

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

OCT 11 1989

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Public Water Trough
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Intersection Main, Canadian, Northeast Blvd. N/A not for publication
city, town Geary N/A vicinity _____
state Oklahoma code OK county Blaine code 011 zip code 73040

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
2	1	structures
0	0	objects
2	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. 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. See continuation sheet.

David L. Tolson
Signature of certifying official

October 2, 1989
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. 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.

Beth Roland

11/15/89

- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation--road-related
Government-public works

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation & Culture-monument/marker

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

No style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Concrete

roof _____
other Metal-lid

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Summary

The Public Water Trough and Well site in Geary, Oklahoma, is located on the industrial side of town, where it served farmers and agricultural tradesmen from 1901 to 1939. Originally constructed of wood, the first trough was replaced by a concrete structure in the late teens or early 1920s and was placed on a cement pad which drained into a culvert; it was disconnected from the well and was connected to city water. The present trough is a concrete structure measuring 40" x 89" outside, 28" x 76" inside, and 23" in depth. Its design incorporates an indentation intended to accommodate a wagon tongue, thus allowing a team to be watered without first being unharnessed. The Public Trough was maintained by the city and used by farmers and tradesmen until the use of horse-drawn vehicles declined around the time of World War II. Four such public utilities were constructed in the 1899-1901 period in Geary; the Public Trough at Main and Canadian is the only one extant. It retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship and still conveys the feeling and associations of its past identity. An historic marker was added in 1982.

Description

The site of the Public Water Trough and Well in Geary, Oklahoma, is located in the city right-of-way in the intersection of Main Street, Canadian Avenue, Northeast Boulevard, and Southeast Boulevard. Visible from the site are industrial structures related to the trough's reason for being built: to the south is a large cotton gin; across the street, on the southwest corner of Main Street, is a large barn which in the early 1900s housed the Ringleman-Ruth feed-and-seed store; and to the north several tall grain elevators, built at the same time, are visible. The trough's setting is still much as it was in the early decades of the century.

The site is triangular in shape, measuring 35' on each side. In the center of the site, a concrete water trough is located near a well (not visible) which was drilled in 1901. The trough rests on a concrete pad measuring approximately 6' x 10'. The trough's outer dimensions are 40" x 89", with a 12" x 20" U-shaped indentation in the center. This design element allowed a team of horses to be watered without first being unharnessed from the wagon. Inside measurements are 28" by 76". Inside the tank, behind the indentation, two metal shields form walls enclosing an intake pipe and float valve. The shields are

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bolted into place 1" above the bottom of the trough, thus allowing space for water circulation. A sheet steel cover protects the works. The trough's walls are 6" thick, and the container's inside depth is 23". On the south side, the concrete apron dips slightly downward, allowing the overflow to run into a flagstone-walled ditch running parallel with Main Street. A concrete-covered culvert directs the runoff under Canadian Avenue and into a ditch. This apron-and-culvert drainage plan was designed to prevent the accumulation of mud which would arise from the constant splashing of water by horses. The trough faces west and parallels Canadian Avenue.

Originally, a wooden trough stood beside the well; a windmill and hand pump drew water from the well and into the trough. The windmill and pump were removed in 1903; in the late 1900s or teens, the wooden trough was replaced with a concrete structure, and the well was capped (it may have gone dry during one of several parched summers in 1916-1918 when the water table dropped precipitously [Geary Journal, 6 June 1918]); the trough was connected to city water and was provided with a "water closet" type system consisting of an intake pipe and float valve. This system functioned until it was disconnected around the time of World War II.

In 1982, local citizens marked the site with a large sign, erected upon two poles. The marker sits behind the trough, on the east side. The marker is counted as a noncontributing structure.

The site retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship, and the structures generally retain the essential features enabling them to convey the site's past identity and significance. It is the only such site extant in Geary, Oklahoma.

