

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

historic name Muskogee Depot and Freight District

other name/site number _____

street & town Roughly bounded by Columbus Ave. on the north; S. Main St. on the east; Elgin Ave. on the south; and S. 5th St. on the west N/A not for publication

city or town Muskogee N/A vicinity

state Oklahoma code OK county Muskogee code 101 zip code 74401

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Bob L. Balckburn 10 27 -06
Signature of certifying official/Title Bob L. Balckburn/ SHPO Date

Oklahoma Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that the property is:

<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain): _____	_____	_____

NATIONAL REGISTER LISTED
DEL 06 '06

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
 (check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
	5	buildings
1		sites
	2	structures
15		objects
16	7	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
 (Enter categories from instructions)

- TRANSPORTATION/rail-related
- TRANSPORTATION/auto-related
- INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/warehouse
- INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/manufacturing facility
- COMMERCE/warehouse
- COMMERCE/specialty store
- AGRICULTURE/processing
- AGRICULTURE/storage

Current Function
 (Enter categories from instructions)

- RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum
- INDUSTRY/warehouse
- COMMERCE/specialty store
- COMMERCE/warehouse
- COMMERCE/business
- VACANT/NOT IN USE
- UNKNOWN

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions)

- LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival
- OTHER: warehouse
- No Style

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation STONE, CONCRETE
- walls BRICK
- CONCRETE
- roof OTHER
- other BRICK, CONCRETE

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

8. Description

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 Name of repository:

Three Rivers Museum, Muskogee; Muskogee Public Library

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION

INDUSTRY

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

c.1903-c.1930

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Curtiss, Louis, architect

Manhattan Construction Company

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 18.9

UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/5 2/8/5/2/6/6 3/9/5/8/5/5/0
Zone Easting Northing

2 1/5 2/8/5/5/4/5 3/9/5/8/3/2/6
Zone Easting Northing

3 1/5 2/8/5/4/7/4 3/9/5/8/1/7/4
Zone Easting Northing

4 1/5 2/8/5/0/8/8 3/9/5/8/3/8/7
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of the Muskogee Historic Freight District is indicated by the black line on the attached boundary map.

Property Tax No. N/A

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the Muskogee Depot and Freight District encompass the concentration of historic resources that retain integrity and are significantly associated with the railroad and rail freight development of the area as described in the contexts presented in Section 8. The contributing resources define the historic setting and feelings of the Muskogee Depot and Freight District, and the District's boundaries correspond to the rear lot lines of the included properties and include the alleyway rail spur between South 5th and Owen Streets. The four-lane width and greater volume of traffic along Columbus Avenue create a natural break between the District and the commercial and institutional development to the north. Beyond the boundaries, non-associated retail commercial and residential uses, as well as vacant lots become increasingly prevalent.

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sally F. Schwenk, President and Kerry Davis, Architectural Historian

organization Sally Schwenk Associates, Inc. date June 2006

street & number 112 West 9th Street, Suite 415 telephone 816-221-2672

city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64105

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs: Representative **black-and-white photographs** of the property.

Additional items: (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name/title See continuation sheet(s) for Property Owners

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section 7 Page 1

**Muskogee Depot and Freight District
Muskogee County, Oklahoma**

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION STATEMENT

The proposed Muskogee Depot and Freight District is located in Muskogee, Muskogee County, Oklahoma (Figure 1). The District is approximately two blocks southwest of the central business district. It encompasses an approximately 18.9-acre polygonal area that lies on level ground and shares the same grade as the rail lines (Figure 2). It is generally bounded by Columbus Avenue to the north, South 2nd Street to the east, the alley between South 5th Street and Owen Street on the west, and the south property lines of the contributing properties on the south side of Elgin Avenue between South 2nd Street and South 6th Street. The areas adjacent to the Muskogee Depot and Freight District boundaries are characterized by a loss of physical integrity through demolition and recent construction to the north and west; non-associated residential and commercial retail resources prevail to the south and east. The 1979 Columbus Street overpass forms a strong visual boundary to the north.

The Muskogee Depot and Freight District illustrates typical freight-associated land use during the first half of the twentieth century as railroad development patterns emerged in Muskogee and established the city as a regional railroad marketing center. The District includes twenty-three resources, of which sixteen contribute to the District's historic character and date from circa 1903 to circa 1930. In addition to three depots, the buildings in the District include warehouses, manufacturing and processing plants, wholesale distribution offices and warehouses, rail- and road-related transportation facilities, and retail and wholesale commercial buildings. The District also includes one contributing site in the form of the intact open rail yard that includes the arc of the former railroad right-of-way, which spans the south side of Elgin Avenue from South 2nd Street to South 6th Street, and its rail spurs that run to the north between South 6th Street and South 4th Street.

ELABORATION

SETTING

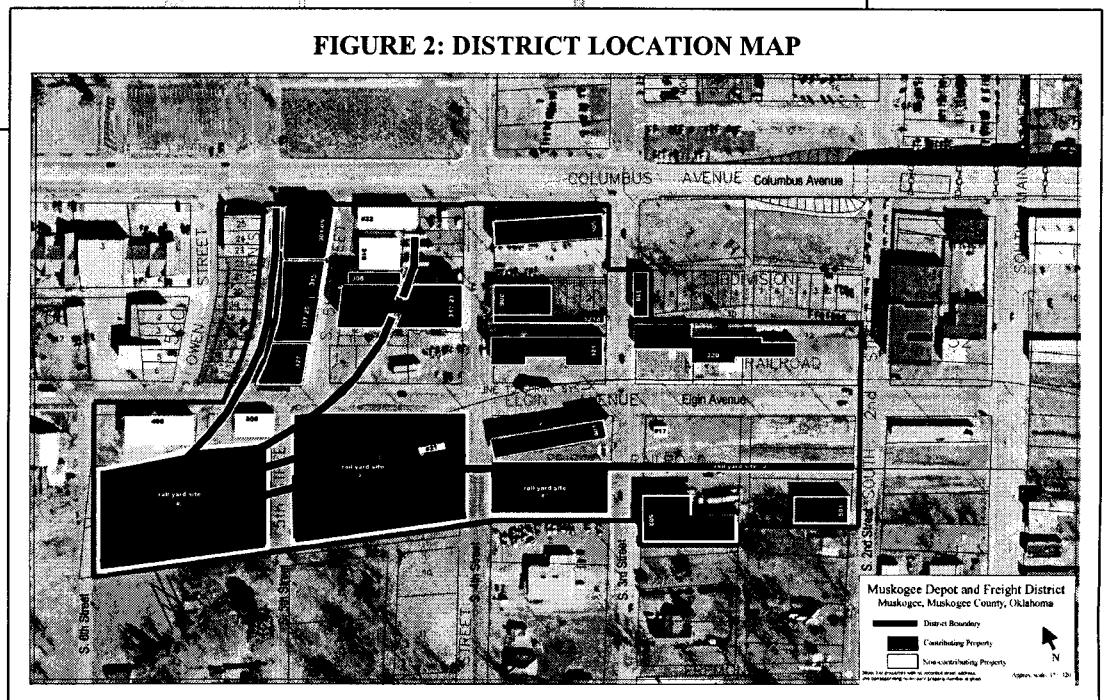
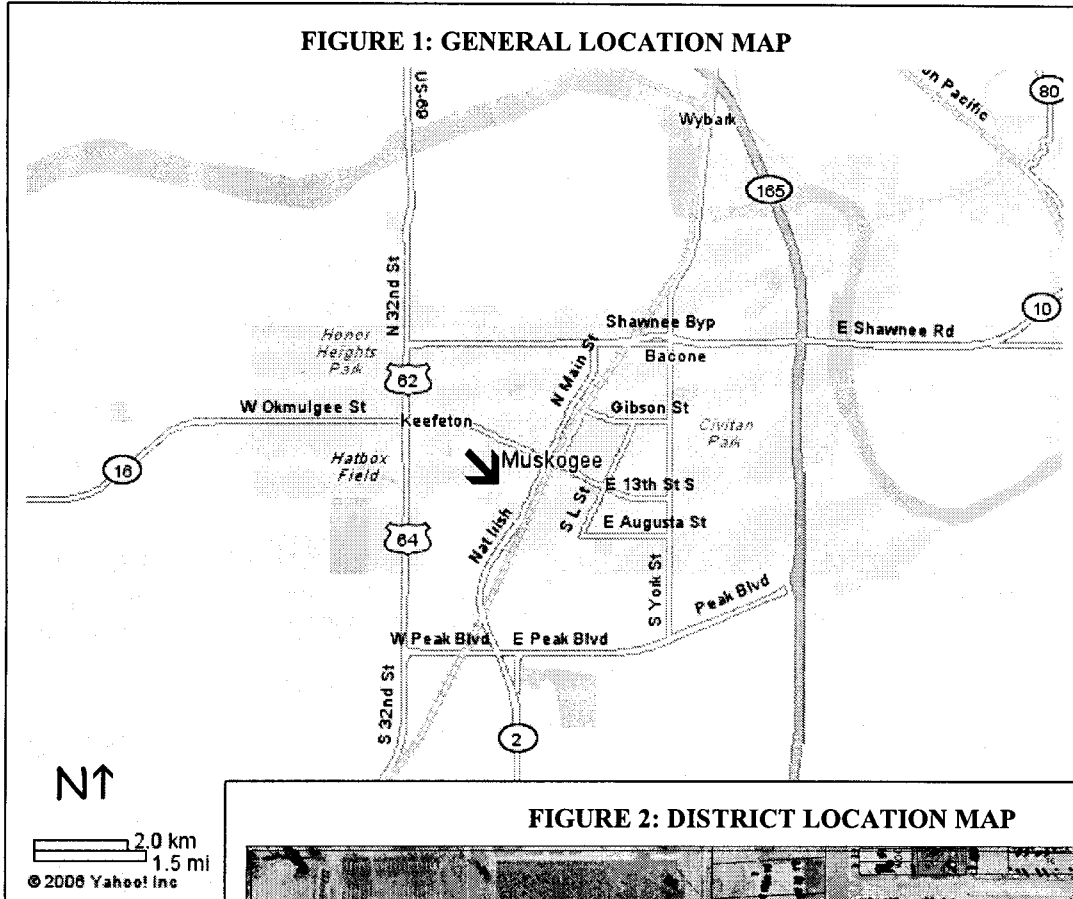
The District's setting reflects its history of rail-specific uses and is composed almost entirely of industrial and commercial facilities that relied on convenient access to rail transportation for the distribution of goods. The original rail yard and its spurs, which is a contributing resource to the District, form the functional spine from which all of the buildings emanate. The open space of the rail yard is intact and although the rails were removed during the 1980s, the rail alignments are still legible in the grading and vegetation, corresponding parallel alignment of buildings and structures, as well as through a new asphalt pedestrian trail that follows one of the main lines southwest from South 4th Street.

