the citizens of Ardmore would come through on the deal, the CO&G made an “authoritative statement” in early November 1900 that work on 175 miles of extensions would begin shortly after the new year. The majority of this work, 120 miles, would be on the line from Hartshorne to Ardmore, Indian Territory. Work was set to commence “...as soon as preliminary legal matters (were) arranged” and was expected to be “...pushed vigorously...” so that the line would be complete to Ardmore by early spring, 1901. Although the city had not provided a definitive

⁵Ibid., 28 October 1900.

⁶Ibid., 31 October 1900.

⁷Ibid., 30 October 1900 and 1 November 1900.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

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Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf Railroad Viaduct
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answer, the newspaper reported in mid-November that “Construction work (was) expected to begin on the Ardmore branch of the CO&G road by December 1.” With work to commence on both ends of the line simultaneously, pressure to respond positively to the railroad’s proposition began to mount in Ardmore.⁸

Aware that the by-passing of the town by the CO&G would “...do incalculable injury to Ardmore’s business interests,” work on securing the estimates for purchase of lands in the right-of-way got seriously underway around December 1, 1900. On that day, and based on the advise of J. W. Shartel of Oklahoma City, the CO&G’s general solicitor, a committee of ten was formed to ascertain the names of all property owners along the proposed line, as well as determine the price for which all the property needed by the railroad could be bought. Following this, “...steps will be taken for raising the money necessary to close the deals and secure the road.” Property owners along the proposed right-of-way were implored to “...exhibit sufficient public spirit to fix a fair and reasonable valuation on it and not attempt to speculate on the town’s necessity.” Additionally, shortly after the committee was formed, the newspaper was careful to point out that Congressional acts authorizing the building of railroads in Indian Territory allowed for the appointment of appraisers to assess the value of land in the right-of-way both in and out of towns if agreement on the price could not be reached. Additionally, the law also allowed railroads to condemn land and acquire it for rail purposes, irregardless of the owner’s consent or lack thereof.⁹

Working rapidly, within days, the committee of ten decided that the cost of acquiring all the property necessary for the line through Ardmore would cost about \$50,000. Because this sum was based on figures obtained by the committee for property north of Main, it was determined that the committee work would continue for properties on the south side of Main and that a community meeting would be held the following week. The purpose of the meeting was to decide on the CO&G’s proposition. The prevailing motions from the meeting, however, resulted in the formation of two new committees. One committee was to determine how much money could be raised to purchase the necessary land and the other committee was to ascertain the actual cost of the right-of-way.¹⁰

Days before the initial January 1, 1901, deadline, the fundraising committee was disconcertingly short of funds. Near the end of their subsequent twenty-eight day grace period, the committee still lacked \$6,700 of their goal. Although successfully raising an additional \$475, the committee decided at that time to approach the railroad with a counteroffer of \$30,000 cash to purchase the right-of-way. Meeting with the “railroad people,” members of the right-

⁸Ibid., 9 November 1900 and 19 November 1900.

⁹Ibid., 2 - 4 December 1900.

¹⁰Ibid., 5 - 16 December 1900.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 17

Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf Railroad Viaduct
name of property
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of-way committee examined the proposed route “minutely” to ascertain if there was any way to lower the cost. Much hinged on a second afternoon meeting, when a decision would be made if

Ardmore (was) to be a city with her waterworks, street cars, factories, machine shops, more railroads, and innumerable other things that is attracted by a busy, bustling city, or whether she will retrograde into the prairie like shape she was when the Santa Fe came along, with owls and bats inhabiting our stores and offices, and grass and weeds growing in our streets, rabbits scampering here and there, with a mail hook on a post at the depot for the passenger train of the Santa Fe to take the mail sack as she passes by going forty miles an hour.”¹¹