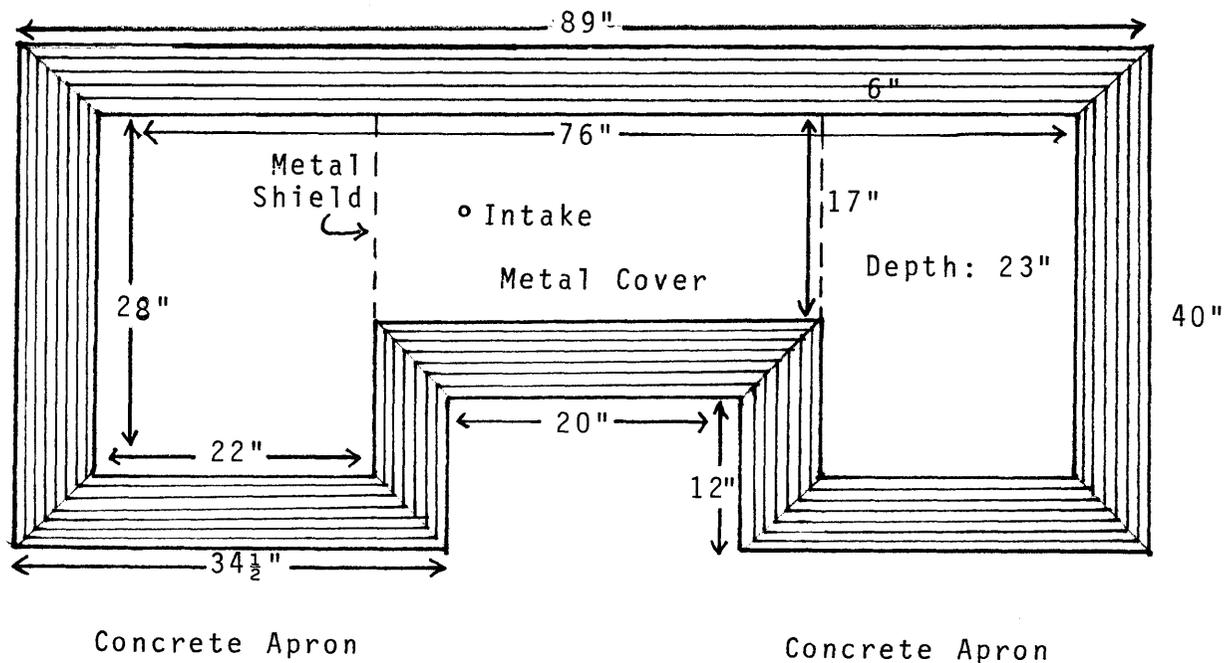
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PUBLIC WATER TROUGH

Geary, OK



8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Community Planning & Development
Commerce
Transportation

Period of Significance
1901-1939

Significant Dates
1903

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Summary

The Public Water Trough and Well site at Northeast Boulevard and Main in Geary is the site of a significant pattern of activity in the community's development. It is historically significant within the context of Geary's community planning, commercial growth, and transportation development in the 1901-1939 period. The construction and maintenance of this public facility over this period of years reflects Geary's dependence on agriculture and agriculture-related industry, a pattern typical of rural communities throughout western Oklahoma. The trough and well site specifically reflects community planning, because the city fathers intended the facility to provide domestic water, fire protection, and stock water for east side industries. The utility was also intended to provide an essential service for farmers bringing trade into Geary. In the design of the trough and its geographical placement, it illustrates the method of commercial transportation common during the early years of the century. It is one of four well and trough sites constructed in town in 1899-1901, and it is the only one still extant.

Historic Context

Organized by Congress in 1890 under the Organic Act creating Oklahoma Territory, Blaine County (originally County "C") was opened for settlement by "land run" on April 19, 1892.¹ The site of Geary was originally homesteaded in April of 1892 by S. E. and W. D. Huff, father and son. The Huffs disposed of most of their property for the creation of the town when the Choctaw Railroad's townsite corporation created Geary. The town was established May 3, 1898, as the Choctaw (predecessor of the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific) built a line from Oklahoma City. On July 4, 1898, when the railroad reached Geary, the town boasted a population of approximately 700.² By 1907, the community had more than doubled in size, and the Special Census for Oklahoma in that year counted 1,438 persons. In 1910, Geary's population stood at 1,336; by 1920, it had decreased to 1,065; but by 1930 it had increased to 1,730. See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Geary Bulletin, 13 July 1899, 7 November 1901.
- Geary Journal, 30 July 1903.
- Geary Star, 1 July 1948.
- Lowman, Lonnie. Interview by Dr. Dianna Everett, 26 April 1989. Notes on file in State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City.
- Ruth, Kent. Interview by Dr. Dianna Everett, 20 April 1989. Notes on file in State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City.
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Geary, OK, 1902, 1904, 1909, 1915, 1930. Microfilm. Roll 7. Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman.
- Their Story: A Pioneer Days Album of the Blaine County Area. Oklahoma City, OK: Heritage Book Committee, 1977.

N/A See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than 1 (one) acre

UTM References

A

1	4
Zone	

5	6	2	0	2	0
Easting					

3	9	4	3	0	5	0
Northing						

C

Zone							

Easting							

Northing							

B

Zone							

Easting							

Northing							

D

Zone							

Easting							

Northing							

N/A See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point which is the northeast corner of the intersection of Main Street and Northeast Boulevard, proceed east 35' along the edge of Main Street; turn to the left at an angle of 60° and proceed 35' northwest to the edge of Northeast Boulevard; turn 60° to the left and proceed southwest along the east edge of Northeast Boulevard to the point of beginning, having described a closed triangle. See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The south and northwest boundary lines are drawn along existing curblines along Main Street and Northeast Boulevard. The northeast boundary separates the public right away from the corner of Lot 13. The closed triangle includes the area used as "parking" of teams using the water trough (please refer to sketch map on continuation sheet).

