

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED OCT 24 1975
DATE ENTERED MAY 13 1976

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

** **
Jenson Tunnel
AND/OR COMMON

"Backbone Tunnel"

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Cameron

STATE

Oklahoma

NE of Cameron off OK 112
 VICINITY OF

CODE

40

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

No. 3

COUNTY

LeFlore

CODE

079

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

__DISTRICT

__BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

__SITE

__OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

__PUBLIC

PRIVATE

__BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

__IN PROCESS

__BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

__OCCUPIED In Use

__UNOCCUPIED

__WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

__YES: UNRESTRICTED

__NO

PRESENT USE

__AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

__EDUCATIONAL

__ENTERTAINMENT

__GOVERNMENT

__INDUSTRIAL

__MILITARY

__MUSEUM

__PARK

__PRIVATE RESIDENCE

__RELIGIOUS

__SCIENTIFIC

__TRANSPORTATION

__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

St. Louis - San Francisco Railway Company

STREET & NUMBER

Frisco Building - 906 Olive

CITY, TOWN

St. Louis

VICINITY OF

STATE

Missouri

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the County Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

LeFlore County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Heavener

STATE

Oklahoma

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

HAER Inventory - Oklahoma

DATE

1974

FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Oklahoma Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Oklahoma City

STATE

Oklahoma

*has to not a more all only
an inventory property 5/12/76*

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT

GOOD

FAIR

DETERIORATED

RUINS

UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED

ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE

MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Jenson Tunnel is approximately 1,180 feet long. Construction, much of it through solid rock, probably began in late 1885 or early 1886. It was completed in 1887.

The tunnel has an average width of 14 feet, but reaches 20 feet in some places. Its average height is 20 feet above the top of the rail, although it reaches 24.7 feet at one point. More than half the tunnel's interior 629 feet is unprotected rock, requiring no arching. Nearly 384 feet of stone walls with brick arch was called for at either end of this natural arching. A final 62 feet of stone walls with timber arch and 118 feet of timber plumb posts and timber arch was required for the remaining end sections.

The quality of masonry construction alone, especially in this day of steel and pre-cast concrete, is noteworthy and therefore deserves preservation. Also worth noting: Jenson continues to serve a state that was not born until nearly a quarter-century after it was first constructed.

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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1885 to present

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The United States today has many railroad tunnels. So far as is known, however, only one was built in a "foreign nation." It was bored in 1885-1886 ... in the Choctaw Nation, the southeastern corner of present Oklahoma. It is the state's first, and only, railroad tunnel.

* * *

Present-day Oklahoma lagged well behind the rest of the nation in the development of railroads. Indian Territory embraced roughly the eastern half of the state-to-be and the so-called Five Civilized Tribes recognized, correctly, that steel rails and white encroachment were synonymous. Permission had only reluctantly been granted for construction of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas (Katy) and the Atlantic and Pacific (present Frisco) Railroads. They began operation in 1871. For the next fifteen years, however, there was no railroad building in Indian Territory. And then, as lines spread out in adjacent states, the transportation gap represented by the various nominally independent Indian Nations became increasingly important. And the pressure to breach that gap increased accordingly.

Finally in 1885 the 49th Congress was bombarded with no less than ten bills calling for construction of railroads across Indian Territory. The dam was broken. In February 1886 the Fort Smith and Southern Railway (to be acquired by the Frisco Railway the following year) was incorporated in Arkansas and it promptly laid plans to lay rails across the Choctaw Nation from Fort Smith to Paris, Texas. The date 1886 is on the keystone of what was then called the "Backbone Tunnel" (for nearby Backbone Mountain). The completed line was put into service in 1887.

* * *

In this day of frequent and extensive abandonments, the Jenson Tunnel branch of the Frisco is still used. (Its 90-year-old configuration, however, is not always able to accommodate all of the larger modern freight cars.) And it continues to serve a rugged, isolated, hill-country corner of the state that, in many ways, is little changed from Indian Territory days.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Gibbs, Lawrence, "Only State RR Tunnel Built by FS&S In '86," Stillwater (Okla.) News-Press, Nov. 22, 1973, p. 3

HAER Inventory (Historical American Engineering Record - Oklahoma) - Duane S. Ellifritt, Principal Investigator, 1974

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY c. 5.5 acres (1,200 feet long, 20 feet wide)
 UTM REFERENCES (figured from center of the tunnel)

A 15 | 36,32,5,0 | 3819,211,6,0
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING
 C | | | | | | | | | |

B | | | | | | | | | |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING
 D | | | | | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE

Kent Ruth, Deputy

ORGANIZATION

Oklahoma Historical Society

DATE

September 1975

STREET & NUMBER

Historical Building

TELEPHONE

405/884-5456

CITY OR TOWN

Oklahoma City

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Don O. Shaw
SFD

TITLE

DATE

OCT 20 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Acting

Ken L. ...

