

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Oklahoma	
COUNTY: Latimer	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER APR 13 1972	DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Pusley's Station

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
c. 2 m. SW of

CITY OR TOWN:  
Higgins (NE/4 Sec. 25, T 4 N, R 17 E)

STATE: Oklahoma CODE: 40 COUNTY: Latimer CODE: 077

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
R. W. Watts

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Box 405

CITY OR TOWN: Hartshorne STATE: Oklahoma CODE: 40

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Office of the County Clerk

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Latimer County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN: Wilburton STATE: Oklahoma CODE: 40

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Report on the Butterfield Overland Mail

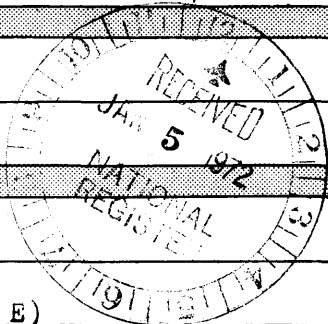
DATE OF SURVEY: 1958  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Oklahoma Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN: Oklahoma City STATE: Oklahoma CODE: 40

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)  
 Excellent     Good     Fair     Deteriorated     Ruins     Unexposed

(Check One)  
 Altered     Unaltered

(Check One)  
 Moved     Original Site

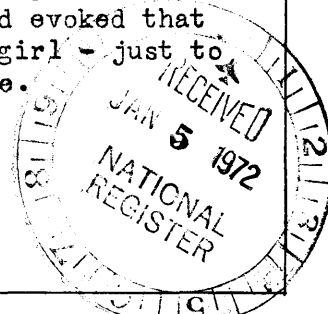
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Well worn ruts of the Butterfield stage line lead southwesterly from the road's crossing of Gaines Creek to Pusley's Station. At the station site itself one can see, on the southeast, the ruins of the original Silas Pusley house, which served as the Butterfield station, a remnant of the Eastman Pusley log house of approximately the same age, and the original well. To the northwest of the trail is the Pusley family graveyard, now overgrown with weeds, brush and trees. Well fenced, it contains at least a half-dozen graves marked with large marble stones (of Pusleys and Seeleys), a number of other unmarked burials. The graves of Narras Pusley (1887) and of Eastman Pusley (1899) show the remains of covering gravehouses, according to the traditional Indian interment custom.

The original Silas Pusley home and stage station was, according to the determination of the Conklings, a large double log house. When they saw it in 1930, however, it had been reduced to two crumbled heaps of stone chimneys. But it was probably not unlike the Eastman Pusley house, built about the time of the Civil War a short distance to the east. This log house -- reduced in the 1960s to a single room -- was built in the traditional style of the area ... two sections connected by an open hall or "dog-trot." Even in near ruins the carefully prepared logs indicate that the house was a comfortable one. The door and window frames were about twelve inches thick. Porches, now completely disappeared, once ran the full length of the east and west sides of the house. In later years the dog-trot was enclosed with a waist-high partition, screened in for a summer room. The well, still standing in the front yard, is built up of carefully cut and fitted sandstone slabs.

Long stretches of the old Butterfield stage route can be driven today in one's car, for the most part on pleasantly meandering county roads. But in few places can one get more of the "feel" of the route than along the two or three hundred yards of rutted trace that leads northeast from the ruins of Pusley's Station to the property line fence, an abandoned section line road, and the crossing of Gaines Creek just beyond. Here parallel ruts, formed first by iron tired wagons and then by rubber tired motor vehicles, indicate the flow of a century's traffic across the unbroken prairie. Now seemingly deserted (the nearest house, that of owner R. W. Watts, is more than a half-mile to the southwest, and out of sight), the site must appear much as it did in 1858. One need only to reconstruct the log station house, if only in one's eye, to recreate the scene that greeted Ormsby when he arrived, fresh from the east. When this writer was there even the cattle were present, crowding curiously around his car. So strong was the mood evoked that he was almost tempted to inquire about the pretty Indian girl - just to see if her hand, and half the cattle, were still available.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1858-1861

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal                | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric               | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                   | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture               | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture              | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian       | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                   | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation              |   |  | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