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The District's streetscapes create a distinct sense of place. The buildings are sited on a traditional grid system, except where the street grid is skewed to align with rail spurs, such as at South 5th Street north of Elgin Avenue and the corresponding alleys behind. Rail lines from the freight rail yard enter into alleys that run north, bisecting the blocks and aligning with loading docks designed for box cars. Vestiges of these rail spurs heading north from the main track bed — between South 4th and South 5th Streets, between South 5th and Owen Streets, and at the intersection of South 3rd Street and Elgin Avenue — are still visible. The streets have asphalt paving and are lined with concrete curbs punctuated by numerous short concrete driveways that access auto freight bays. Round, wood power poles and modern cobra-head street lamps line the streets. Brick paving is still visible in the wide gutters of Elgin Avenue between South 2nd and South 4th Streets.

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

The Muskogee Depot and Freight District encompasses a unique collection of transportation, manufacturing, warehousing, and commercial resources. Of the multiple railroad lines that historically traveled through Muskogee, no other depots and no other cohesive collections of associated railroad-related freight buildings and structures survive. All of the sixteen contributing properties date from circa 1903 to circa 1930, of which, over 80 percent date to the period between circa 1903 and circa 1920. The seven non-contributing resources include three historic resources that have lost their historic architectural integrity — a water tower moved to its current location in circa 2004, a concrete freight shed ramp, and the ruins of brick warehouse — and four industrial/commercial resources constructed after the period of significance that date from circa 1955 to circa 1985.

The properties that compose the Muskogee Depot and Freight District include a variety of industrial/transportation building forms and construction techniques that roughly reflect a forty-year continuum of construction. The relationship between these resources — based on their location, streetscape, building materials, workmanship, scale, and massing — creates a district with a strong feeling of cohesiveness.

The buildings are generally one to two stories tall and have two primary elevations — a railroad boxcar freight elevation oriented to an adjacent rail line, and an administrative elevation oriented to the street. A number of buildings feature auto freight loading features with vehicular bays oriented to the street. The buildings generally have rectangular footprints and are constructed of load-bearing brick and/or reinforced concrete; their fenestration is irregular in its arrangement and includes a variety of window and door sizes.

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Most of the buildings feature minimal to no decorative embellishment and are void of high style architectural influences. Modest corbel courses of brick and header brick windowsills form the most common ornamental treatment. As a group, their restrained designs; brick, concrete, or stucco walls; and dense grouping contribute to the District's unique sense of place. Only two, both of which are railroad company buildings, reflect conscious stylistic designs in their references to the Mission Revival style that was popular during the era in which they were constructed.

Functional Property Types

Function, not architectural style, dictated the design of these buildings. Therefore, the terminology provided by data categories for functions and uses listed in *National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* guided the derivation of functional property types to facilitate categorization. The contributing resources fall under the following functional property types: two are Industrial Manufacturing Facilities and Warehouses; three are Commercial Warehouses; three are Commercial Distribution Office and Warehouses; five are Rail-Related Transportation Resources; one is a Road-Related Transportation Resource; and two are Specialized Businesses.

Non-contributing resources include one Commercial Warehouse, two Commercial Distribution Office and Warehouse resources, two Rail-Related Transportation resources, one Specialized Business, and one modern utility building with the categorization of "Other."

INTEGRITY

Because of the lack of significant stylistic architectural features, determination of the individual integrity of these railroad freight area commercial and industrial buildings as contributing or non-contributing resources to the District is based on their ability to communicate their period of construction and historic functional use during the District's period of significance. This required the retention of sufficient levels of original building materials, as well as the original form, plan, spaces, and special functional features such as railroad and truck loading docks, ramps, and so forth. Where architectural styling was originally present, evidence of workmanship through retention of materials and stylistic and design features was important. In addition, resources determined to be contributing components of the District remained substantially unaltered since the period of the District's significance and all had to share the historic associations of the District.

The most common alterations to the historic buildings within the District are the replacement of window units and the blocking in of window, door, and/or vehicular bay openings with masonry, glass block, or plywood sheathing. This is to be expected due to the types of multiple uses over time, and many of the

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**Muskogee Depot and Freight District
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buildings demonstrate the use of these treatments. In the majority of cases, the original openings are intact and the rhythm of the windows and bays continues to be readable and provides visual evidence of the original building function. Replacement or blocking of window, door, or vehicular openings alone did not warrant the assignment of non-contributing status.

By defining the essential physical features necessary to convey each property's functional role and associations with the railroads that serviced Muskogee and contributed to its growth, it was ascertained that the District as a whole enjoyed integrity as the majority of the property types in the District retained sufficient integrity to communicate their function, period of construction, and associations with the rail yards and facilities, even though some were individually undistinguished. Moreover, the relationship among the resources remains substantially unchanged since the period of significance, creating a distinct sense of place that successfully communicates the period of significance and associations.

CONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES

The following building descriptions are organized numerically by street address. Descriptive information about integrity notes elements that affected their evaluation as contributing or non-contributing properties in the District.

01. 220 Elgin Ave.

Historic Property Name: Midland Valley Railroad Passenger Depot
Style: Mission Revival
Functional Property Type: Transportation Resource: Rail Passenger Depot
Date of Construction: 1916
No. of stories: 2 **Walls:** Concrete
Roof shape: Gable; Flat
Integrity: Good
Photograph Number: 1, 4, 5
Architect/Builder: Curtiss, Louis, architect; Manhattan Construction Company, builder

Description:

This one-story, rectangular plan, reinforced concrete building has a flat roof. A prominent two-story gable-front section centrally intersects the middle part of the building. The building has two

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primary elevations — the south elevation that faces the Midland Valley railroad alignment and the north elevation that once faced a row of commercial buildings (demolished 1922). The fenestration arrangement clearly conveys the functional sections of the building. The bands of one-over-one light wood sash windows and half-light pedestrian entrance doors denote the ticketing and passenger waiting areas at the west end; and the large loading dock bays with bi-fold wood doors denote the baggage and freight areas at the east end. Broad cantilevered porches shelter pedestrian entrance locations; the baggage and freight section of the building is unsheltered. The building's parapet walls, large exposed porch roof beams, faux tile roof, and smooth exterior finish convey its Mission Revival style. Stylistic elements are geometric, angular, and crisp; linear and rectangular recesses provide shadowed texture in the otherwise smooth exterior finish. Additional character-defining features include broad keystones at the gable pediments and over select baggage/freight bays, a geometrically decorative exterior chimney located centrally on the west elevation of the two-story section, the concrete loading dock along the baggage/freight section of the north elevation, and the use of recessed letters on both the east and west secondary elevations and on the chimney that read, "MUSKOGEE." and "M," respectively. A circa 1999 one-story addition of complimentary design extends from the west elevation. Historic photographs show that a section of porch and decorative parapet elements along the east and west secondary elevations were removed before circa 1955. Despite the loss of these features, this building retains good architectural integrity. It clearly conveys its historic associations and contributes to the significance of the District.

02. Elgin Ave., between S. 2nd St. and S. 6th St.

Historic Property Name: St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad ("Frisco") and Midland Valley Railroad Yard

Style: No Style

Functional Property Type: Transportation Resource: Rail Yard

Date of Construction: c. 1903

No. of stories: N/A **Walls:** N/A

Roof shape: N/A

Integrity: Fair

Photograph Number: 24, 25

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Description:

This site is located along Elgin Avenue between South 6th Street and South 2nd Street. Open, level

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space covered with grass, gravel, and remnant railroad ties characterize the site. The site consists of large tracts of open space in the southwest corner of the District, the spur lines that arc to the north between Owen and South 5th Streets and between South 5th and South 4th Streets, and the open space that extends east along the south side of the Frisco Freight Depot and the north side of the Benton County Hardware Company and Loose-Wiles Biscuit Company buildings. Remnants of the rail are intact and visible in the alley to the west behind South 5th Street and at the intersection of South 3rd Street and Elgin Avenue. The site is integral to the understanding of the surrounding railroad depot and freight resources. Although the tracks were removed in the 1980s, the site retains sufficient integrity to convey its important historic associations and contributes to the significance of the District.

03. 501 S. 2nd St.

Historic Property Name: Loose-Wiles Biscuit Company Building
Style: No Style
Functional Property Type: Commercial Distribution Office and Warehouse
Date of Construction: c. 1930
No. of stories: 1 **Walls:** Brick
Roof shape: Flat
Integrity: Good
Photograph Number: 2
Architect/Builder: Unknown

Description:

This one-story brick building has a flat roof and a rectangular footprint that is three bays wide and seven bays deep; the fenestration is asymmetrically arranged throughout. There are two primary elevations — the administrative (east) elevation that faces South 2nd Street and the freight (north) elevation that faces the rail line. The administrative (east) elevation features a pedestrian entrance flanked by a pair of vehicular bays and a large display window. A set of concrete steps with a stepped, solid brick railing provides access to the pedestrian entrance that contains the historic three-quarter light wood-framed door; plywood covers the glazing. The freight (north) elevation features a centrally located loading bay flanked by a large display window and a set of four small square windows placed high in the wall at the west end. The secondary elevations (west and south) feature additional large loading bays and similar small square windows. The window openings contain six-light steel sashes and have flat steel lintels throughout. Courses of header brick form the only decorative treatment on the building and form a water table, the windowsills, and a sign

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frame centered at cornice level of the administrative elevation. Cast concrete caps the parapet walls.

The only non-historic alterations include the covering of the display windows with plywood, the replacement of the original vehicular doors with modern overhead doors, and the wood infill of one of the vehicular bays. These alterations are minimal and do not affect the overall integrity of the building nor its ability to convey its historic and architectural associations.

04. 310 S. 3rd St.

Historic Property Name: Unknown
Style: No Style
Functional Property Type: Specialized Business
Date of Construction: c. 1915
No. of stories: 1 *Walls:* Brick
Roof shape: Flat
Integrity: Good
Photograph Number: 10, 11
Architect/Builder: Unknown

Description:

This brick one-part commercial block building has a flat roof and a rectangular footprint that is four bays wide (defined by identical storefronts on the primary [west] elevation) and is two bays deep (defined by fenestration on the secondary elevation). The primary elevation features four identical storefronts, each with recessed center-bay entrances flanked by large four-light display windows that rest on cast iron bulkheads. A nine-light transom window spans the top of each storefront, the glazing of which has been painted white. Slightly projecting courses of header brick form the only decorative treatment, which surrounds the perimeter of each storefront, forms rectangular frames on the elevation wall above each storefront, and spans the length of the elevation at the cornice level. The south side elevation features a display window with a transom above and a pedestrian entrance that contains brick infill. A painted wall sign at the top of this wall faintly reads, "PEPPER MATTRESS CO." The rear elevation has ten small regularly spaced window openings with segmental arched brick lintels and plywood infill.

This building retains a high degree of physical integrity for its building type and period of construction. It is an excellent example of a historic conversion of commercial/retail space into

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small-scale manufacturing space adjacent to rail lines. It communicates information about the development of the vicinity and is a contributing resource to the significance of the District.

05. 321 S. 3rd St.

