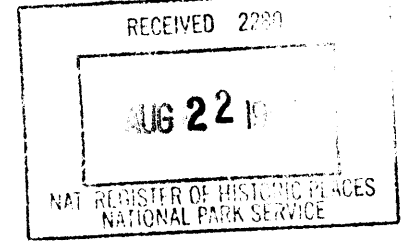


115a

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Barnsdall Main Street Well Site

other names/site number Indian Territory Illuminating Oil Company Well #20

=====

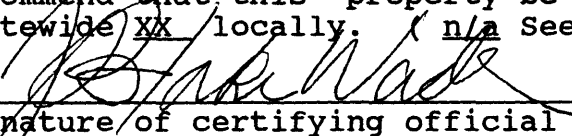
2. Location

=====

street & number 28 feet w. of jct SH 11 and Main St. not for publication N/A  
city or town Barnsdall vicinity N/A  
state Oklahoma code OK county Osage code 111  
zip code 74002

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

  
Signature of certifying official

1 August 1997  
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

10/1/97  
Date of Action

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>1</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>2</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) Energy-Related Properties in NE Oklahoma

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: EXTRACTION Sub: Extractive facility

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: NOT IN USE Sub: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Well Site

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

roof N/A

walls N/A

other Pumping Unit: 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)

Industry  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance 1914-1930  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates 1914  
\_\_\_\_\_



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

Acreage of Property <1

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>14</u>	<u>753660</u>	<u>4049790</u>	3	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
2	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	4	<u>    </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 Neysa Clark, Researcher, edited by Dianna Everett  
organization Okla. Historic Pres. Survey, OSU date February 5, 1997  
street & number 501 Life Science West telephone 405/744-5679  
city or town Stillwater state OK zip code 74078-0611

=====  
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 City of Barnsdall  
street & number 102 S. 5th telephone (918) 847-2980  
city or town Barnsdall state OK zip code 74002



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 9 Barnsdall Main Street Well Site  
Osage County, Oklahoma  
Energy-Related Properties in NE Oklahoma

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Summary:

The Barnsdall Main Street Well Site was opened in 1914 on the northwest side of Barnsdall, Oklahoma, just west of the intersection of Main Street and 9th Street, now State Highway 11, in the watershed of Bird Creek. Three blocks west, Main Street abruptly ends at Red Eagle Hill. The hill's steep slope contributes to the deteriorated condition of the narrow, concrete street. Adjacent residential buildings are a mix of various styles, ages, and conditions although, in general, this is an older residential neighborhood. Immediately to the east of the well site is the central business district, where Main Street widens, allowing for angle parking along each side and for the flow of state highway traffic.

After 1962 but exact date unknown, an original small "flathead" pumping unit was replaced with the current model and the site was fenced.<sup>1</sup> This pumping unit, mounted on a 5' 10" x 12', 4-inch metal skid, is not currently working, although the prime mover, gears, and well-head connections and rods appear to be intact. Public access to the equipment well is blocked by a 4-foot-high, 8' 9" x 16' chain-link fence with a small gate on the northeast corner. Although the integrity of the site is diminished by removal of the standard pumping equipment that was associated with oil wells prior to the 1940s, the actual geographic location and setting of the site remain the same and are important elements in defining the site's significance. Because of its location in the center of Barnsdall's Main street, this well is the only publicly accessible historic well site in the Barnsdall oil field.

Description:

The Barnsdall Main Street Well Site, located on the northwest side of Barnsdall, Oklahoma, just west of the intersection of Main Street and 9th Street, now State Highway 11, is directly in the middle of the Main Street between Lot 1 of Block 11 and Lot 13 of Block 10 in the NE 1/4, NW 1/4, Sec. 18, T24N, R11E. On the west side of the well, two blocks from the base of Red Eagle Hill, the steep slope of the terrain contributes to the deteriorated condition of the narrow, concrete street. Adjacent houses are a mix of various styles, ages, and conditions although, in general, this is an older residential neighborhood. Immediately to the east of the well site is the central business district where Main Street widens, allowing for angle parking along each side and for the flow of state highway traffic through town.