With the CO&G agreeing to chip in \$5,000, quickly amended to \$7,000, and an additional twenty-four hour grace period, a group of local citizens banded together to pass a resolution cementing the deal if “...at least sixty solvent property owners signed an agreement to become responsible for the right-of-way, after receiving the \$7,000 from the railroad.” Final assurances for the road came with the deal that the citizens of Ardmore put their \$28,000 in subscriptions towards purchase of the right-of-way; the railroad furnish an additional \$7,000 for the same purpose; and, if the cost of the land exceeded the combined \$35,000, the railroad would share the excess equally with the citizens of Ardmore. “Fifteen good and reliable citizens” agreed to be responsible to the railroad for any excess funds, with the sixty property owners responsible to the fifteen.¹²

Moving rapidly, the railroad signed a contract with Bernard Corrigan of Kansas City, P. Dowling of St. Louis and G.M. Garvey of Memphis for construction of the entire Hartshorne-Ardmore line. Construction headquarters were to be located at South McAlester, the heart of the coal mining region in Indian Territory. Notably, the roadbed was “...to be the best in the southwest in order to carry the heaviest possible coal trains.” It was anticipated that construction of the road would take 1500 men working for six months. By the second week of February 1901, work was underway on securing the property rights to the right-of-way. Subcontracts for grading were let in mid-February with W. A. Shippey¹³ securing miles 101 to 117, the Ardmore section. Notably, at that time, contracts had not been let for the masonry bridges or track laying. Near the end of February, contractors, surveyors and teamsters were gathering in

¹¹Ibid., 26 - 30 December 1900, 25 January 1901 and 28 January 1901.

¹²Ibid., 28 - 29 January 1901.

¹³Although initially also appearing as “Shipley,” “Shippey” was the dominant spelling of the subcontractors name in the newspaper.

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Hartshorne, as well as other points along the line, ready to start work. Although apparently still in Memphis through early March 1901, it was estimated that the subcontractor on the Ardmore section would have a thousand men in his employ, a significant boom for local merchants as "Everybody knows that railroad men spend their money. They hold none back."¹⁴

Far below expectations, Shippey and his crew of eighty-five men arrived in Ardmore by March 11, 1901. The crew was composed of African-American men, also apparently from the Memphis area. Shippey noted that he expected no additional men as his team had considerable experience, many having worked with him for thirteen years. Still waiting on the teams, implements and other necessities, Shippey planned to establish his camp about five miles from Ardmore on the right-of-way. Arriving within a day of Shippey and his men, "The teams, scrapers, mules and other paraphernalia..." were off-loaded in Ardmore with the mules being taken to a wagon yard on east Main Street to recuperate for several days after their long confinement in rail cars.¹⁵

By March 22, 1901, dirt was flying all along the CO&G line from Haileyville to Ardmore. Within Ardmore, Shippey's subcontractor, G.W. Ward had fifteen teams busy grading the three miles of road opposite the old Business college. Shippey, working near Durwood, reportedly had almost 100 teams working with the job going like "...clock work." Additional subcontractors were also arriving almost daily. H.F. Watkins arrived in Ardmore from Memphis on March 23, 1901, with "...about forty negro men, women and children, two car loads of stock and five cars of wagons, scrapers and other tools necessary for grading." Two days later, F.M. Snider had secured a subcontract for a portion of the road east of Ardmore and was seeking "...a number of men and teams to work on the same." The main contractors, Messrs. Corrigan, Garvey and Dawling were "...well pleased with the rapidity and method" of the work. Additionally, the subcontract for track laying and trestlework had been let to Patterson, Collier and Company of Chicago. The twenty-one iron bridges and spans on the line were to be built by the CO&G. Masonry work was contracted with four companies, three from Kansas City and one Chicago firm. Matt and Roberts secured ten miles; Pringle and Flowres, also contracted for ten miles; Robert Forrester, twenty miles; and, Patterson, Collier and Company, forty-eight miles.¹⁶

With a twenty-eight foot fill between the hill by Rudisill's college and the Santa Fe track, Shippey moved his big grader into Ardmore in mid-April 1901. With twelve mules harnessed to the grader, eight to pull and four pushing,

¹⁴Ibid., 30 January 1901 - 5 March 1901 and 23 April 1901.

¹⁵Ibid., 11 March 1901 - 13 March 1901.

¹⁶Ibid., 22 March 1901 - 26 March 1901.