DATE

8/13/76

Acting DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

5.12.76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	OCT 24 1975
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

NAME

HISTORIC

Jenson Tunnel

AND/OR COMMON

"Backbone Tunnel"

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Cameron

VICINITY OF

STATE

Oklahoma

COUNTY

LeFlore

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

Fort Smith and Southern Railway

DATE OF PHOTO

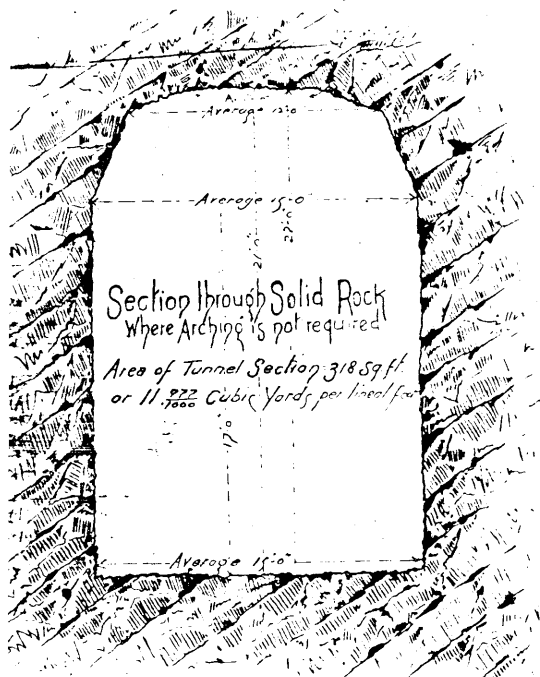
NEGATIVE FILED AT

IDENTIFICATION

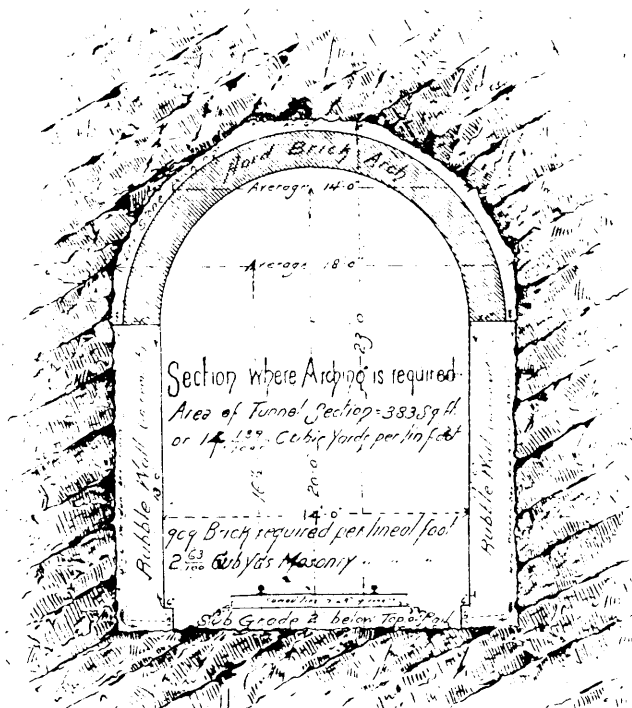
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO.

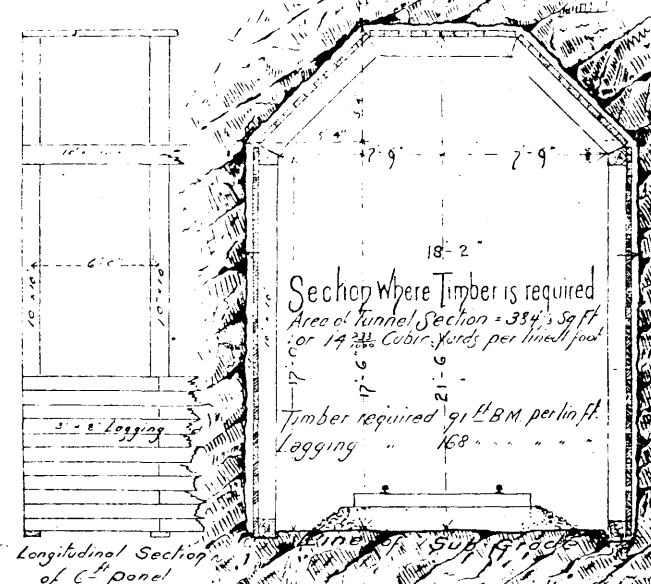
Zerox of official tunnel sections schematic.



Section through Solid Rock
Where Arching is not required
Area of Tunnel Section 318 Sq ft
or 11.922 Cubic Yards per lineal foot



Section where Arching is required
Area of Tunnel Section = 383.59 sq ft
or 14.139 Cubic Yards per lineal foot
909 Bricks required per lineal foot
2.63 Cubic Yards Masonry



Section Where Timber is required
Area of Tunnel Section = 334.3 Sq ft
or 14.236 Cubic Yards per lineal foot
Timber required 91¹/₂ BM per lin. ft.
Lagging " 168

Sections of
Back-bone Tunnel
Ft. Smith & Southern R.W.

scale 1/4 inch = 1 foot

57-4/26-86