The site represents oil industry development in that part of the Osage Nation lying in the Bird Creek Basin. Bird Creek flows southeastward from northwest of Pawhuska, the central portion of Osage County, to the Arkansas River near Fort Gibson. The rugged terrain drops abruptly with sharp sandstone outcroppings; dense stands of scrub oaks and thick undergrowth cover the nearby

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Section 7 Page 10 Barnsdall Main Street Well Site  
Osage County, Oklahoma  
Energy-Related Properties in NE Oklahoma

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hillsides. Agricultural operations exist along the narrow floodplain of Bird Creek but are limited by the area's topography. At the base of the steep inclines along Bird Creek are numerous abandoned limestone quarries.

The small town of Barnsdall is located fifteen miles southeast of Pawhuska in the three-quarter-mile-wide floodplain of Bird Creek. On the east side of town is Bird Creek; its channel, apparently straightened at an unknown date, cuts southward; on the west side are steep hills, including Red Eagle Hill.

After a number of wells were completed in and around Barnsdall in 1913-1914, well operators built a central power plant at a strategic position atop Red Eagle Hill. Using long lines of shackle rods, this central power pumped numerous wells, including the Barnsdall Main Street Well, in the Bigheart Field, later known as the West Barnsdall Field. By 1919, the town of Bigheart annexed the land at the base of Red Eagle Hill and the town built around the well, leaving the rod shackle line in the middle of Main Street. After 1962, date unknown, the lines were removed, but grooves in the street are evidence of that time.

Today the well site is enclosed by a noncontributing, 1960s-era, 4-foot-high, 8' 9" x 16' chain-link fence, 10' 6" away from the curblineline of Main Street. The site is approximately 28' west of the intersection of Main Street and Highway 11 and is two blocks from the base of Red Eagle Hill. Over the small gate on the northeast corner is a small sign stating that this well is "The Worlds [sic] Only Main Street Oil Well/Completed March 16, 1914/Depth 1771 Ft. Still Active/Barnsdall, Okla. " On the southeast corner is a 4' x 4' large white metal sign with a large, blue, block style, "B" on the southeast corner advertising ". . . Dependable Products" of the old Barnsdall Oil Company (see photograph #1).

Because of its relatively recent age (1960s), the modern pumping unit is a noncontributing resource. It replaced an older, smaller "square-topped" model sometime after 1960. The newer unit is mounted on a 5'10" x 12', metal platform, or skid, resting on the concrete of Main Street. The skid is made of 4" steel beam. The front, or east end, of the platform is elevated on a six-inch steel pipe. The American Manufacturing Co. pumping unit's walking beam is approximately 8' long from its head to its square metal counterweight; including these parts, it is 11' from head to tail. The stroke is approximately 5'. East of its center, the beam rests on a bearing that sits atop a 4 1/2' high x 2 1/2' wide, triangular, steel sampson post. Toward the west end of the beam, a pitman arm connects the beam with the crank and the gear reducer. The working of this configuration forces the rear end of the beam to go up and down, thus causing the head of the beam to pump. The prime mover is a small "Century" electric motor located directly behind the gears and connected to the

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Barnsdall Main Street Well Site  
Osage County, Oklahoma  
Energy-Related Properties in NE Oklahoma

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crank by a belted wheel. The pumping unit is connected to the assembly of rod, rings, and clamps that still attach to the well's casing head (at ground level), although the unit is not presently pumping. Adjacent to the rod line are vertical two-inch pipes with gauges (see photograph #1). Attached to the front of the sampson post is a large, orange, metal sign announcing the name of a former lessee, "Welch Properties/Main Street No. 20/in Sec. 18 T24N R11E/Osage County." This is a shallow well of 1,771 feet, and at maximum production it would have produced eight to ten barrels a day.

The well casing head marks the well site, which is the contributing resource, the significant element in this configuration of oil field elements.