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the dump carts could be filled in as little as thirteen seconds. Shortly after this, the railroad's Chief Assistant Engineer, E.J. Beard, arrived in Ardmore to "...hurry up the contractors (so) that the road may be pushed to completion." Beard indicated only about 600 teams were then at work on the line. The railroad had hopes to double the number of teams as soon as possible. Additionally, Beard told local reporters that the bridge builders were working on the other end of the line "...but would soon commence at this end also."¹⁷

Mid-May 1901 brought admonishments in the local newspaper to the railroad subscribers to pay their promised monies. Having secured only \$20,000 of the subscribed \$28,000, the right-of-way purchasing committee was running low on funds. The \$7,000 promised by the railroad was unattainable until the full \$28,000 had been expended. At the same time, Shartel was in Ardmore with condemnation papers in hand for those property owners who failed to come to terms with the purchasing committee. At the end of the month, the Santa Fe made the announcement that they would erect a new brick passenger depot in Ardmore. Notably, the depot was to be used by both the Santa Fe and CO&G. Additionally, during this same period, news that the A&C Railroad would be sharing the CO&G's right-of-way from Durwood through Ardmore raised some local excitement.¹⁸

With work continuing on the CO&G line within the city limits, in mid-July 1901, the local contracting firm of Galt and Erickson received the contract for construction of stone culverts throughout Ardmore. Employing forty to fifty men, the stone was to be hauled from a quarry five miles from town. In late July 1901, the CO&G's bridge contractors, H.C. Ludsley and H.M. Walker of Kansas City, arrived in Ardmore to meet with a "...prominent Ardmore contractor" for discussion about "One of the biggest pieces of bridge work on the new road..." the bridge over the Santa Fe line. Receiving the masonry contract less than two weeks later, the firm of Galt and Erickson anticipated work would begin on the stone piers supporting the CO&G's iron bridge over the Santa Fe tracks in two subsequent weeks. The piers were to be over twenty-six feet high and cost nearly \$6,000. Presumably the stone would be procured at the same quarry as used previously by the firm in constructing the line's culverts.¹⁹

In late September 1901, the last piece of the right-of-way was acquired from J.E. Bowles in exchange for \$3,200 and the old Baptist Signal building. Before steel could be laid, however, all the buildings remaining on the lots would have to be moved and Shippey return to Ardmore to finish the grading throughout the city. At that time, about twenty-five miles of roadbed had been laid on the east end of the line with rolling stock already running on it. Shortly

¹⁷Ibid., 16 April 1901 and 24 April 1901.

¹⁸Ibid., 16 May 1901 - 16 July 1901.

¹⁹Ibid., 12 July 1901 and 13 August 1901.

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after this, the newspaper announced that Galt and Erickson, having "...finished the heavy brick arch composing the conduit at the outlet of Paradise alley for the Choctaw railway company," were "...pushing the preparatory work for the erection of two heavy masonry piers at the viaduct where the Choctaw road crosses the Santa Fe in the north part of town." With "...large forces of hands at work..." all along the line, anticipation ran high that the line would be complete by January 1, 1902; however, within weeks, the completion date was set back to March 1.²⁰

By late November 1901, completion of the bridge over the Santa Fe tracks was predicted within sixty days. By that time, it was anticipated that the trackage through the town would also be in place. At the first of December 1901, bridge contractor Sullivan, who had the contract for bridges along the fifteen mile stretch east of Ardmore shared by the CO&G and A&C, was hard at work driving piles. With only one pile driver at work at that time, Sullivan planned to bring two more pile drivers onto the job to push the work to completion. The trestle bridge at the Santa Fe crossing, measuring nearly 1050 feet long, was to have over 400 piles. Each pile required about sixty strokes by the two-and-a-half ton hammer to get them deep enough into the ground so obviously much work remained to be accomplished.²¹

Just after Christmas 1901, six carloads of bridge material arrived in Ardmore. The majority of the material was piles for the big CO&G viaduct. A steam and a horse pile driver were expected in town before the New Year with work to be pushed to allow track layers to proceed seamlessly laying track to the east of town. With track laying proceeding from the east, it was anticipated that the two sides would meet on the west side of the Washita River. Taking a few more days than hoped, "The big steam pile driver as well as the horse pile driver..." arrived in Ardmore on January 3, 1902.²²