Historic Property Name: Midland Valley Railroad Office Building
Style: Mission Revival
Functional Property Type: Transportation Resource: Railroad Administration Building
Date of Construction: c. 1920
No. of stories: 2 **Walls:** Concrete; Brick
Roof shape: Flat
Integrity: Good
Photograph Number: 1, 6, 7,
Architect/Builder: Unknown

Description:

This two-story brick building has a flat roof and a rectangular footprint. It is three bays wide and twenty-five bays deep, defined by second-story fenestration. The primary elevation has a concrete finish and features a peaked parapet wall with a geometrically stylized cornice, keystone, and bracket treatment similar to that found on the Midland Valley Railroad Passenger Depot. Its parapet walls, large exposed porch roof beams, and smooth exterior finish convey its Mission Revival style. A flat concrete awning porch shelters the recessed center-bay entrance. The secondary elevations have exposed brick and a series of twenty-five window openings. The primary elevation and the front (easternmost) seven bays of the side elevations contain steel sashes; the rear (westernmost) eighteen bays contain one-over-one light wood sashes with concrete lintels and sills. A parallel circa 1955 one-story brick addition with a concrete finish extends from the east end of the south side elevation. The primary elevation of this addition features a decorative treatment similar to that of the primary elevation of the main block of the building, from which the addition's wall is recessed approximately two feet. A parallel circa 1950 one-story brick addition extends from the west end of the south elevation. Recent fire damage has affected the integrity of this building; however, it continues to clearly convey its historic associations and contributes to the significance of the District.

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06. 321A S. 3rd St.

Historic Property Name: Unknown
Style: No Style
Functional Property Type: Transportation Resource: Auto Garage
Date of Construction: c. 1930
No. of stories: 1 *Walls:* Metal
Roof shape: Gable: Off-Center
Integrity: Good
Photograph Number: 6, 7
Architect/Builder: Unknown

Description:

This one-story steel-framed auto shed spans the full length of the lot and has only three side walls; the primary elevation, which faces south toward the north elevation of the Midland Valley Railroad Office building, is a single continuous open bay. The building features a side-gabled roof with an off-center ridge. The three side walls and roof are sheathed with corrugated metal. Riveted steel beams, wind-brace steel rods, and 2-by-8-inch lumber framing form the exposed structure. The floor is gravel and dirt. This building retains its physical integrity from the period of significance and clearly communicates its historic associations with the Midland Valley Railroad Office Building.

07. 401 S. 3rd St.

Historic Property Name: St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad ("Frisco") Freight Depot
Style: No Style
Functional Property Type: Transportation Resource: Rail Freight Depot
Date of Construction: c. 1903; c. 1920
No. of stories: 2 *Walls:* Brick
Roof shape: Flat
Integrity: Good
Photograph Number: 1, 8, 15
Architect/Builder: Unknown

Description:

This brick building features a two-story administrative section at the east end and a long one-story

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freight section at the west end. It has a flat roof and a long rectangular footprint that is three bays wide and thirteen bays deep, and is aligned at a slight angle to correspond to the adjacent rail alignments that flank the building. The fenestration is defined by window and door openings and is symmetrically arranged. The building has three primary elevations — two freight elevations that face north and south onto the rail lines, and the administrative elevation that faces east onto South 3rd Street. The administrative section of the building features tall, narrow segmental arched window and door openings in the first story and flat arched window openings in the second story. The original four-over-four light wood sashes are intact, as is the historic half-light wood paneled entrance door in the north end bay; plywood covers the sashes on the second story. All of the window openings have concrete sills. A second pedestrian entrance is located in the south elevation at the center of the second story at the top of a set of exterior metal stairs. The administrative section of the building features decorative treatments that the freight section of the building lacks. These embellishments include: a peaked parapet wall at the top of the east elevation; smooth, geometric concrete trim at the cornice and parapet level; a continuous wide band of wood trim that forms a visor between the first and second stories; a continuous band of slightly projecting soldier brick at the lintel level of the second-story windows; and multiple painted wall signs that read, "FRISCO FREIGHT DEPOT" and "FRISCO." The freight section features a series of eleven freight loading bays sheltered by a continuous shed porch supported by large wood knee brackets. The loading bays each contain the historic wood paneled bi-fold doors and retain the timber and steel bumpers on the raised concrete docks. The secondary (west) elevation of the freight section features three small square window openings that contain plywood. Terracotta tile caps the parapet wall of the freight section.

This building retains a very high degree of historic physical integrity for its type and period of construction. It clearly conveys its strong associations with the District. The recent addition of a wood pedestrian access ramp at the south elevation does not affect the overall integrity of the building nor its ability to communicate its historic significance.

08. 502 S. 3rd St.

Historic Property Name: Benton County Hardware Company Building
Style: No Style
Functional Property Type: Commercial Distribution Office and Warehouse
Date of Construction: c. 1912
No. of stories: 2 **Walls:** Brick
Roof shape: Flat

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Integrity: Fair
Photograph Number: 4, 9, 15
Architect/Builder: Unknown

Description:

This two-story reinforced concrete building has brick curtain walls and a flat roof. The L-shaped plan is four bays wide and eighteen bays deep, defined by the symmetrically arranged exposed reinforced concrete piers. The building has two primary elevations — the freight (north) elevation that faces the rail line and the administrative (west) elevation that faces South 3rd Street. The administrative (west) elevation has four street-level bays delineated by reinforced concrete piers and a continuous concrete lintel that spans the length of the elevation. The street-level bays contain stucco-clad brick curtain walls with irregularly placed window and pedestrian door penetrations. These window openings all have header brick sills and contain one-over-one light wood sashes and steel security bars. Broad rectangular window openings occupy the upper story bays; these openings each contain a band of three aluminum sashes set in wood panel infill and have flat steel lintels and header brick sills. The freight (north) elevation features irregularly placed rectangular window openings of various sizes and large freight loading bays. The window openings contain either one-over-one light wood sashes with steel security bars or multi-light steel sashes; they also have header brick sills and either segmental arched brick lintels or flat steel lintels. A raised concrete loading dock is located along a central section of the freight elevation. An open-wall porch with a shed roof shelters the loading dock and two large freight loading bays, both of which contain their historic sliding wood doors. The secondary elevations (east and south) feature irregularly spaced window openings matching those on the primary elevations and an additional vehicular bay. A series of five corbel courses of brick across the cornice of the administrative elevation provide the only decorative treatment. A tall, raised skylight tower with steel cladding is centrally located on the roof.

A concrete block partition wall divides the administrative space at the front of the building from the open warehouse space at the rear of the building. The open utilitarian space is punctuated by the exposed, square, reinforced concrete posts and beams of the structure.

The freight (north) elevation and secondary elevations retain a high degree of integrity and the building continues to clearly communicate its character-defining functional features, including its orientation to the rail line, freight loading bays, and lack of ornamentation. The application of stucco and the replacement of windows and doors on the administrative (west) elevation diminish the integrity of the elevation. However, the building retains sufficient integrity to communicate its

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architectural form, period and method of construction, and strong historic associations with the District.

09. 305 S. 3rd St.

Historic Property Name: Unknown
Style: No Style
Functional Property Type: Transportation Resource: Auto Freight Depot
Date of Construction: c. 1920
No. of stories: 1 *Walls:* Brick
Roof shape: Flat
Integrity: Good
Photograph Number: 11, 12
Architect/Builder: Unknown

Description:

This one-story brick building has two primary elevations located on opposite ends of the building — the east elevation, which faces South 3rd Street, and the west elevation, which faces South 4th Street). Both are historically vehicular freight elevations. The building has a flat roof and a rectangular footprint that is four bays wide (defined by window and door openings on the primary [east and west] elevations) and fifteen bays deep (defined by projecting brick piers on the north elevation, which faces Columbus Avenue). The bays are asymmetrically arranged throughout. Each of the primary elevations feature a central vehicular bay flanked by three multi-pane steel sash windows with header brick sills. A continuous concrete lintel spans the window and door openings and a band of soldier brick and three consecutive corbel courses decorate the cornice of each primary elevation. The vehicular bay on the east elevation contains concrete block infill and a non-original pedestrian entrance; the east elevation also features a second pedestrian entrance. The secondary elevations (north and south) feature stepped parapet walls and irregularly placed window openings, vehicular bays, and pedestrian entrance doors of various sizes and shapes; several of these openings contain brick or plywood infill.

The infill of historic window and door openings with non-original materials affects the integrity of this building; however, the fenestration location and rhythm is still readily apparent and these alterations are reversible. The building continues to clearly communicate its strong historic associations with the development of the District. Its location, utilitarian design lacking decorative

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embellishment, prominent vehicular freight bays, and irregular fenestration are all character-defining features of this building type and period of construction.

10. 317-323 S. 4th St.

Historic Property Name: Muskogee Transfer & Storage Company Building (Owen Building)

Style: No Style

Functional Property Type: Commercial Warehouse

Date of Construction: c. 1908

No. of stories: 3 *Walls:* Concrete

Roof shape: Flat

Integrity: Excellent

Photograph Number: 13, 14, 17

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Description:

This three-story reinforced concrete building has a flat roof and a barbell-shaped footprint. Twin warehouses with trapezoidal footprints that are linked by an upper-story connector form this unique footprint. The connector allows for the pass-through of the rail siding below. This large building, which is the tallest in the vicinity, has three primary elevations — the rail freight (south) elevation, which is aligned with and designed to access the rail siding, and the two vehicular freight/administrative (east and west) elevations, which face onto South 4th and South 5th Streets. The building is fourteen bays wide and five bays deep, defined by the exposed full-height reinforced concrete piers. The rail freight (south) elevation is asymmetrically arranged due to the accommodation of the design to the rail spur that bisects the building. The large loading bays and the two freight elevator towers are located toward the center of the elevation, adjacent to the rail. A small number of undersized square window openings containing one-by-one light steel sashes with wire glazing are irregularly placed throughout the south elevation. Each window opening has a slightly projecting concrete sill. The connector is visible on the south elevation and allows pass-through between the second and third floors of the twin warehouses. The parapet wall is gently stepped across the length of this elevation. Both the east and west vehicular freight/administrative elevations are symmetrically arranged and feature a prominent center-bay vehicular entrance topped by a simple concrete visor. Small square windows matching those on the south elevation are symmetrically located throughout these elevations. A pedestrian entrance is located in the south end bay of the east elevation, sheltered by a simple visor canopy. Letters in relief are centrally

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located on the east elevation between the second and third stories; these letters read, "OWEN."
There are no windows or doors in the north elevation.

The historic interior spatial arrangement is largely unaltered. The historic freight elevator is intact and still in operation, the administrative space continues to operate in the southeast corner of the building, and the square reinforced concrete posts and beams remain exposed in the utilitarian warehouse spaces.

This building retains a very high degree of physical integrity for its building type and period of construction. It has very strong associations with the development of the District that are readily apparent in its location, design, and materials. Its lack of ornamentation, rail-specific design, and character-defining freight openings all contribute to the District's significance.