The site's integrity is only slightly compromised by the protective chain-link fence and by the replacement of the original 1920s-1930s pumping unit. It is important to realize that the existing pumping unit, in and of itself, simply marks the location of the historic well site. Pumping units are portable and expendable, and the original may not have lasted a half-century in working order. The well's casing head is the original and is the most important element illustrating the well's existence. It is also important to note that the location and setting, both important factors in assessing integrity, have little changed since the well's period of significance, 1914-1930. Because of its location in the center of Barnsdall's Main Street, this well is the only one of its era that has been preserved for public access.

ENDNOTES

1. "Barnsdall Statue Pumps Black Gold," photocopy of a U. P. I. article, by Mac Sebree, dateline Bartlesville, 17 February 1962, Vertical File Library, Oklahoma Historical Society. This article contains a photograph of the well, in which the pumping unit appears to be an underslung "Oklahoma Jack" unit. At that time, 1962, there was a small fence, made of pipe, surrounding the site.

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Section 8 Page 12 Barnsdall Main Street Well Site  
Osage County, Oklahoma  
Energy-Related Properties in NE Oklahoma

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Summary:

The Barnsdall Main Street Well Site, located at Barnsdall, Oklahoma, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the development of the petroleum industry in Barnsdall. The well was drilled in 1914 in the Bigheart oil field by the Indian Territory Illuminating Oil Company on the property of Chief Paul Red Eagle. The well was located west of the original townsite of Bigheart. Drilled in 1914, the well site is the only remaining site of its type in the town of Barnsdall. The well site retains the ability to convey the importance of petroleum exploration and production during that time in the town of Bigheart, later named Barnsdall, and in the Bird Creek Basin of the Osage Nation. The well site maintains its integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association that allows it to convey information about its former years as a producing well. Contextually, the well site relates to "Energy Development in Northeastern Oklahoma, 1889-1930." As a property type, the Barnsdall Main Street Well Site relates to Well Sites.

Historical/Industrial Significance:

The Barnsdall Main Street Well Site, located at Barnsdall, Oklahoma, is significant within the context "Energy Development in Northeastern Oklahoma, 1889-1930". Its existence reflects the frenzied oil-boom activity that occurred around Bigheart/Barnsdall, Oklahoma, in 1913 and 1914, during the era when "the Osage lease" was attracting much attention in petroleum circles.

Shortly before the turn of the century, H. B. Foster, an oil promoter, acquired a long-term drilling lease from the Osage Nation for a huge area of land that today exists as Osage County, Oklahoma. In 1901 Foster's nephew and heir, E. B. Foster, formed the Indian Territory Illuminating Oil Company. In 1905 I. T. I. O. drilled the first oil well in the Bigheart pool. Quickly, oil exploration extended south of Bigheart to Avant where the development of the Avant pool began in 1906.<sup>1</sup> By the end of 1906, 25 shallow wells had been drilled in the Bigheart pool; however, the major oil production in the Bigheart area did not occur until the 1913-1916 era when the East Barnsdall pool was developed east of Bird Creek.<sup>2</sup>

The slow development of oil production in the Osage Nation was partly due to the lack of technology for transporting oil out of the rugged creek bottom and partly due to the reluctance of the Department of Interior to allow the leasing of Native American lands. Adding to the dilemma was the federal government's lack of guidelines for determining how much the Osage Nation should be awarded for pipeline easements. Congress finally resolved the dilemma, and in 1905 the Prairie Oil and Gas Company laid a line that connected the Osage wells near Cleveland, Oklahoma Territory, to a trunk line in Kansas, opening the way for other pipeline companies.<sup>3</sup>

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Osage County, Oklahoma  
Energy-Related Properties in NE Oklahoma