Within two weeks, about half of the total 117 mile line had been laid; however, railroad officials were pessimistic about the likelihood of the road being completed by March 1, 1902. Two sections of the road, one fifteen miles east of Ardmore and another near Wapanucka, were causing some delays. Nonetheless, the connection spur from the Santa Fe to the CO&G roadbed was nearing completion. This accomplishment materially aided the construction effort in Ardmore as ties and rails could then be delivered by train car to exactly where they were needed. In early February 1902, the stone piers at the viaduct were about three-fourths done. The trestle work was also proceeding with the builder, T.E. Luttgerding, forecasting completion of the trestle by the end of the week. With some parts of

²⁰Ibid., 22 September 1901, 2 October 1901, 11 October 1901 and 24 October 1901.

²¹Ibid., 26 November 1901 and 2 December 1901.

²²Ibid., 26 December 1901, 29 December 1901 and 3 January 1902.

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the trestle reaching as high as thirty-five feet, it was estimated over 700,000 feet of timber would be used in the bridge.²³

At the end of February 1902, track laying began in earnest on the west end of the line. In mid-March 1902, the Choctaw engine crossed the viaduct over the Santa Fe tracks to deliver hands, cross ties and rails to the track's stopping point. The first train across the bridge was described as a "...pretty sight..." by an appreciative audience. The hands riding the train enjoyed the music of "The cracking and settling of the new timbers...as they looked down below." There were no doubts about the strength of the bridge as "...the workmanship on it (was) first-class..." and the 758,000 feet of timber was the best," Southern Texas long-leaf pine. Riding the train a few days later, a local reporter noted that "As we glided over the bridge and the Santa Fe road, everything was as smooth and even as it could be."²⁴

Despite continued predictions, the track for the CO&G road was not fully laid until the end of May 1902. Train service was then postponed due to rainy weather which created "...unsatisfactory condition of the track," including the washing out of two bridges. The washout of the Washita River bridge in particular delayed the opening of the line for more than a month; however "...considerable other work to be done before the road will be ready for trains to run with safety..." remained to be done in mid-June 1902. Work was further slowed about a week later due to a strike of the track layers due to non-payment of their wages. Finally, on July 8, 1902 and running an hour late, "The first regular Choctaw train this side of Tishomingo arrived (in Ardmore) with freight and passengers."²⁵

Shortly before completion of the line, rumors began floating that the CO&G would become a subsidiary of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific (Rock Island) Railroad Company. Due to the variety of legal hurdles inherent in early twentieth century railroad matters, the CO&G finally signed a 999 year lease with the Rock Island on March 24, 1904. Further complicating rail matters in Ardmore, in 1902 the A&C amended their charter and changed their name to Saint Louis, San Francisco and New Orleans Railroad Company. Five years later, the Saint Louis, San Francisco and New Orleans Railroad Company was sold to the Saint Louis and San Francisco (Frisco) Railroad Company. The Frisco was granted the right to joint use of the tracks between the Frisco Junction and Ardmore, including the trestle bridge, in November 1913. In 1938, the Rock Island leased the 13.9 miles from the Frisco Junction to Ardmore,

²³Ibid., 12 January 1902, 21 January 1902 and 7 February 1902.

²⁴Ibid., 26 February 1902, 13 March 1902 and 16 March 1902.

²⁵Ibid., 29 May 1902 - 9 July 1902.