11. 306 S. 4th St.

Historic Property Name: Unknown

Style: No Style

Functional Property Type: Industrial Manufacturing Facility and Warehouse

Date of Construction: c. 1910

No. of stories: 1 **Walls:** Stucco

Roof shape: Flat

Integrity: Good

Photograph Number: 12

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Description:

This one-story brick building has a flat roof and a rectangular footprint that is three bays wide (defined by projecting piers on the primary [west] elevation) and five bays deep (defined by fenestration on the secondary [north] elevation). The bays are symmetrically arranged throughout. The primary (west) elevation features a center-bay vehicular entrance that contains a metal overhead door and is flanked by a single window opening on each side. The window openings have header brick sills and contain multi-pane steel sashes and wood-framed screens. The window openings on the secondary elevation are of uniform shape and size, are arranged singly, and contain wood louvers, plywood sash covering, or multi-light steel sashes. The exterior of the building retains its historic stucco finish, which features two parallel bands of revealed header brick at the

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cornice level and at the top of the parapet wall. These bands frame a painted wall sign that faintly reads, "RAYMOND'S." Terracotta tiles cap the parapet walls.

This building retains a high degree of historic integrity. It clearly conveys its historic associations with the development of the District. Its location, prominent vehicular freight bay, and lack of decorative embellishment are all features that characterize its building type and period of construction.

12. 308 S. 5th St.

Historic Property Name: Muskogee Transfer Company Garage

Style: No Style

Functional Property Type: Commercial Warehouse

Date of Construction: c. 1920

No. of stories: 1 *Walls:* Brick

Roof shape: Gable

Integrity: Fair

Photograph Number: 17

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Description:

This one-story brick building has a rectangular footprint and a false front wall that conceals a shallow-pitched gable roof covered with corrugated metal. The false front wall steps up in the center to form a raised rectangular middle portion. The primary elevation is three bays wide defined by a pedestrian entrance that contains a non-original glass door, a central loading dock bay, and a segmental arched window opening that contains a modern fixed sash. A non-original wood-framed screen covers the freight loading bay and a corrugated metal awning shelters the northern two-thirds of the elevation.

The replacement and covering of the original windows and door affects the integrity of this building; however, these alterations do not affect the overall ability of the building to convey its historic associations with the neighboring Muskogee Transfer Company and the District as a whole. This building retains sufficient integrity to contribute to the significance of the District.

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13. 301-309 S. 5th St. (429 Columbus Ave.)

Historic Property Name: Unknown
Style: No Style
Functional Property Type: Commercial Distribution Office and Warehouse
Date of Construction: c. 1920
No. of stories: 1 *Walls:* Brick
Roof shape: Flat
Integrity: Fair
Photograph Number: 18
Architect/Builder: Unknown

Description:

This one-story brick building has a flat roof and a trapezoidal footprint that reflects the arc of the rail spur along the west elevation. There are three primary elevations — the administrative (north) elevation that faces onto Columbus Avenue; the rail freight (west) elevation that faces the rail line; and the vehicular freight (east) elevation that faces onto South 5th Street. The building is seven bays wide and ten bays deep, defined by window and door openings that are asymmetrically arranged and irregularly placed throughout the primary elevations. The rail freight (west) elevation is distinctly angled to align with the railroad spur that traveled along this wall. Irregularly placed loading bays and window openings characterize this elevation; openings contain steel sashes, plywood infill, or masonry infill. The vehicular freight (east) elevation features three vehicular bays and a set of four window openings. The vehicular bays contain decorative concrete block infill and the window openings contain multi-light steel sashes, plywood infill, or brick infill. The administrative (north) elevation features sets of two to four tall, narrow window openings and a pedestrian entrance in the west end bay. The window openings have header brick sills and contain either multi-light steel sashes or brick infill. Two projecting brick piers delineate the two north end bays of this elevation.

The only decorative treatment is a continuous course of slightly projecting header brick at the top of the parapet walls that rises above the parapet wall at intervals to simulate pier caps.

The infill of historic openings with non-original materials diminishes the integrity of this building; however, the location and rhythm of these openings is apparent and legible and these alterations are reversible. The building retains sufficient integrity to communicate its architectural form, period of construction, and strong historic associations with the surrounding railroad freight district. The

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character-defining functional features — location, rail-specific orientation and design, multiple rail and vehicular freight loading bays, and lack of significant decorative embellishment — continue to clearly communicate its significance to the District.

14. 313 S. 5th St.

Historic Property Name: Unknown
Style: No Style
Functional Property Type: Commercial Warehouse: Baled Hay Storage
Date of Construction: c. 1910
No. of stories: 1 *Walls:* Brick
Roof shape: Flat
Integrity: Good
Photograph Number: 19
Architect/Builder: Unknown

Description:

This one-story brick building has a flat roof and two primary elevations — the freight (west) elevation, which faces the rail spur, and the administrative (east) elevation, which faces onto South 5th Street. The trapezoidal footprint reflects the arc of the rail spur along the freight (west) elevation and is six asymmetrical bays wide, defined by window and door openings on the administrative (east) elevation. The freight (west) elevation is distinctly angled to align with the curvature of the railroad spur that travels along this wall. The elevation features a stepped parapet and large window openings and loading bays asymmetrically arranged in the elevation. The window openings have flat steel lintels and header brick sills, and contain either multi-pane steel sashes with operable hoppers or concrete block infill. The loading bays contain wood overhead doors or concrete block infill. The administrative (east) elevation features a stepped parapet, a single pedestrian door in the north end bay, and a series of five tall, narrow window openings with segmental arched brick lintels; plywood covers these openings. The only decorative treatment on the building is single courses of projecting header brick found at the windowsills and at the top of the administrative (east) elevation's parapet wall.

The covering and infill of selected window and door openings with non-original materials affects the integrity of this building. However, these reversible alterations do not compromise the building's overall ability to convey its strong historic associations with the development of the District. The building clearly communicates its historic character-defining features, including its

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distinct design relating directly to the adjacent rail spur, its freight loading doors and large window openings with historic steel sashes, and its utilitarian appearance lacking decorative treatments.

15. 317-25 S. 5th St.

Historic Property Name: Unknown
Style: No Style
Functional Property Type: Specialized Business: Auto Repair
Date of Construction: c. 1910
No. of stories: 1 *Walls:* Brick
Roof shape: Flat
Integrity: Good
Photograph Number: 19, 20, 21
Architect/Builder: Unknown

Description:

This one-story brick building has a flat roof and two primary elevations — the freight (west) elevation that faces the rail spur and the administrative (east) elevation that faces onto South 5th Street. The trapezoidal footprint reflects the arc of the rail spur along the freight (west) elevation and is six asymmetrical bays wide, defined by window and door openings on the administrative (east) elevation. The freight (west) elevation is distinctly angled to align with the curvature of the railroad spur that travels along this wall. The elevation features a stepped parapet and large window openings and loading bays asymmetrically arranged in the elevation. The window openings have flat steel lintels and header brick sills, and contain either multi-pane steel sashes with operable hoppers or concrete block infill. The loading bays contain wood overhead doors or concrete block infill. The administrative (east) elevation features a stepped parapet and a variety of window and door penetrations of various sizes, shapes, and arrangements placed irregularly in the elevation wall. There are two pedestrian entrances, large square window openings with multi-pane steel sashes, and a vehicular bay. The only decorative treatment on the building are single courses of projecting header brick found at the windowsills and at the top of the administrative facade's parapet wall. A painted wall sign centrally located at the top of the elevation wall faintly reads, "MUSKOGEE SUPPLY INC."

The utilitarian interior spatial arrangement is intact with open floor space punctuated by wood support posts. The wood truss roof is exposed and concrete block partition walls divide the space into function-specific areas.

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The covering and infill of selected window and door openings with non-original materials affects the integrity of this building. However, these reversible alterations do not compromise the building's overall ability to convey its strong historic associations with the development of the District. The building clearly communicates its historic character-defining features, including its distinct design relating directly to the adjacent rail spur, its freight loading doors and large window openings with historic steel sashes, and its utilitarian appearance lacking decorative treatments.

16. 327 S. 5th St.

Historic Property Name: Southern Creamery Company Building
Style: No Style
Functional Property Type: Industrial Manufacturing Facility and Warehouse
Date of Construction: c. 1920
No. of stories: 1 *Walls:* Brick
Roof shape: Flat
Integrity: Good
Photograph Number: 16, 19, 20
Architect/Builder: Unknown

Description:

This one-story brick building has a flat roof and two primary elevations — the freight (west) elevation, which faces the rail siding, and the administrative/auto freight (east) elevation, which faces South 5th Street. The trapezoidal footprint reflects the arc of the rail spur along the freight (west) elevation and is seven asymmetrical bays wide (defined by projecting brick piers on the administrative [east] elevation) and seven asymmetrical bays deep (defined by window and door openings on the secondary [south] elevation). The freight elevation is distinctly angled to align with the curvature of the railroad spur that travels along this wall. The elevation features two large loading bays and two tall, irregularly placed windows with multi-pane steel sashes; all openings have flat steel lintels and header brick sills. A raised concrete loading dock, angled to facilitate freight loading access, is intact at the south end loading bay. The administrative/auto freight elevation features pedestrian entrances in both the south end and north end bays, with vehicular loading bays and window openings of various sizes between. These openings contain plywood, brick, or glass block infill. The secondary (south) elevation has seven window and loading bay openings of various sizes that are irregularly placed and a raised, recessed pedestrian entrance at the east end. Brick, glass block, and fixed steel sashes fill each of these window openings. Modest

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brickwork provides the only decorative treatment. This treatment appears as a decorative drip mold over the pedestrian entrance at the south end bay of the east elevation and in two parallel corbel courses that span the administrative (east) and secondary (south) elevations at cornice level and frame painted wall signs that faintly read, "HEATING - AIR COND....," and "LAKESIDE BUTTER COMPANY."

The original fenestration rhythm and locations are apparent, characterized by large loading bays, irregularly sized windows, and relatively unpronounced pedestrian entrances.

The freight elevation retains a high degree of integrity and the building continues to clearly communicate its character-defining functional features, including its location, orientation, and distinct design to efficiently align with the rail spur, its freight loading bays and dock, and its modest decorative treatments. The infill of original openings diminishes the integrity of the administrative and secondary elevations; however, the location and rhythm of these openings is apparent and legible and these alterations are reversible. The building retains sufficient integrity to communicate its architectural form, period of construction, and strong historic associations with the District.

NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

17. **Elgin Ave. at S. 3rd St., Southeast Corner**

Historic Property Name: Unknown

Style: No Style

Functional Property Type: Other

Date of Construction: c. 1985

No. of stories: 1 *Walls:* Metal

Roof shape: Gable

Integrity: N/A

Photograph Number: 9

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Description:

This small platform-frame building has a shallow gable roof and is oriented parallel with Elgin Avenue. Corrugated metal covers the roof and walls. The building has a single pedestrian entrance and irregularly placed aluminum sash windows with security bars.