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In addition, promoter I. T. I. O. had had trouble drilling on the Osage lease due to financial problems, and in 1903 the eastern portion of the property (including the environs of Barnsdall) had been divided into 348 "lots" that were subleased to a total of 75 drilling companies. The lots stretched along the present east side of Osage County from Kansas to the Arkansas River (to Tulsa), and 11.25 miles to the west (reaching just west of Red Eagle Hill, at Bigheart/Barnsdall). In this long, narrow strip, drilling began; by the end of 1904, 361 wells had been drilled on lots held by sublessees and by I. T. I. O. Near the town of Bigheart, a townsite developed by the Midland Valley Railroad, lay Lot 293, part of which is otherwise legally described as Sec. 18, T24N, R11E. Lot 293 was a strip of land measuring .5 mile north-south and 3.75 miles east-west and including part of the town, as well as land to the east and west of it.<sup>4</sup>

Lot 293 lay in the Bigheart (later, Barnsdall) Field. In its first years, production in this geographical area was slight, but a spurt of drilling activity took place in 1914. Much drilling took place on Red Eagle Hill and nearby to the east. The first recorded well near Bigheart/Barnsdall was completed on the property of Paul Red Eagle by the Red Eagle Oil Co., as its #1 well, in the summer of 1913. Red Eagle #2, I. T. I. O. #16, Red Eagle No. 3, and I. T. I. O. #18 were completed in early 1914, and I. T. I. O. #20, the Barnsdall Main Street Well, was completed in March 1914, all on Lot 293.<sup>5</sup>

The town of Bigheart benefitted enormously from the oil boom. In 1907 only 307 people resided there. Bigheart was a government-planned town developed by the Midland Valley Railroad.<sup>6</sup> The town was named for James Bigheart, who had served as the principal chief of the Osages from 1875 until his death in 1908. Chief Bigheart wanted the townsite located on his ranch nearby; however, the railroad developers chose the present townsite but honored him by naming the town Bigheart.<sup>7</sup> The railroad, and eventually the pipelines, opened the basin for oil development, bringing economic and population changes to the area. By 1910, the town had doubled in size.<sup>8</sup> Although Bigheart and the oil field town of Avant were both railheads for exporting oil out of the Bird Creek Basin, transportation of petroleum was still hampered as there were very few roads from the oil fields to the railroads.<sup>9</sup>

In 1916, the I. T. I. O.'s second "Osage Blanket Lease" expired, and thereafter the Osage leases were auctioned off at Pawhuska. In the next few years oil and gas well exploration and completion fully developed in the Bird Creek Basin. The timing was right for a renewed oil boom in the Osage Field. New explorations and discoveries by other companies were spurred on by World War I and the technological advances of the early twentieth century.<sup>10</sup> By that time Bigheart had become an industrial center for petroleum-related businesses in the Bird Creek Basin and the Osage Field. In 1918-1919 the town of Bigheart annexed the property northwest of town, including the well site. Main Street was extended west through "Red Eagle Addition," allowing the well, which was connected to a central power plant on Red Eagle Hill, to remain fully

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operational, in the center of the street. The street began to assume a residential character in the late 1920s. Eventually the site became known as "The Worlds [sic] Only Main Street Well" after being so designated in a 1930s "Ripley's Believe or Not" column.<sup>11</sup>

By 1920 the population of industrial Bigheart had risen to 2,097.<sup>12</sup> The town boasted a refinery/gasoline processing facility and numerous suppliers and servicers of field equipment.<sup>13</sup> Oil well services became specialized, with the nearby towns of Avant and Wolco providing mainly oil field supplies, construction, and drayage services. In 1921 the Barnsdall Oil Company, the predecessor of the now Petrolite Corp., moved into Bigheart and bought the Bigheart Producing and Refining Company. Bigheart's civic leaders changed the community's name to Barnsdall in 1922 to honor the company's late president and oil tycoon, T. N. Barnsdall, who had been a principal stockholder in the Indian Territory Illuminating Oil Company at one time.<sup>14</sup> The town of Barnsdall quickly became a "company town" as the local economy soon became dependent on the Barnsdall Oil Company.

