

PH0047163

Form 10-306
(Oct. 1972)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM
FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	California
COUNTY:	Inyo
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	DEC 31 1974

1. NAME

COMMON: *12 miles vicinity*
Saline Valley Salt Tram Historic Structure

AND/OR HISTORIC: *n of Bakersfield*
Saline Valley Aerial Tramway *Cerro Gordo Peak and New York Butte*

2. LOCATION

~~XXXXXX~~ SW end (Owens Valley Terminal): T. 16 S., R. 37 E., Sec. 23
MDM. One mile north of Swansea on Highway 136. The tram runs NW across the
~~XXXXXX~~ Inyo Mtns. between Cerro Gordo Peak on the South & New York Butte on the
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 18, State: CA,
Code: 06 County: Inyo, Code: 027
~~XXXXXX~~ North through Daisy Canyon. NE ~~XXXXXX~~ end (Saline Valley ~~XXXXXX~~
Terminal): T. 14 S., R. 38 E., Sec. 26, MDM, 13 mi. NE of Swansea at the S end
of Salt Lake in the Saline Valley.

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"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) Recreational Scenic

4. AGENCY

U. S. Bureau of Land Management

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)
Bakersfield District

CITY OR TOWN: **Bakersfield**

STREET AND NUMBER: **800 Truxtun Avenue**

STATE: **California** CODE: **06**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Office of County Assessor

STREET AND NUMBER:
325 W. Elm

CITY OR TOWN: **Bishop** STATE: **California** CODE: **06**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

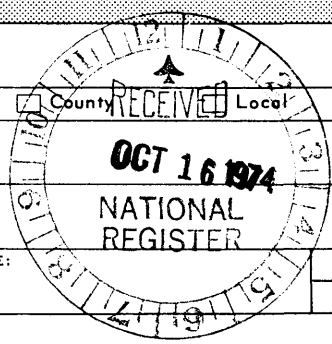
TITLE OF SURVEY: **None**

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:



STATE: California

COUNTY: Inyo

ENTRY NUMBER: 1001

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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

The Saline Valley Salt Tram was built in 1911 and 1912 to carry salt from Saline Valley to Owens Valley. In its 13½ mile length it rose from an elevation of 1100 feet at the east terminal to 8500 feet at the crest of the Inyo Range and dropped to 3600 feet at the west terminal.

The double-cabled tramway was divided into five sections, three on the east slope and two on the west. Each section was in effect a separate tramway at each end of which was a control station where both the carrier wires and the traction wires terminated. The carriers, which were suspended from wheels that ran on the carrier wires and attached to the traction cable by friction grips, passed through the control stations on rails. At each control station a 75-horsepower electric motor supplied power to the endless traction cable through a grip sheave eight feet in diameter. Power was obtained from a three-phase line that paralleled the tramway. The maximum horizontal angle, about 30°, was at control station one at the head of Daisy Canyon, while the verticle angle was as much as 40° in places.

The carriers weighed 800 pounds and held about 700 pounds of salt giving the tramway a capacity of 20 tons per hour. Unlike most tramway buckets, they were cylindrical in shape, and the suspension was designed so that they hung horizontally regardless of the angle of the carrier.

The tramway required for its operation two men at each of the terminals, two men at each of the four control stations, and four "line riders" who performed lubrication and other maintenance work. All stations were connected by telephone. At the loading terminal carriers were dispatched at the gong and were automatically released when the carrier reached the end.

The construction of the tramway required one million board feet of lumber and six hundred tons of iron, which had to be transported over rough, inaccessible, precipitous mountain country. Grades of up to 25 percent required a team of eight horses to move 5000 pounds of equipment.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1911-1935**

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The salt deposit in Saline Valley was discovered in 1864. Its potential value, (contained less than one percent impurities) was known to the early miners but lack of transportation delayed its development.

The salt deposit was first worked on a small scale in 1903 and 1904 by the Saline Valley Salt Company. Transportation required a two-day roundabout journey by wagon across the Inyo Range by way of Waucoba Canyon, a distance of only 12 miles. The death of the president, J. L. Bourland, in 1905 brought an end to this phase of the salt development.