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18. 500 Elgin Ave.

Historic Property Name: Muskogee Tool Company Building
Style: No Style
Functional Property Type: Commercial Distribution Office and Warehouse
Date of Construction: c. 1918
No. of stories: 1 *Walls:* Brick
Roof shape: N/A
Integrity: Poor
Photograph Number: 16, 22
Architect/Builder: Unknown

Description:

This one-story brick building only retains its stone foundation and brick walls. The rectangular plan building has asymmetrically arranged fenestration throughout and is six bays wide and seven bays deep. Most of the window and door openings have segmental arched brick lintels and have been filled with brick. The original wood-frame, steel-clad loading bay structure attached to the west elevation and aligned with the rail line is no longer extant.

This building communicates information about the freight development of the District.

19. 400 Elgin Ave.

Historic Property Name: Unknown
Style: No Style
Functional Property Type: Commercial Distribution Office and Warehouse
Date of Construction: c. 1955
No. of stories: 1 *Walls:* Metal
Roof shape: Gable
Integrity: Good
Photograph Number: 23
Architect/Builder: Unknown

Description:

This one-story steel-frame corrugated metal building has a rectangular plan and a gable roof. The building, which is oriented parallel to Elgin Avenue, has two primary elevations — the

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administrative (east) elevation and the freight (south) elevation, which faces the rail line. The only openings in the corrugated metal walls are a pedestrian entrance and a square window on the administrative elevation and a loading bay on the freight elevation. A set of concrete steps provides access to the pedestrian entrance. The raised concrete loading dock is intact at the loading bay located at the east end of the freight (south) elevation. The roof ridge features six ventilators. There is no attempt at decorative treatment. A small sign that reads "Butler" is located on the gable peak of the east elevation.

This building retains a high degree of physical integrity for its type and period of construction, with no apparent non-original alterations. However, it was constructed after the period of significance of the District and, therefore, is a non-contributing resource.

20. 401 S. 3rd St.

Historic Property Name: Unknown
Style: No Style
Functional Property Type: Transportation Resource: Water Tower
Date of Construction: Unknown; Moved 2004
No. of stories: N/A **Walls:** Metal
Roof shape: N/A
Integrity: Poor
Photograph Number: 15
Architect/Builder: Unknown

Description:

This structure was moved to its current location in 2004. This cylindrical water tank stands approximately three stories tall on an exposed steel frame. The four-sided pyramidal frame consists of round post members and rests on a square concrete pad. The tank has a shallow conical roof.

Koch Industries donated \$20,000 to move this structure to the City of Muskogee in 2004. It was originally located in the Glenpool/Jenks area south of Tulsa, Oklahoma. The Muskogee Rotary donated \$10,000 for its restoration and painting.

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21. S. 4th St. at Elgin Ave.

Historic Property Name: Unknown
Style: No Style
Functional Property Type: Transportation Resource: Rail Freight Ramp
Date of Construction: unknown
No. of stories: N/A *Walls:* Concrete
Roof shape: N/A
Integrity: Poor
Photograph Number: 16
Architect/Builder: Unknown

Description:

This ramp structure was constructed at an unknown date between 1907 and 1951. Its original structural configuration and physical associations with other rail-related structures are uncertain. This freight ramp structure is approximately 12 feet wide and 40 feet long. At its tallest point, which is at the west end, it reaches a total height of 4.5 feet. The historic timber bumpers are intact on the west end and along the inside of the curbs that run its length.

Although this building communicates information about the development of the surrounding rail freight district, it no longer retains sufficient physical materials to contribute to the significance of the District.

22. S. 5th St. at Columbus Ave., Southeast Corner

Historic Property Name: Unknown
Style: No Style
Functional Property Type: Commercial Warehouse
Date of Construction: 1972
No. of stories: 1 *Walls:* Concrete
Roof shape: Flat
Integrity: N/A
Photograph Number: 17
Architect/Builder: Unknown

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Description:

This one-story concrete building has a rectangular footprint and a flat roof. The primary elevation is three symmetrical bays wide and features a large vehicular entrance with a metal overhead door in the center bay.

This building has not yet reached fifty years of age and does not contribute to the historic significance of the District.

23. 318 S. 5th St.

Historic Property Name: Unknown
Style: No Style
Functional Property Type: Specialized Business
Date of Construction: c. 1985
No. of stories: 1 **Walls:** Concrete Block
Roof shape: Gable
Integrity: N/A
Photograph Number: 17
Architect/Builder: Unknown

Description:

This one-story concrete block building has a rectangular footprint and a shallow-pitched gable roof. The primary elevation is two asymmetrical bays wide and features a pedestrian entrance in the north bay, and a large display window in the south bay. A visor porch shelters the south half of the façade.

This building has not yet reached fifty years of age and does not contribute to the historic significance of the District.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Muskogee Depot and Freight District is locally significant under National Register Criterion A in the areas of **TRANSPORTATION, COMMERCE, and INDUSTRY**, and under Criterion C in the area of **ARCHITECTURE**. The District is one of two major industrial and commercial areas that evolved in Muskogee adjacent to rail freight facilities beginning in the territorial period and continuing into the early twentieth century. Its historic significance is based on its associations with the development of rail transportation and the commercial and industrial growth of Muskogee that shaped the town's first fifty years. In particular, the District has significant associations with the rapid rise of the railroad in the early twentieth century that established Muskogee as a regional center of warehousing and agricultural commodity processing. The District's architectural significance is rooted in its embodiment of distinctive characteristics of architectural and functional property types erected in railroad freight areas in the early twentieth century. It reflects the architectural characteristics of industrial manufacturing and processing facilities, warehouses, and wholesale distribution facilities and their methods of construction. Of special note are three railroad depot and administrative buildings — the Midland Valley Railroad passenger depot at 220 Elgin Avenue, the Midland Valley Railroad Office Building at 321 South Third Street, and the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad ("Frisco") freight depot at 401 South 3rd Street. In addition to their individual stylistic significance, these rail-related buildings reflect the unique design characteristics of their railroad architectural property type and demonstrate the evolution and variation of styles and features of railroad depots and administrative buildings. The District includes sixteen contributing resources and seven non-contributing resources. Its period of significance begins with the circa 1903 establishment of the St. Louis and San Francisco and Midland Valley rail yards and depots and continues to circa 1930, the date of construction of the last contributing building erected in the District and the apex of railroad expansion in Oklahoma.

RAILROAD DEVELOPMENT IN MUSKOGEE

THE EARLY YEARS

What is today the city of Muskogee is located in what was once called the "Three Forks" region at the junction of the Grand (Neosho) and Verdigris Rivers near a point where they enter the Arkansas River. Euro-Americans first entered the region in the late eighteenth century as part of the fur trade. During the 1830s, the forced removal of the Cherokee and Creek Nations from Alabama and Georgia introduced these Native American cultural groups into the area.

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The quality of the agricultural lands in the lower Arkansas River valley was such that, by the 1850s, large self-sufficient plantations scattered across the area engaged in the production of livestock, cotton, corn, wheat, and fodder crops.¹ During the Civil War, the area depopulated and after the end of the war, the plantation agricultural system, dependent on slave labor, was unable to recover. Instead, the Three Forks area's prosperity rested on its location near important east-west overland freight routes that connected western military forts. In addition, a cattle trail, known variously as the Texas Road or the East Shawnee Trail, passed through Muskogee, connecting Eastern Kansas and parts of Central Missouri to Texas and the Gulf of Mexico. The Three Forks region was also among the connection points used by the Creek and Cherokee Nations. These transportation routes and their access to rich agricultural lands attracted railroad development.

The advent of railroad lines into what is today the State of Oklahoma had its origins in federal funding policy that evolved in the mid-nineteenth century that focused on connecting the Great Lakes with the Missouri River, the Missouri Valley with the Gulf Coast, and the Mississippi River with California. The latter two goals affected what was then the Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma.² Among the various railroad companies who planned expansion during this period was the Union Pacific Railroad's effort to connect Eastern Kansas with the Gulf of Mexico via a southern route following the old Texas Road/East Shawnee cattle trail, thereby connecting Eastern Kansas with the Gulf of Mexico.

In 1869, the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad Company (MK&T)³ acquired the rights to the southern branch of the Union Pacific Railroad and, between June 1870 and December 1872, laid track extending from Chetopa, Kansas, southwest into the Indian Territory and across the Red River ending in Denison, Texas. Following the cattle trail of the Texas Road/East Shawnee Trail, the rail line ran through what would become the Oklahoma settlements of Muskogee, Eufaula, McAlester, Atoka, and Durant.⁴ In 1871, a second road, the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad, tapped the MK&T from the east at present-day Vinita, Oklahoma.⁵

¹ Brad A. Bays, George O. Camey, and Jeffery K. Williams, AIA, "Reconnaissance Level Survey of a Portion of Muskogee, Project No. 40-97-12040.013," Department of Geography, Oklahoma State University. 1997-1998, 192. Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, OK.

² John W. Morris, Charles R. Goins, and Edwin C. McReynolds, *Historical Atlas of Oklahoma*, 3d ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 64.

³ Also referred to as the KATY railroad. The railroad company grew to link Kansas City and St. Louis, Missouri; Tulsa and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Dallas, Fort Worth, Waco, Temple, Austin, San Antonio, Houston, and Galveston, Texas.

⁴ Morris, et al., 64.

⁵ Donovan L. Hofsommer, ed., *Railroads in Oklahoma*, (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1977), 3.

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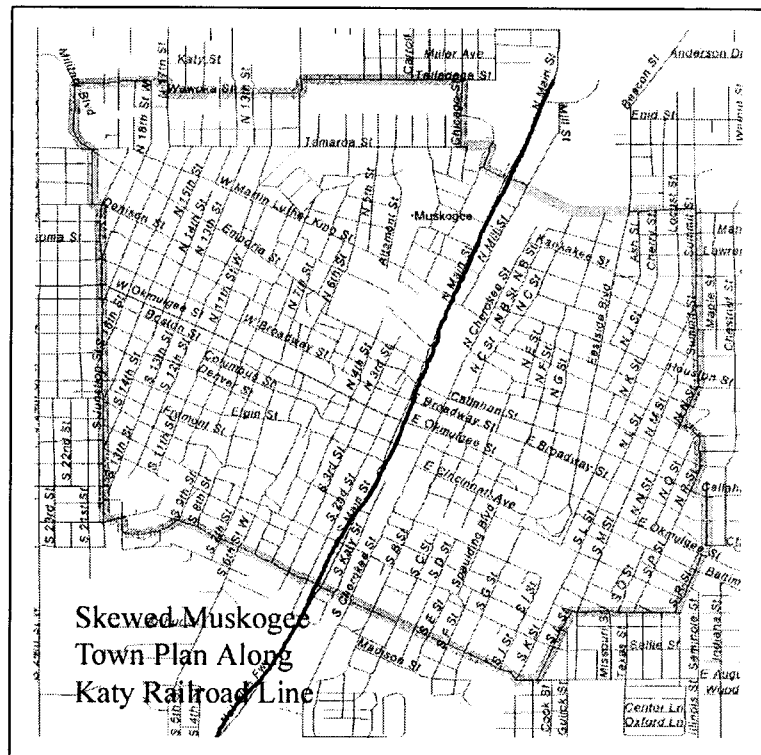
Muskogee Depot and Freight District
Muskogee County, Oklahoma

INDIAN TERRITORY ADMINISTRATIVE PERIOD (1874-1898)

The settlement of Muskogee originated in 1872 with the construction of a railroad depot for the MK&T. Due to its location near the Three Forks, the settlement attracted sufficient merchants to rival the other stations along the line.⁶ The growing community of Muskogee was, however, located in the Creek Nation, which precluded settlers from owning property outright in lands given to Native Americans. Regardless of these legal limitations, the merchants constructed buildings that conformed to the commonly accepted grid pattern of streets, blocks, and lots aligned with Main Street and the MK&T railroad tracks, which ran parallel to one another. As a result, the town's orientation aligned with the angled path of the rail line rather than the cardinal points of a compass.⁷

With the arrival of the railroad, access to outside markets improved the economic viability of agriculture as an important component in the local economy. Cotton, hay, and corn became the area's main products, in addition to cattle ranching, a long-established regional enterprise due to the direct access to markets along established cattle trails and military roads and, later, railroads.