Today, oil field activity has declined in this part of the Osage Field. One of the only reminders of the early oil boom days is the Barnsdall Main Street Well Site, an historic property around which a town grew up and accommodated as an attraction and as a symbol of the community's history during the period of significance, 1914-1930. Drilled in 1914, the well site is the only remaining resource of its type in the town of Barnsdall. Its existence symbolizes the early economic impact of petroleum exploration and production during the 1910s-1920s in Bigheart, later Barnsdall, and in the Bird Creek Basin of the Osage Nation. The well site retains its integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association.

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Osage County, Oklahoma  
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ENDNOTES

1. Frank F. Finney, Sr., "The Indian Territory Illuminating Oil Company," The Chronicles of Oklahoma 37 (Summer 1959): 152-156; Kenny Franks, The Oklahoma Petroleum Industry, (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Oklahoma Heritage Association, Inc., 1980), 58.
2. L. C. Snider, Petroleum and Natural Gas in Oklahoma (Oklahoma City: Harlow-Ratliff Co., 1913), 121; Bess Mills-Bullard, "Digest of Oklahoma Oil and Gas Fields," Oklahoma Geological Survey Bulletin 40 (July 1928): 108; H. T. Beckwith, "Osage County," in *ibid.*, 246-47.
3. Franks, Oklahoma Petroleum, 58.
4. Finney, "The Indian Territory Illuminating Oil Company," 157.
5. Oil and Gas Journal, 10 July 1913, 39; *ibid.*, 18 September 1913, 42-43; *ibid.*, 9 October 1913, 41; 15 January 1914, 45; *ibid.*, 12 March 1914, 41; *ibid.*, 9 April 1914, 41; Oklahoma Oil and Gas News, 1 October 1914, 7.
6. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 13th Census of the United States, 1910, Population (Washington D.C.: G. P. O., 1911), 451.
7. Orpha B. Russell, "Chief James Bigheart of the Osages," The Chronicles of Oklahoma 32 (Winter 1954-1955): 387-89; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Tulsa District, "Historical Review: Bird Creek Basin from 1800," (August 1977) 83.
8. U.S. Bureau of Census, 13th Census of the United States, 1910, Population, (Washington, D.C.: G. P. O., 1911), 451.
9. Osage County Profiles (Pawhuska: Osage County Historical Society, 1978), 456.
10. Finney, "The Indian Territory Illuminating Oil Company," 155-56; Gerald Forbes, "History of the Osage Blanket Lease," The Chronicles of Oklahoma 19 (Winter 1941): 74-75; Franks, Oklahoma Petroleum, 64.
11. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Bigheart, Oklahoma, June 1919; Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Barnsdall, Oklahoma, January 1922, August 1929; Naomi Schmidt, Our Home Town in the Osage Hills, (Dallas, Tex.: Taylor Publishing Company, 1983), 45
12. U.S Bureau of the Census, 14th Census of the United States, 1920, Population (Washington, D.C.: G. P. O., 1921), 575.
13. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Barnsdall, Oklahoma, January 1922.
14. Schmidt, Our Home Town in the Osage Hills, 45.

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Energy-Related Properties in NE Oklahoma

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Verbal Boundary Description:

For point of beginning start at the NE corner of Main Street and SH 11, proceed 50 feet west across the highway, turn south and proceed 20 feet, turn west and proceed 20 feet to the NE corner of the site; this is the point of beginning (refer to sketch map). From the point of beginning, proceed west 16 feet, turn south and proceed 8 feet and 9 inches, turn east and proceed 16 feet, turn north and proceed 8 feet and 9 inches to the point of beginning, having described an 8-foot, 9-inch by 16-foot rectangle.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary was drawn to include the well head, the pumping unit, and the chain-link fence. The fence is a noncontributing resource but because of its immediate presence in the area, it was necessary to include it within the boundary. The current pumping unit is also noncontributing as it post-dates the period of significance.