Several years later the Saline Valley Salt Company made a thorough study of the transportation problem. Building a railroad was impracticable, so an aerial tramway and a pipeline through which the salt could be pumped as brine were considered. The tramway was chosen because it provided a means for shipping supplies into Saline Valley in addition to shipping the salt deposits out.

In 1911 the Trenton Iron Works, a subsidiary of the American Steel and Wire Company, began construction. Other tramways that had been built were longer and had greater capacity, but the Saline Valley line had steeper grades than any other in the United States.

The construction of the tramway exhausted the Saline Valley Salt Company financially, and in 1915 the operation was leased to the Owens Valley Salt Company. This company produced salt until 1918 when it, too, went out of business. Between 1912 and 1918 several tens of thousands of tons of salt were produced.

The Taylor Milling Company acquired the Saline Valley plant and produced some salt in 1920. After five years of inactivity the Sierra Salt Company was formed; and in 1926 salt was produced once more. Trucks were used to haul the salt to Keeler over the newly built Saline Valley road until the tramway was overhauled in 1929. The plant was last operated in 1930, and in 1935 the Sierra Salt Company went into receivership.

Most of the structures within easy access of roads, including both terminals, have been carted off by wood gatherers and junk collectors. The stout 10 x 10 timbers are especially prized. However, many of the towers still remain, some with steel buckets still clinging to their steadfast cables high over deep canyons.

(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Desert Magazine - "The Purest Salt in the World" (pp. 27-28)
 "The Most Spectacular Aerial Ride in the World" (pp. 19-21)
 "Salt in California" (pp. 116-118)

Palm Desert, California, August, 1959.

HM 11 NE 429425
 4060000
 NE 419650
 404250
 SW 417550
 4043325
 NW 427125
 4061300

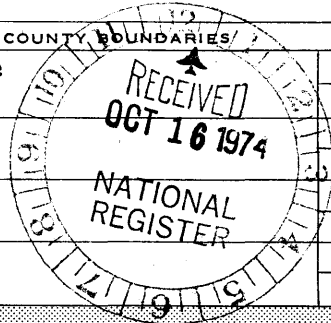
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	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	36 ° 41 ' 41 "	117 ° 48 ' 52 "				
NE	36 ° 41 ' 02 "	117 ° 47 ' 24 "				
SE	36 ° 31 ' 24 "	117 ° 53 ' 52 "				
SW	36 ° 31 ' 59 "	117 ° 55 ' 16 "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **164**

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

STATE: None	CODE	COUNTY: None	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Richard D. Conrad, Natural Resource Tech.** DATE: **10/31/73**

BUSINESS ADDRESS: **Bureau of Land Management**

STREET AND NUMBER: **800 Truxtun Avenue** PHONE: **323-7676**

CITY OR TOWN: **Bakersfield** STATE: **California** CODE: **06**

12. CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

<p>State Liaison Officer recommendation:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><i>[Signature]</i> State Liaison Officer Signature</p> <p>In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Liaison Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The recommended level of significance is <input type="checkbox"/> National <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State</p> <p><i>[Signature]</i> 10-11-74 Federal Representative Signature Date Deputy Assistant Secretary Title</p>	<p>NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION</p> <p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p><i>[Signature]</i> Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date: <u>12/31/74</u></p> <p>ATTEST</p> <p><i>[Signature]</i> Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date: <u>12/31/74</u></p>
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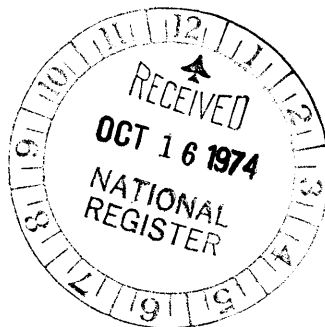
(Continuation Sheet)

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8. Statement of Significance (cont.)

Besides being the steepest tramway in the United States, the Saline Valley Salt Tram is one of the most scenic, historic, best preserved, oldest, and largest of its kind remaining today.