Adding to these economic factors, Muskogee's early prosperity was also strongly tied to its significance as the governmental seat of Indian Territory. Muskogee was the location of the United States Department of Indian Affairs in the region, and became the first U.S. District Court for Indian Territory.



This governmental function also influenced the development of transportation networks to and from the territorial seat.

⁶ Bays, et al., 202.

⁷ Bays, et al., 193.

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In 1890, the United States Organic Act created the Oklahoma Territory, which allowed the organization of functional governmental entities in the central areas within Native American lands. Muskogee, as the location of the U.S. District Court, became the *de facto* territorial capital. In 1887, in an effort to set the stage for opening thousands of acres in the Indian Territory for settlers, Congress passed the Dawes Act, which allowed the allotment of lands once held exclusively by Native Americans. By 1894, the Dawes Commission, which administrated the allotment system, conducted its business from Muskogee.

To further reduce the ability of the various Native American tribes and nations to manage their own affairs, the Curtis Act of 1898 abolished tribal laws and courts and allowed communities within the Indian Territory that had a population of two thousand or more to incorporate. These federal laws sent a clear signal that the territory would eventually become a state and, during the 1890s, large numbers of settlers entered the territory.

At this time, a wave of railroad construction swept throughout the state. The St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad,⁸ a satellite line of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad and a predecessor of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad, initiated significant construction in the late 1880s and continued to construct main and secondary lines throughout the 1890s and into the twentieth century.⁹ In 1895, the Kansas City Southern Railroad built its main north-south line along the eastern border of the Indian Territory. By the turn-of-the-century, a grid of mainline routes crossed the soon-to-be state. These major “trunk” carriers quickly added branches to areas where raw materials or agricultural goods could be shipped. At the same time, numerous independent short lines formed to provide local and regional services; the major carriers bought up most of these as soon as it proved expedient.¹⁰

ALLOTMENT/RAILROAD PERIOD (1898-1912)

By the 1880s, Muskogee’s business district evolved on both the east and west sides of the MK&T tracks and spread east and west to include Court Street, Broadway Street, and Okmulgee Avenue, all of which intersected the railroad tracks at right angles.¹¹ In 1899, a fire destroyed much of Muskogee’s wood frame commercial buildings and business owners subsequently built brick buildings further from the railroad tracks.

⁸ The St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad had purchased the Oklahoma rail lines of the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad at this time.

⁹ Hofsommer, 3.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Bays, et. al., 24

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In 1899, Muskogee's newly gained legal status as an incorporated town on land that was excluded from allotment and the vacant lots left by the fire prompted a federal survey and the first official platting of the town. The plan redirected Muskogee's commercial downtown orientation from Main Street, which paralleled the railroad tracks, to Broadway, which ran east-to-west and focused growth toward the west. Nevertheless, the town's central business district remained divided by the MK&T tracks.

The federal government's approval of the new town plan in 1900 and the availability of land for purchase attracted settlers and the town's population exploded from 4,254 in 1901 to 25,278 in 1910.¹² Muskogee's more affluent citizens used their tribal affiliation to claim multiple lots and assumed ownership of most of the town's parcels. Among them were merchants and federal bureaucrats who controlled the information pertaining to how to claim lots.¹³ A building boom ensued.¹⁴

Between the 1890s and World War I, Muskogee competed with other regional communities to secure rail connections. Among the first of the fledgling short-line railroad companies to locate in Muskogee was the Ozark and Cherokee Central (O&CC) Railroad, which incorporated in 1901 and erected a line between Muskogee and Fayetteville, Arkansas.¹⁵ The St. Louis & San Francisco Railroad (SL&SF or the "Frisco") acquired the O&CC rail lines in 1903, becoming the second significant rail line to enter Muskogee after the MK&T arrival in 1872.¹⁶ There is some evidence that the owners of the Frisco controlled the O&CC from the beginning, although the sale of the O&CC to the Frisco did not officially occur until 1907.¹⁷ Also in 1903, SL&SF acquired a section of track from the Shawnee, Oklahoma & Missouri Coal and Railway Company, which ran from Muskogee to Okmulgee.¹⁸

In 1902, the Muskogee Southern Railroad began construction and reached the Canadian River where construction stopped due to lack of funding for a bridge. At this time, a group began construction of the Midland Valley Railroad (MV) from Hartford, Arkansas into Oklahoma Territory. In 1904, the MV arrived in Muskogee and established the town as its headquarters and the location of its shops.¹⁹ The

¹² Triad Design Group, "Muskogee 2013 Comprehensive Plan and Neighborhood Revitalization Study," July 2003, 5-3.

¹³ Bays, et. al., 211. This is particularly evident from the 1908 Tax Rolls available at the Muskogee Public Library. Several landowners are associated with either the Indian Agency or the Dawes Commission.

¹⁴ Bays, et. al., 25.

¹⁵ John L. Fike, "The MO&G to 1926," *Railroads in Oklahoma*, Donovan L. Hofsommer, ed., (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1977), 47

¹⁶ Linda Moore, "A Brief History of the St. Louis & San Francisco Railroad in Muskogee, Indian Territory," n.d., article on file at the Three Rivers Museum, Muskogee, Oklahoma.

¹⁷ Fike, 48

¹⁸ Moore, "A Brief History of the St. Louis & San Francisco Railroad in Muskogee, Indian Territory."

¹⁹ Eventually the railroad extended from Fort Smith, Arkansas to Wichita, Kansas via Tulsa and Muskogee.

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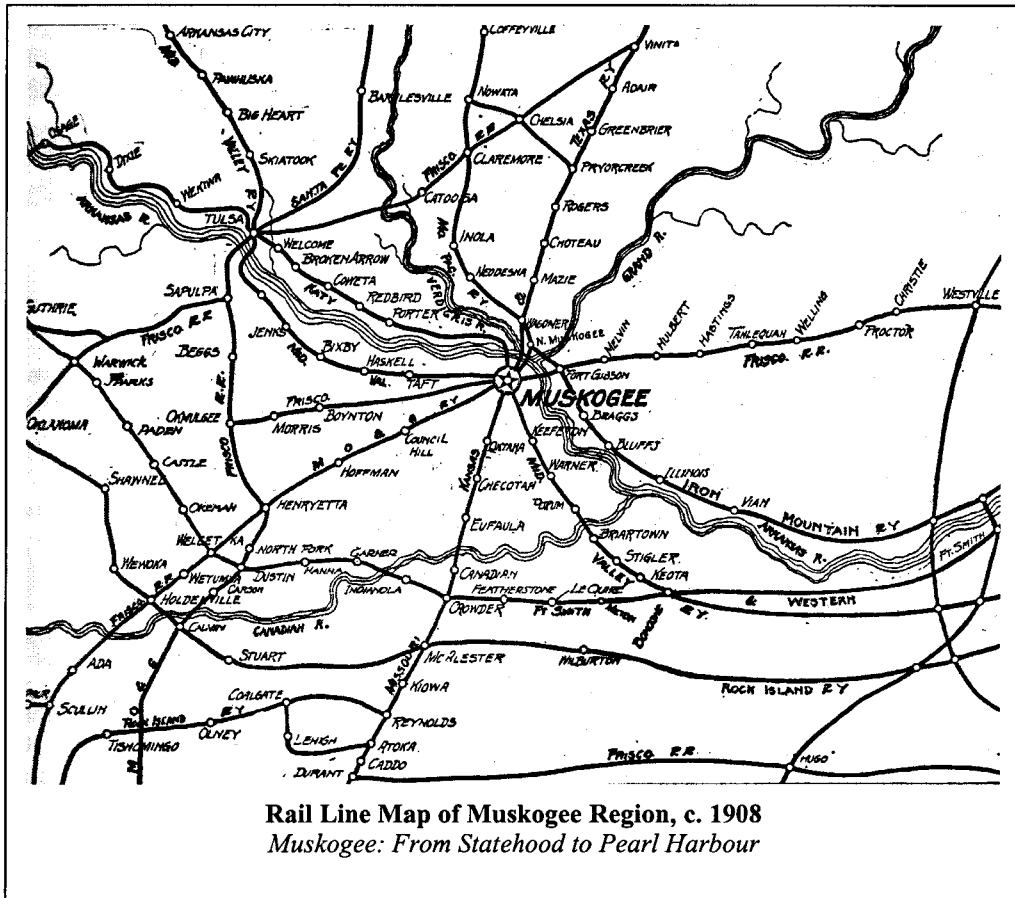
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investors of the MV originally built the line to haul coal from mines they owned in Western Arkansas and Indian Territory to connections with the Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf Railroad at Hartford, the Frisco at Manley Junction, the Kansas City Southern Railway at Panama, and the Fort Smith and Western Railroad at Bokoshe, all

stations in Indian Territory.²⁰ But, because of the inability of these railroads to agree on rates and shared equipment, the MV instead built to Muskogee, where it could connect with the MK&T line. To accomplish this, the MV purchased the existing track and right-of-way of the Muskogee Southern, constructed the bridge over the



Canadian River, and reached Muskogee on March 14, 1904. As one of two railroads nearest the Glenn Pool oil strike in 1905-1906, the MV quickly built a branch into the area and began a long and profitable relationship with oil reproducers and refiners in the Tulsa area.²¹

By 1904, Muskogee boasted six railroad lines and rail services that included fourteen passenger trains a day. In addition, an interurban line connected Muskogee directly to Tahlequah, Oklahoma. That same year, the MK&T built a new depot and roundhouse and the newly arrived Missouri, Oklahoma and Gulf

²⁰ Fike, 49.

²¹ Ibid., 72.