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including the viaduct, to the Frisco, who then purchased the same on March 6, 1940.²⁶

In early 1909, the Rock Island began making improvements on the line between Haileyville and Ardmore. The work was done in anticipation of an extension west to Waurika and then on to Byers. With a connection to Byers, it was expected "...all passenger traffic originating in north Texas and in a goodly portion of the (Oklahoma) Panhandle, besides western Oklahoma, that is destined for St. Louis or Memphis, will be sent over the line from Waurika to Haileyville." Representing a considerable savings by cutting off almost a hundred miles of the existing system which routed through El Reno, it was believed that once the Byers-Haileyville thoroughfare was complete, the "...Ardmore line (would) no longer be a branch but be a portion of the main line."²⁷

While not meriting specific mention in the local newspaper, the addition of the plate girder span over G Street Northeast to the CO&G viaduct was apparently part of the Rock's 1909 improvements as indicated on the metal plaque on that section of the bridge. Work on bridges of the CO&G line was underway by late February 1909, largely related to the potential expansion of the line discussed above. This included both strengthening existing bridges and building some new. By late July 1909, residents in northeast Ardmore were petitioning the city council for crossings over the tracks, specifically at Sixth and Seventh avenues. This was an on-going issue for the city which had previously passed an ordinance requiring the railroad to install "...suitable crossings at the various points where the company's lines cross the city's streets." In mid-August 1909, the newspaper noted "The construction gang of the Rock Island-Frisco has been busy this week putting in crossing in northeast Ardmore." This likely included the work on the trestle bridge but unfortunately, the local paper is missing the issues for the next two weeks and no further mention is made of the project through 1909.²⁸

In 1913, another major project was undertaken at the bridge. Originally, the bridge's trestle work extended past I Street Northeast, as well as about five additional sets of bents to the west. The railroad decided to replace the numerous wood bents with a thirty-foot embankment. The project was likely designed to reinforce the bridge by providing a more stable base. Additionally, the fill would require substantially less maintenance work than the wood bents. An estimated 51,000 cubic yards of dirt was needed to fill the surplus forty-nine panels on the east side of G Street Northeast. An additional 3,000 cubic yards of dirt was allocated for filling four panels on the west side of the

²⁶George Preston, The Railroads of Oklahoma, (Boston, MA: Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, 1943), 43-44 and 66-69.

²⁷The Daily Ardmoreite, 13 February 1909.

²⁸Ibid., 10 October 1908, 19 February 1909, 24 July 1909 and 21 August 1909.

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bridge. In order to accomplish the project, the city passed Ordinance No. 145 which vacated Ninth Avenue Northeast from I to G streets northeast. The project also unexpectedly necessitated the railroad extend the right-of-way and purchase several properties in the area. After initiating the work, the adjacent property owners filed suit against the railroad due to overlap of the fill onto their property. The matter was settled with typical railroad efficiency.²⁹

Between 1901 and 1913, the CO&G trestle bridge evolved into a 254 foot viaduct, which it remains today. The bridge was a critical link in the CO&G's line, allowing CO&G, and subsequently Frisco, trains to have unrestricted passage over the Santa Fe's track while not hindering the crossing of street-level traffic and, therefore, development of this section of Ardmore. The CO&G line was historically significant in Ardmore's development of transportation facilities as the town's first east-west line. As evident by the efforts of the townspeople to secure the CO&G line, an east-west connection was an absolute necessity to not only lower the cost of goods transported into and away from Ardmore but also cement the town's position as an important trade center in the region.

The viaduct is historically significant as the best extant representative resource associated with the CO&G in Ardmore. The Union Station, constructed in 1902 for use by the CO&G, A&C and Santa Fe, was destroyed in 1915 when a tank car filled with gasoline exploded in the yards of the Santa Fe. At the heart of the explosion, the Santa Freight depot was decimated. Located just to the northwest of the Union Station, the CO&G's freight depot was also rebuilt as a result of the 1915 explosion. As such, the viaduct is the only remaining, significant, rail-related, pre-1915 resource in Ardmore.³⁰

²⁹“Purchase of Property for Bridge #C-1156,” File 9812, Box 244, Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad Collection, (Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma).

³⁰27 September 1915. See also Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Ardmore, Oklahoma, 1903, 1907, 1913 and 1918.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property includes the bridge and approaches with boundaries forming a rectangle fifty feet wide and 300 hundred feet long centered on the CO&G viaduct, located at the intersection of G Street Northeast and the abandoned roadbed of the Saint Louis-San Francisco Railroad, Ardmore, Carter County, Oklahoma.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries include the property historically associated with the bridge.