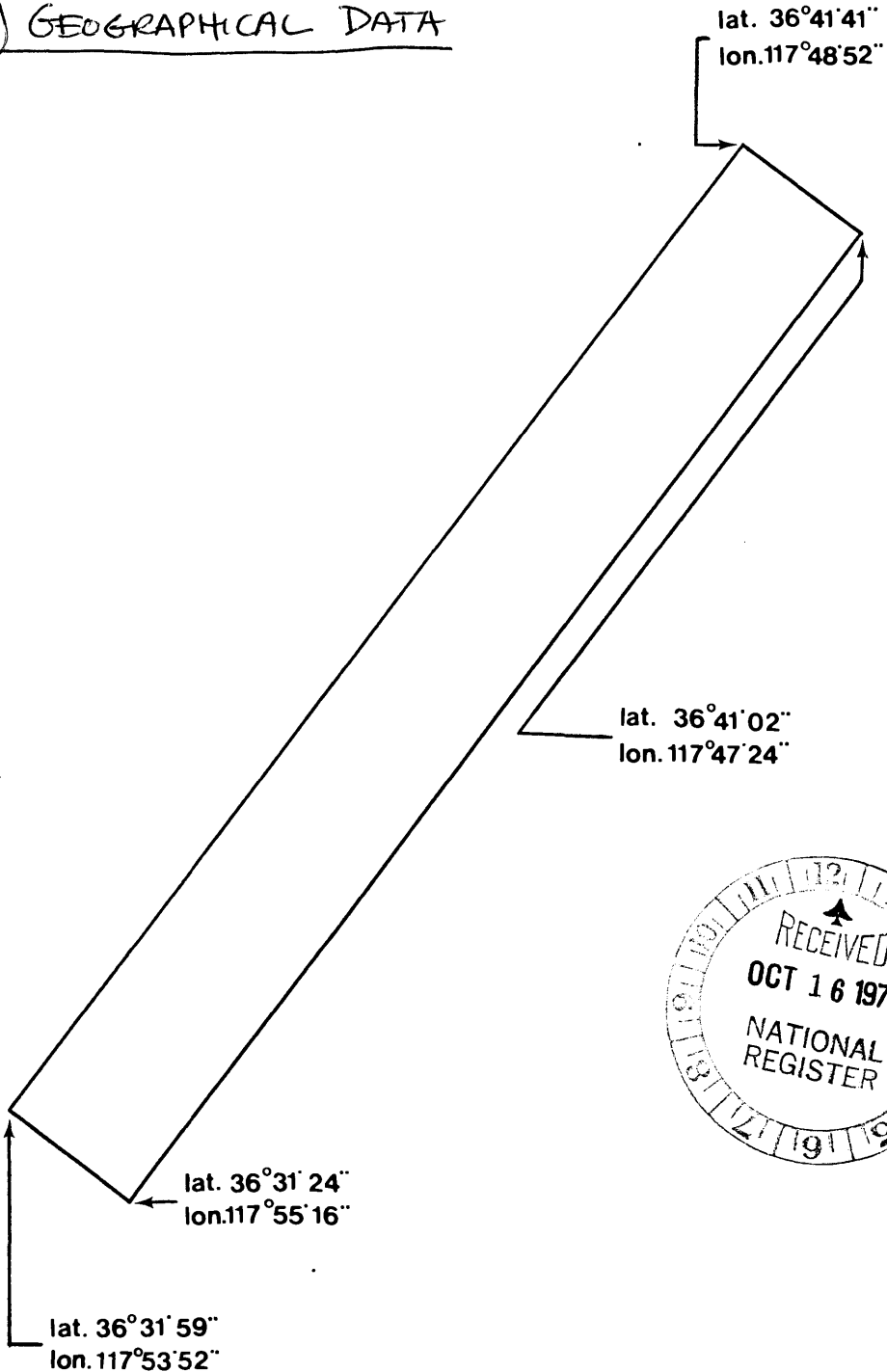
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#10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA



1/2 scale