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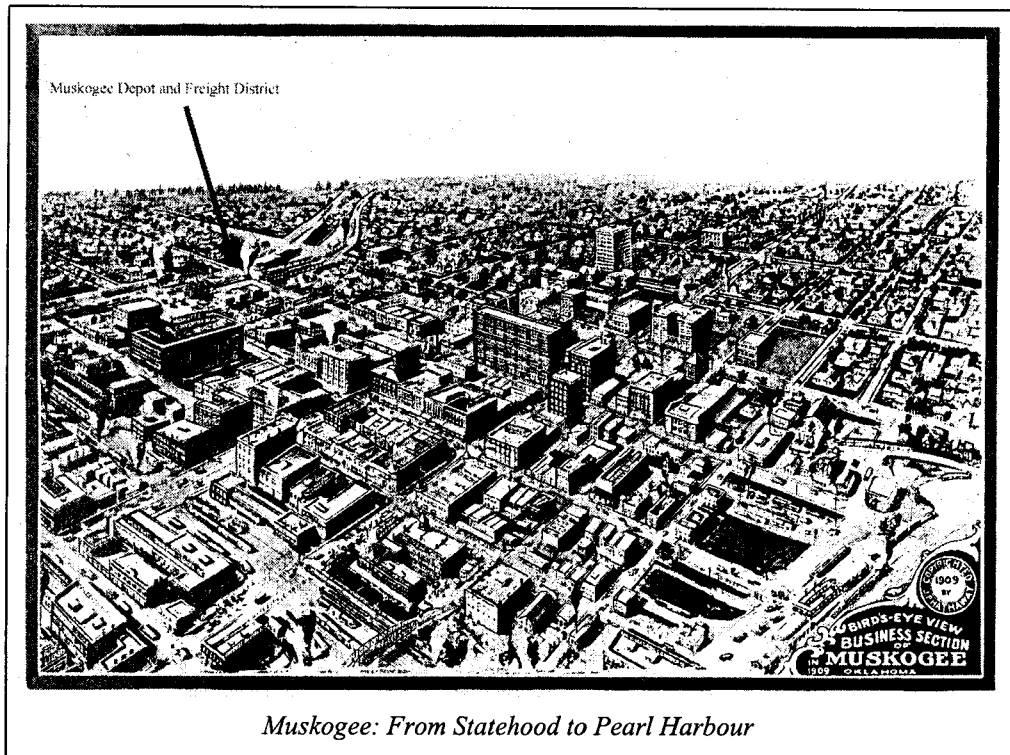
**Muskogee Depot and Freight District
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(MO&G) Railroad erected a station near Second and Main Streets.²² The new MO&G line connected Muskogee to Coffeyville, Kansas and Fort Smith and Little Rock, Arkansas.²³

Further establishing Muskogee as a major regional rail transportation nexus, the Midland Valley Railroad, the Missouri Southern Railroad, the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad, the Pullman Company, and the Muskogee Union Railroad all established their divisional headquarters in Muskogee in 1904.²⁴

These multiple railroad connections spawned warehousing, agricultural processing, and distribution

businesses that thrived near rail yards, depots, and railroad repair and servicing shops that often flanked or straddled the tracks. The industrial sector that emerged along the MK&T Railroad complex north of the business district in the 1880s and 1890s stretched southward to where the MV connected with



the MK&T in the first years of the twentieth century. This generated the development of a new warehousing freight district south of the two business districts; this is the location of the Muskogee Depot and Freight District.

²² The forerunner of the MO&G, the Muskogee Union Railway, incorporated the previous year to build a connection from Muskogee to the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern Railway, a satellite of Missouri Pacific, near Wagoner, Oklahoma.

²³ Fike, 49.

²⁴ Bays, et. al., 213.

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The MK&T Depot, located next to the Muskogee Hotel at Broadway and the MK&T tracks, was one of the largest and most elaborate railroad stations in Oklahoma and incorporated vast yards, a pond, a roundhouse, a coal chute inclined trestle, and sheds. Upon their arrival in Muskogee, both the Frisco and Midland Valley railroad companies constructed freight and passenger depot buildings near their parallel tracks that ran east-west and crossed the north-south MK&T tracks on the east side of town. Midland Valley constructed a one-story brick freight depot at the northwest corner of Elgin Avenue and South 3rd



Street²⁵ and a passenger depot at the northwest corner of Elgin Avenue and South 2nd Street.²⁶ At the same time, the St. Louis and San Francisco Railway constructed the Frisco Freight Depot at the intersection of their main line and South 3rd Street²⁷ and a passenger depot at the intersection of their main line and South 2nd Street.²⁸ Within two years, Midland Valley expanded their passenger depot, nearly doubling its size, and their track road bed.²⁹

As a result of these lines and the resulting boom period, Muskogee boasted several warehousing districts, regional railroad machine shops, glass factories (from Arkansas River sand), cotton processing gins and mills, iron works, brick plants, tool companies, furniture manufacturers, bottling companies, lumber yards, printing companies and various manufacturers, all of which contributed to a growing employment base. Muskogee's first oil field was opened in 1903, and Standard Oil erected the state's earliest oil refinery, the Muskogee Oil Refining Company. In 1904, there were 10 wholesale houses operating in

²⁵ This building was replaced around 1920 with the current Midland Valley Railroad Office Building.

²⁶ This building was demolished in 1916 to make way for the existing Midland Valley Passenger Depot.

²⁷ This building was significantly expanded and remodeled to its existing configuration during the 1920s.

²⁸ This building was demolished during the 1990s.

²⁹ Muskogee Democrat, 2 January 1906, p. 1, col. 6, untitled article, Muskogee Public Library, Muskogee, Oklahoma, Microfilm.

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Muskogee; by 1911, Muskogee boasted 53, as well as 144 active manufacturing plants. With its diversified and growing economic base, Muskogee's railroad connections assured future success.

EASTERN OKLAHOMA OIL BOOM PERIOD (1912-1928)

Between 1910 and 1920, the establishment of hundreds of new businesses and the platting of over one hundred subdivisions reflected the infusion of wealth afforded by the town's rail connections. During this period, Muskogee's warehousing and food processing industries also continued to expand as did retail and consumer-related businesses as Muskogee's population reached thirty thousand.³⁰

In 1909, the MO&G obtained another east-west connection when its line reached Calvin, Oklahoma.³¹ This connection allowed overnight Pullman service between Muskogee and Oklahoma City and "double daily" daylight service in both directions between Muskogee and Fort Smith, Arkansas and between Muskogee and Oklahoma City. At the same time, the owners of the MO&G solidified connections and new lines in Texas and to Kansas City. Population density and economic activity was such that in addition to the passenger trains on the main lines, gas-electric motorcars powered by small engines that formed a 54-foot-long combination of passenger (forty-five-seat) and baggage cars provided regional railroad passenger service between Wagoner, Muskogee, and Henryetta.³²

The expansion of the MO&G lines outside of Oklahoma prompted the citizens of Muskogee to act to ensure the retention of the railroad company's regional headquarters' service shops. A successful city bond issue in 1912 provided a cash bonus to the railroad company and twenty acres of land lying along the north side of the main line just west of the railroad's existing shops.³³ The next year a new line of the MO&G ran from Muskogee to Miami, Oklahoma. Within the next few months the line from Miami to Baxter Springs, Kansas opened and the railroad secured rights for fifteen miles of trackage between Baxter Springs and Joplin, Missouri.³⁴ In 1916, Muskogee citizens again supported the long-term establishment of the railroads in their city with a \$50,000 donation toward the reconstruction of the 1903 MV shops that had recently been destroyed by fire.³⁵

³⁰ Phoenix City Directory Company, *1921 Phoenix City Directory of Muskogee* (Muskogee: Phoenix City Directory Company, 1921), 3.

³¹ Although the bridge over the South Canadian River was not completed until 1913.

³² Fike, 59.

³³ *Ibid.*, 58.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

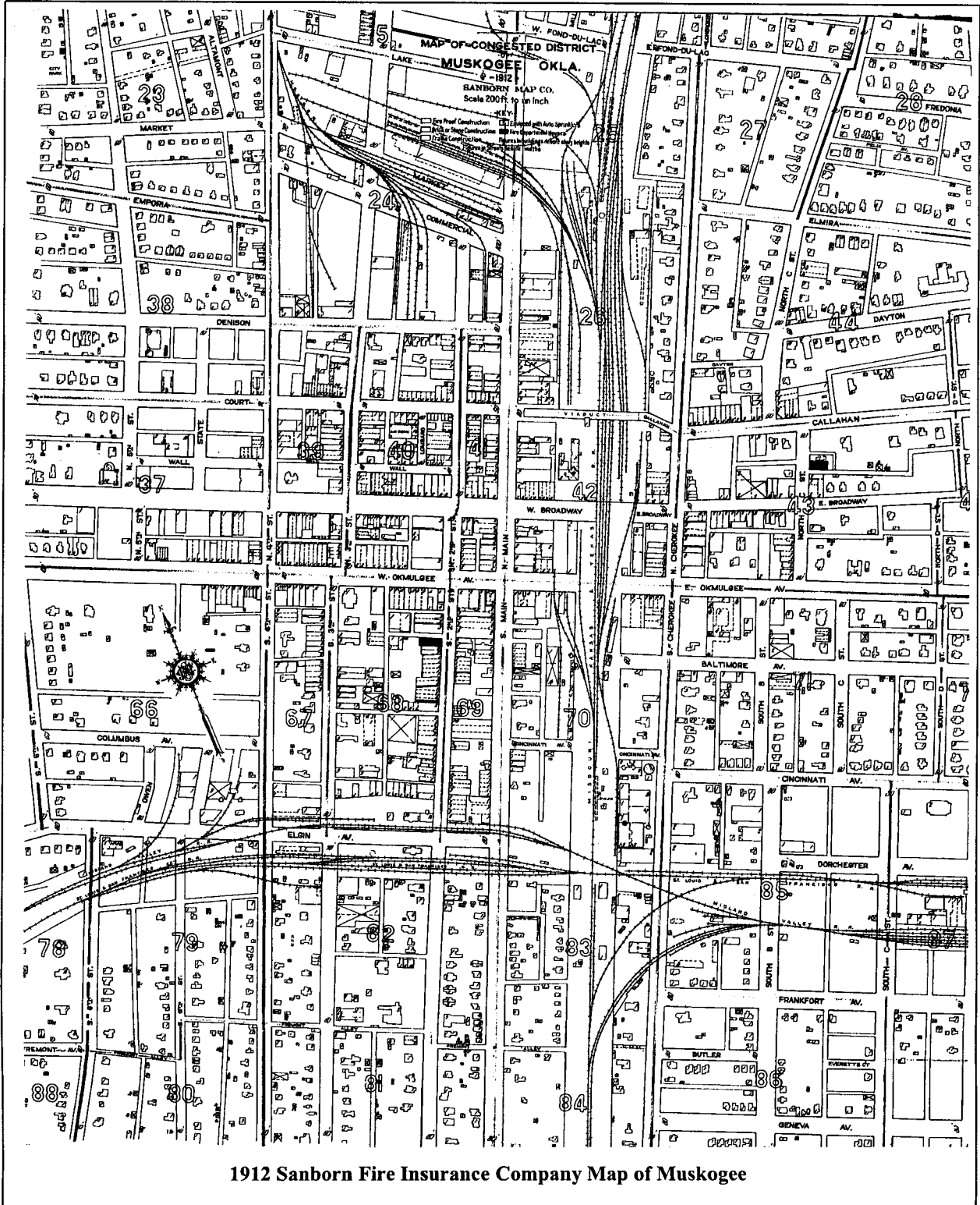
³⁵ Roger L. Bell, "Midland Valley Railroad," n.d., article on file at the Three Rivers Museum, Muskogee, Oklahoma.