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dianna Everett, Researcher

organization S. H. P. O., Okla. Historical Soc. date 15 May 1989

street & number 2100 N. Lincoln telephone (405) 521-2491

city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73105

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Blaine County's population experienced similar fluctuations, growing from 17,227 in 1907 to 17,960 in 1910, but dropping to 15,875 in 1920 and growing to 20,452 in 1930.³ The county's population was predominantly rural,⁴ and during the 1901-1939 period (as well as afterward) Geary served as the hub of commercial activity and as a transportation center in the agriculture-oriented economy of southern Blaine County.

Community Planning Significance

The Public Water Trough and Well site in Geary is significant within the context of community planning because it represents the earliest effort of the city's officials to provide an essential public service, a water supply to be used for domestic consumption, fire fighting, and watering stock.

The original well and trough was one of four such facilities established by the city in the 1899-1901 period. Their locations were as follows: Well #1, intersection of Main Street and Broadway; Well #2, center of street, convergence of Main, Blaine, Northwest Boulevard, and Southwest Boulevard; Well #3, center of street, convergence of Main, Canadian, Northeast Boulevard, and Southeast Boulevard; Well #4, center of street, on 6th Street, west of intersection with Broadway (one block north of the center of town). Wells #1, #2, and #3 were each provided with a windmill, a hand pump, and a wooden trough.⁵ These wells had several purposes during their early years. First, the original concept of creating such facilities was for the purpose of providing downtown businesses with domestic water and water for firefighting.⁶ The town's business district grew up in the two blocks of Main Street between Canadian Avenue, on the east, and Blaine Avenue, on the west. Broadway, which bisected the district, also held various businesses. Along Main and Broadway were found banks, retail outlets, medical and legal offices, and other services needed by townspeople and farm families.⁷ The city was incorporated in April of 1901, and the new city council embarked on a civic improvements program which included wells #2, #3, and #4. At this time, the majority of buildings on the main streets were of wood frame.⁸ In 1902-1903 the council approved the installation of a water system,⁹ with mains along major arteries and fire hydrants strategically placed.⁹ Unfortunately, the public wells were allowed to deteriorate while the city sold bonds to finance the new system; in the meantime, the eruption of five major fires in 1903-1904 hastened the funding of the waterworks and put an end to one of the uses of the public wells.¹⁰ Well #1 was shut off before 1901; Well #2 was permanently out of service after 1903; and Well #4 was in service at least through 1914. In 1903 farmers¹¹ complained about the lack of watering facilities for their teams,¹¹ and Well #3 (the subject of this nomination), which had lost its windmill and pump in 1903, was provided with a new trough and was eventually connected to city water after 1905.¹² Thus, the well and trough's second purpose, furnishing water for teams of draft animals on the east

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side of town, insured its survival for the period of significance, while the other wells were never used again.

Commercial Significance

The Public Water Trough and Well site in Geary is significant within the town's commercial context because the utility provided an essential service demanded by farmers engaged in bringing their trade into town in the years between 1901 and 1939.

Agribusiness was the mainstay of Geary's economy in this period. By 1920, 84% of the county's land was under cultivation.¹³ In these years the primary crops raised in southern Blaine County were corn, cotton, and wheat; broom corn, alfalfa (hay), and vegetables also contributed to the region's productivity.¹⁴ Geary was the regional trade center and distribution point for commodities and livestock grown in this part of the county.¹⁵ The town served the rural communities of High Prairie, Edenvew, Richland, Fairview, Good Hope, and Etna, as well as the towns of Hydro and Bridgeport.