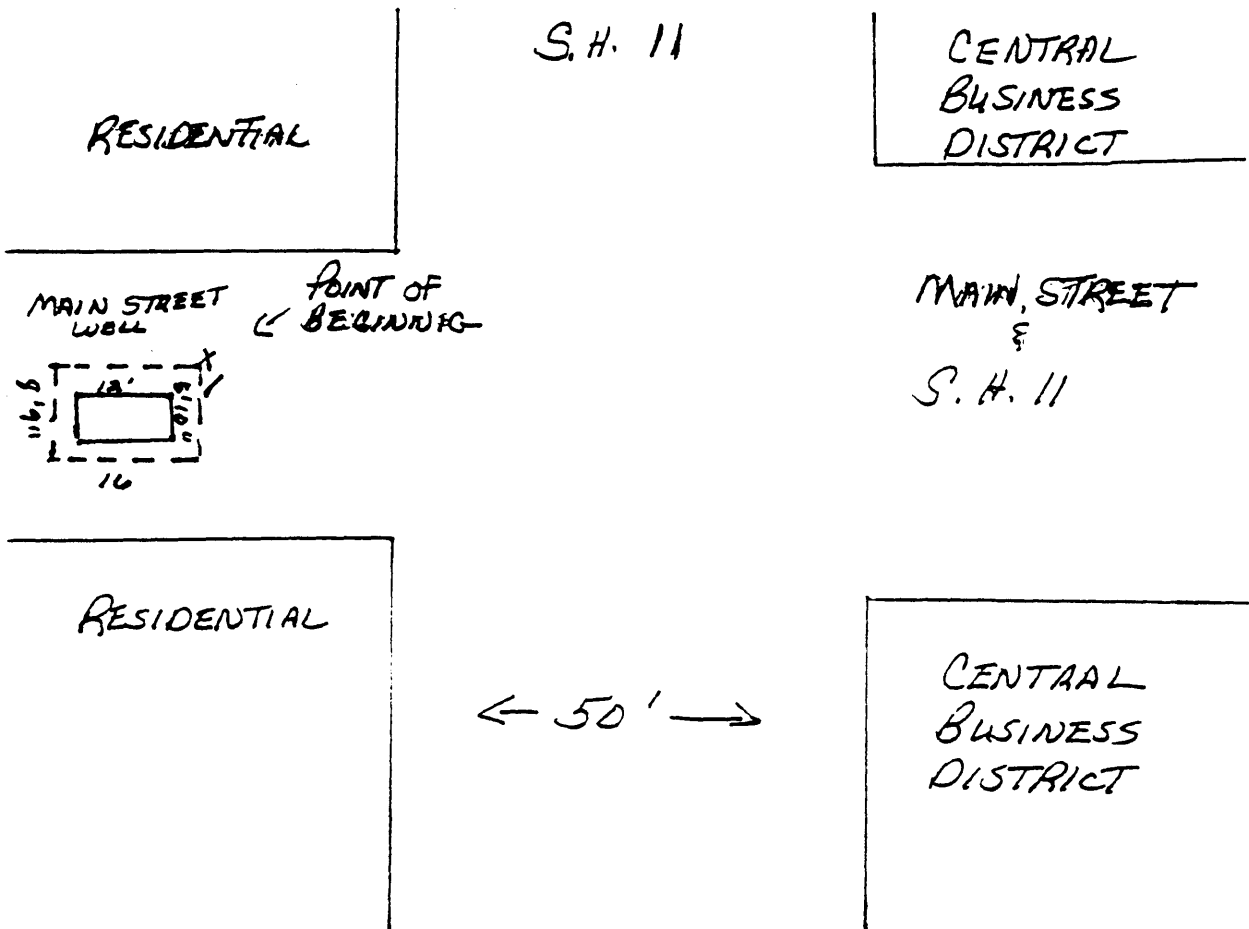
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Barnsdall Main Street Well Site  
Osage County, Oklahoma  
Energy-Related Properties in NE Oklahoma

=====  
Sketch Map  
=====



ONE INCH = TWENTY FEET

⊗ POINT OF BEGINNING

----- FENCE