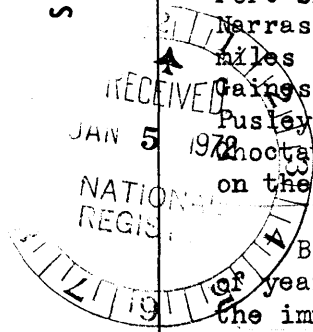
When the Butterfield Overland Mail organized its contracted mail/passenger service to San Francisco, the company arranged with Indian citizens living on or near its 192-mile route across Indian Territory, from Fort Smith to Colbert's Crossing on Red River, to maintain stands where teams could be changed. To keep up roads and bridges along the route the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nation legislatures granted tollgate privileges to various of its citizens. The Choctaw Nation granted seven of these privileges each valid for six years, during regular sessions in 1858 and 1859. Four of them, including the one granted Silas Pusley, were operated as Butterfield stations.

The Pusley Family was well known, first in Mississippi -- where Captain George Pusley had lived on the Natchez Trace and operated a well improved farm -- and then later in the west. He served as one of the Choctaw commissioners who arranged for the removal of the Chickasaws from Mississippi to Indian Territory. Until 1850 the district blacksmith shop (First District in the Choctaw Nation, West) was located at his place near what later was known as Mountain Station, on the Fort Smith-Boggy Depot Road. His three sons, Calvin, Nicholas, and Narras, all lived near the Gaines Creek crossing of that trail, a few miles southwest of Mountain Station. And it is on the south side of Gaines Creek that Silas Pusley, Calvin's son, farmed and operated Pusley's Station for Butterfield. On Oct. 22, 1859, he won from the Choctaw Nation the right to erect a bridge and establish a toll gate on the creek.

Before the arrival of the first Butterfield stage and for a number of years afterwards, enough Pusley family members and others lived in the immediate area to form a fair-sized little settlement. This is indicated by the building ruins on the site and the number of graves in the Pusley cemetery . . . across the trail (a clearly marked indentation in the unbroken sod) north from the Pusley houses. Oldtimers still refer to the "old Pusley place" and a small stream there bears the name of Pusley Creek, thus preserving an association that now is well over a century old.

Waterman L. Ormsby, New York Herald Tribune correspondent who made the initial Butterfield stage run from Tipton, Mo., to San Francisco,

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Ormsby, Waterman L., The Butterfield Overland Mail, Edited by The Huntington Library, 1942  
 Wright, Muriel H., "Historic Places on the Old Stage Line from Fort Smith to Red River," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. XI (1933), pp. 809-810  
 --- Report on the Butterfield Overland Mail, A Special Committee Report, The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. XXXVI (1958), pp. 457-458

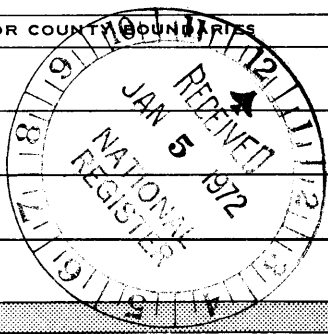
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		34° 41' 52"	95° 28' 15"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 5 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



7L  
No  
UTM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: Kent Ruth, Deputy

ORGANIZATION: Oklahoma Historical Society DATE: December 1971

STREET AND NUMBER: Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN: Oklahoma City STATE: Oklahoma CODE: 40

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name Son to Oliver

Title Liaison officer for Oliver

Date DEC 24 1971

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert M. Utley  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 4/13/72

ATTEST: William Muntz  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date APR 13 1972

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(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

No. 8 Significance

Pusley's Station

gave the site one of its first printed references. (Alas, he committed the cardinal journalistic sin - referring to it as "Pussey" rather than "Pusley.") Stopping at the station Sunday afternoon, Sept. 19, 1858, he wrote:

At Pussey (a station for changing horses, where an Indian of that name lives), about sixty-six miles from the river [the Arkansas], I met an old Indian who owns seven hundred head of cattle and a pretty daughter, and is willing to give the half of the one to the white man who will marry the other. Here I gave an Indian boy a paper of tobacco (sic) to give me water enough to wash my face, put on a blue flannel shirt, and considered myself pretty well on my way out West.