Agriculture-related industries grew up and prospered on Geary's east side during this period (the west side of town was predominantly residential). The railroad tracks were located on the southeast edge of town, with the depot accessible to the industries. In the vicinity of the tracks were grain elevators, flour mills, cotton gins, and warehouses. Along and east of Canadian Avenue (a north-south artery) were lumber yards, wagon yards, feed-and-seed stores, blacksmith shops, machine shops, the post office, a creamery, and a broom factory. At various times, public scales were conveniently located in the street in the intersection at the convergence of Main, Canadian, Northeast Boulevard, and Southeast Boulevard, close to the Public Water Trough.¹⁶ The trough stood in front of the W. D. Huff blacksmith shop. Thus, the trough was a convenient stopping place for farmers hauling loads of commodities into town and hauling loads of provisions and equipment back to their farms. The farmers' 1903 complaint concerning the facility's delapidated condition illustrates its importance to them; the editor of the Geary Journal chided the city council for neglecting this important public utility, and the facility was restored to useability shortly thereafter.¹⁷ Of the three wells drilled in 1901, only the east-side facility, which served the farmers and industries, was maintained until horse-drawn vehicles were no longer functional in agriculture. After the installation of water mains in 1905, the trough was connected to city water, and a float valve was installed. A concrete trough was constructed in the late teens or early 1920s, replacing the wooden structure.¹⁸

Transportation Significance

The Public Water Trough and Well site in Geary is significant within the context of the town's transportation history because it gives evidence

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of the primary method of conveyance used by southern Blaine County's farmers in transporting produce to the local marketplace and to the railroad for shipping.

Blaine County has always been a predominantly rural area. In the years between 1901 and 1920, the county had no paved roads; the first such were built in 1919-1920 (the entire state of Oklahoma had only 1,200 miles of paved rural roads by 1930).¹⁹ Dirt roads were difficult to negotiate by automobile or truck, and the most efficient method of hauling heavy loads continued to be by wagon and team. Several drayage companies operated out of Geary. The volume of trade being brought into Geary's east side by wagon and team necessitated the maintenance of the trough at Northeast Boulevard and Main. Farmers generally did not begin to acquire farm trucks until after the First World War. As the motor-driven truck became more and more widespread, the Public Water Trough became less functional. However, it remains a reflection of an earlier lifestyle, and it is marked by a sign explaining its significance in the earlier years of the Geary community.

ENDNOTES

¹"Organic Act," Oklahoma Red Book, 1912, comp. by Seth K. Cordon, 2 vols. (Oklahoma City & Tulsa: Democrat Printing Co., 1912), 2: 526-544.

²Geary Journal, 10 December 1903; Their Story: A Pioneer Days Album of the Blaine County Area (Oklahoma City, OK: Heritage Book Committee, 1977), 2.

³U. S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1910 (Washington, D. C.: G. P. O., 1911), 574-575; U. S. Bureau of the Census, 14th Census of the United States, 1920, Population (Washington, D. C.: G. P. O., 1921), 571; U. S. Bureau of the Census, 15th Census of the United States, 1930, Population (Washington, D. C.: G. P. O., 1931), 879, 882.

⁴14th Census, 1920, Population, 169; U. S. Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1930 (Washington, D. C.: G. P. O., 1930), 46.

⁵Geary Bulletin, 13 July 1899; *ibid.*, 7 November 1901; Geary Journal, 30 July 1903; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Geary, OK, 1902, 1904, 1909, 1915, 1930.

⁶Geary Bulletin, 13 July 1899.

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⁷Ibid.; Sanborn Maps, 1902-1930; Geary Times-Journal, 19 August 1937; Geary Star, Pioneer Edition, 1 July 1948.

⁸Sanborn Maps, 1902-1930; Geary Bulletin, 25 April 1901; *ibid.*, 13 June 1901.

⁹*Ibid.*, 21 August 1902; *ibid.*, 28 August 1902; Geary Journal, 30 July 1903.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 18 June 1903; *ibid.*, 23 July 1903; *ibid.*, 17 November 1904.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 30 July 1903.

¹²*Ibid.*; Sanborn Maps, 1909, 1915, 1930. The well is marked at this location on Sanborn maps for 1902, 1904, and 1909. It no longer appears on the 1915 or 1930 maps.

¹³U. S. Bureau of the Census, 14th Census of the United States, 1920, Agriculture, part 2 (Washington, D. C.: G. P. O., 1922), 629.

¹⁴Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1910, 651; 14th Census, 1920, Agriculture, 629; U. S. Bureau of the Census, 15th Census of the United States, 1930, Agriculture, part 2 (Washington, D. C.: G. P. O., 1932), 891.

¹⁵Hunter James, "Geary--in the Heart of the Corn Belt," Sturm's Oklahoma Magazine 7 (January 1909): 60-61.

¹⁶*Ibid.*; Geary Journal, 10 December 1903; Geary Times-Journal, 10 August 1937; Sanborn Map, 1909.

¹⁷Geary Journal, 30 July 1903.

¹⁸Lonnie Lowman, interview by Dr. Dianna Everett, 26 April 1989 (notes on file in S. H. P. O., Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City); Kent Ruth, interview by Dr. Dianna Everett, 20 April 1989 (notes on file in S. H. P. O., Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City).

¹⁹Geary Times-Journal, 3 April 1919; Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1930, 376-377.

