

2024-0010  
MAY 31/84

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only  
received JUN 13 1983  
date entered

1. Name

historic Old Salt Works

and/or common Same

2. Location

SE of Southard

street & number Two and 3/4 mile south, and 1 and 1/4 mile east N/A not for publication

city, town Southard vic. N/A vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~

state Oklahoma code 40 county Blaine code 011

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<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:

4. Owner of Property

name Douglas Boeckman

street & number

city, town Okeene N/A vicinity of state Oklahoma

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Clerk

street & number Blaine County Court House

city, town Watonga state Oklahoma

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Oklahoma Preservation Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1981  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Preservation Office, Oklahoma Historical Survey

city, town Oklahoma City state Oklahoma

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Located on the north bank of Salt Creek approximately one-half mile east of the spring from which the creek flows, the Old Salt Works was comprised of two one-quarter inch plate steel vats that measured twelve feet wide and forty-five feet long. Perpendicular at either end, the sides curved upward from the bottom of the vat some twelve inches. Each vat, therefore, was constructed of three pieces of steel: one that formed the bottom and curved sides and two that enclosed either end, both of which were riveted to the larger piece. The two vats were situated side by side and were supported and made level by a loose rock foundation that, because of the sloping bank of the creek, was higher on the south than the north.

Brine from Salt Creek was piped into the two vats to the depth of about ten inches. Apparently, the vats were then heated by fires kindled below the pans and between the foundation stones. The heat increased the rate of evaporation and hastened the end product of pure salt. The salt was then shoveled from the vats, preparatory to the process being repeated.

The pans of the Old Salt Works are still very much in evidence. There are severely rusted and bent, although parts of the supporting foundations are still intact. Pieces of the pipe used to bring brine to the pans are also visible.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1894 **Builder/Architect** Jeff Saunders

### Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

The Old Salt Works is significant because of the role it played in the early settlement of Blaine County, Oklahoma and the industrial development of the region. The waters of Salt Creek are so laden with salt that until just recent times dry salt on the edges of the water might accumulate to the depth of eight to ten inches. Southern Plains Indians utilized the deposits exclusively until the 1840s and 1850s when both white and red entrepreneurs gathered the salt for trade purposes. The most notable of the latter was Jesse Chisholm, a trader of Cherokee extraction for whom the famous cattle trail was later named. Systematic exploitation of the resource, however, awaited the opening of the Cheyenne-Arapahoe Indian Reservation for white settlement in 1892 and the inclusion of the region into Oklahoma Territory.

In 1894 Jeff Saunders, an ex-cattle trail driver, designed and built the two large steel vats known as the Old Salt Works. Where the pans were manufactured is unknown, but it is certain that Saunders had them shipped by rail to Oklahoma, probably Kingfisher, on the newly constructed Rock Island Railroad. From there he took them by wagon some thirty miles to the northwest, up Salt Creek, to the rugged terrain of their present location. Once in place, the works produced some 4,000 pounds of salt in ten hours. Saunders sold the product twenty-five cents per 100 pounds to local people and at \$1 to \$1.25 to more distant customers to pay for shipping. The founder of the Old Salt Works, however, did not establish a successful business for himself, for his own facilities were too small and too inaccessible. But, however, he did pioneer a new industry.

Some four miles down stream from Saunders works on level ground and next to a new railroad track other entrepreneurs in 1901 established the community of Salton, later known as Ferguson. Constructed at that location were two impressive salt plants, one of which was owned by the nationally known Morton Salt Company. The industry, attracting national capital when Oklahoma was still a Territory, thrived for more than a decade. The Old Salt Works, therefore, constituted the first systematic attempt in western Oklahoma to distill salt for profit and as such symbolizes the early settlement and industrial development of Blaine County, the region, and the state.

(Today there are no traces of the two facilities established at Ferguson).

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Their Story: A Pioneer Days Album of the Blaine County Area (Heritage Book Committee, 1977)  
p.6  
Interview with Frank Beneda, Hitchcock, Okla., July 20, 1981  
1941 and 1960 aerial photographs

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Southard

Quadrangle scale 7.5 min.

### UMT References

A 

1	4	5	4	9	2	8	0	3	9	8	5	8	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

**Verbal boundary description and justification** Beginning at Southard, on county roads, go 4 miles east, 2 south, and 1/2 west to Boeckman Ranch headquarters; then go southwest approximately 1 1/4 miles on improved ranch/gas well access road to north edge of Salt Creek; then walk west up creek bed, following south fork, almost exactly 1 mile to steel pans on north bank of creek; include tract of land 75 feet square, being in SW 1/4, NE 1/4, SW 1/4, Sec. 23, T18N, R12W.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries  
state N/A code county code  
state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title W. David Baird  
organization Oklahoma Preservation Survey date 1981  
street & number 502 Math Sciences telephone 624-5678  
city or town Stillwater, Oklahoma State University state Oklahoma

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature C. E. [Signature] date 5/31/83  
title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

For NPS use only  
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
[Signature] date 7/29/83  
Keeper of the National Register  
Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
Chief of Registration