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1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map of Muskogee

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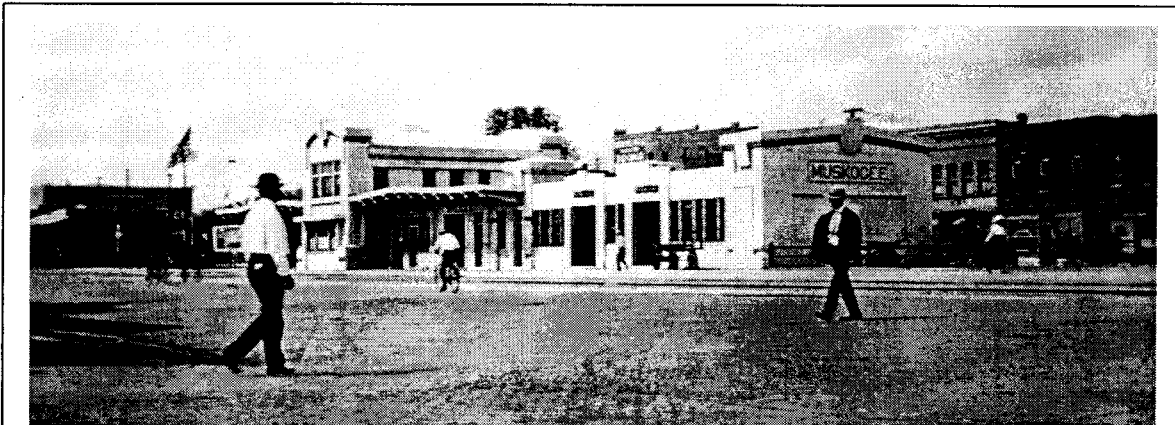
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Around this time, oil and gas production and refining became a part of Muskogee's industrial base. Access to mineral rights on Indian allotted lands, which had opened for oil and gas development throughout the former Indian Territory, required associated business interests to locate in Muskogee near existing federal agencies administering the Indian Nations. As a result, the town continued to be an important federal Indian policy administrative center.³⁶

During World War I, the MV constructed a spur line to serve the Cosden oil refinery in Tulsa. The subsequent discovery of oil in the Burbank field resulted in the construction in 1922 of another MV branch — the Osage Railway to Lyman, Oklahoma. The MV also exclusively served an online refinery erected at Barnsdall, Oklahoma.³⁷ During this period, MV passenger service grew significantly — from six trains a day in 1913 to ten trains a day in 1926. The MV freight traffic was even heavier, with twelve or more trains arriving and/or departing each day from Muskogee between 1908 and 1930.³⁸



Midland Valley Passenger Depot, c.1916
Three Rivers Museum, Muskogee, Oklahoma

In response to the expansion of rail lines and service, the MV expanded their depot, shops, and administrative presence in Muskogee during this period. In 1916, they replaced their original circa 1904 passenger depot with the existing Mission Revival Style passenger depot designed by Kansas City-based

³⁶ Bays, et.al., 223.

³⁷ Lloyd E. Stagner, *Midland Valley Rails for Coal, Cattle & Crude* (David City, NE: South Platte Press, 1996), 5-6.

³⁸ Bell.

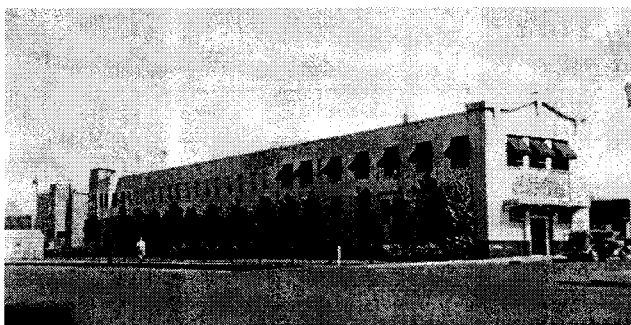
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architect Louis Curtiss.³⁹ The company also replaced their circa 1904 freight depot with the existing Midland Valley Railroad Office Building to house the expanding administrative staff and built new shops in 1922.⁴⁰ In addition, the SL&SF expanded and remodeled their original freight depot to its current configuration with a two-story administrative section and a long freight section with twenty-two loading docks facing the parallel lines that flank the building.



Midland Valley Railroad Office Building, c. 1940
Three Rivers Museum, Muskogee, Oklahoma



Frisco Freight Depot, 1971
Three Rivers Museum, Muskogee, Oklahoma

The war had a more profound impact on the railroads than stimulating new routes to needed resources. In 1918, the federal government assumed management of most of the nation's railroads. The government did not take over management of the MO&G, however, and the railroad company suffered significant losses in revenues when federal managers routed freight over lines they controlled. Litigation ensued and the MO&G went under federal control in 1919 contingent upon a plan to reorganize the company. In July 1919, a group of investors purchased the railroad and three weeks later transferred the property to the newly incorporated Kansas, Oklahoma and Gulf Railway (KO&G). The investors anticipated that the United States Railroad Administration would operate the line under a rental contract, but in March 1920, federal control ceased. Throughout the next decade the rail line lost considerable revenue and in 1924 went into federal receivership. A plan for reorganization approved in 1926 put the railroad into a competitive position and the Muskogee Company of Philadelphia purchased it shortly thereafter. The KO&G connected with the Kansas City Southern Railroad at its northern terminus and with the Texas & Pacific at its southern terminus.

³⁹ Though primary sources have not been located to confirm Curtiss' design of the Midland Valley Passenger Depot, he designed the Midland Valley depot in Tulsa, which is a virtual twin to the Muskogee depot and was constructed in 1917 by the same Muskogee contracting firm, Manhattan Construction Company.

⁴⁰ Bell.

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In addition to the purchase of the KO&G, the Muskogee Company of Philadelphia, incorporated in 1923, controlled the MV and later purchased the Oklahoma City-Ada-Atoka Railway in 1929. Although the three lines operated under their own names, they shared equipment and facilities and were commonly referred to as "the Muskogee Roads."⁴¹ In addition, the Muskogee Company's connection with the Missouri Pacific at Okay, Oklahoma, eleven miles north of Muskogee, allowed operation of through freight trains between Kansas City and Fort Worth/Dallas.

In 1926, the KO&G reached an agreement with the MV that provided savings through combined operations. The KO&G closed their yard and shops at Muskogee and, thereafter, the MV handled these chores. As a result, the MV officers ran both the KO&G and the MV lines, while train service and other operating personnel remained separate.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION /NEW DEAL PERIOD (1928-1941)

At the onset of the Great Depression, the expansion of trackage in Oklahoma reached its apex at 6,678 miles.⁴² The expansion of railroads in the state ceased as the economic depression and severe drought in the Midwest destroyed Oklahoma's agricultural economy. Federal land use policies focused on improving erosion control and rangeland improvements to help drought conditions, but short-term solutions were lacking. Adding to the state's initial loss of revenues and population was the implementation of price controls in the marketing of cotton and concurrent removal of land from cotton production in an effort to create a shift to cattle grazing. The change destroyed Muskogee's most important agricultural processing industries — the ginning and milling of cotton. At the same time, new petroleum discoveries worldwide forced oil prices down and Oklahoma oil producers found themselves in the middle of an oil glut. The early and mid-1930s were years of negative population change in Muskogee. Low prices, drought, and failed federal policies created a widespread migration of tenant farmers and sharecroppers out of the state. As farmers lost their lands in foreclosure and business closings outnumbered openings, the population of Muskogee continued to decline during this period.⁴³

Muskogee's rail connections provided some stability to the local economy throughout the Great Depression. The major carriers continued to run although net revenues declined. The MV, despite erosion of all of its passenger traffic, continued to operate at a profit. Other regional lines did not survive. Passenger service on the KO &G between Muskogee and Miami ended in August 1934.

⁴¹ Stagner, 3.

⁴² Hofsommer, 3.

⁴³ Bays, et.al., 226.

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THE NEW DEAL/WAR PERIOD (1937-1950)

Muskogee began to recover from the Depression in the late 1930s as the economy began to stabilize and federal agricultural initiatives in the late 1930s assisted in reclaiming dust bowl farms for cattle grazing. During World War II, the government established Camp Gruber, an army training facility south of Muskogee. The installation brought millions of federal dollars into the local economy. Muskogee's glass industry also benefited from government contracts. During the war the net income of the state's rail lines escalated. Two daily trains ran along the KO&G connection to Okay, Oklahoma near Muskogee. The demand for Oklahoma coking coal by a Pueblo, Colorado steel mill provided additional revenue. The Oklahoma City-Ada-Atoka Railway, which served the Tinker Field Air Base near Oklahoma City, enjoyed a sharp economic rebound from the losses during the Depression.⁴⁴

The war and the Depression changed the state's traditional farming patterns. After the war, the successful introduction of truck farming reclaimed cotton fields and river bottoms. A new canning plant in Muskogee resulted from the demand to feed the war-ravaged communities of Europe under the Marshall Plan, and Muskogee freight depots shipped newly canned produce from the region. As the local economy began to improve after the war, companies like the Fort Howard Paper Company located in Muskogee to be near its rail connections.

The emergence of the federal highway system and concurrent state highway construction led to a decline in rail use as the automobile highways became the nation's major commercial routes. By 1960, Oklahoma's trackage had been reduced by over one thousand miles from its pre-Depression peak in 1930. During the same period, the abandonment of unprofitable rail lines continued as it had throughout the history of railroad in the United States. At the same time, a number of consolidations occurred that affected Oklahoma transportation as well as the role of the railroad in Muskogee. Missouri Pacific Railroad Company's subsidiary, Texas and Pacific Railway, acquired the Midland Valley Railroad in 1964. At the time of acquisition, the MV extended from Fort Smith, Arkansas, to Wichita, Kansas, via Tulsa and Muskogee, Oklahoma. At that time the Missouri Pacific also purchased the KO&G and Oklahoma City-Ada-Atoka lines and subsequently sold the latter to the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad (Santa Fe). The KO&G line continued its status as a revenue producing bridge line between the Missouri Pacific at Okay, Oklahoma, just north of Muskogee, and the Missouri Pacific-controlled Texas and Pacific Railway at Denison, Texas.

Muskogee remained a railroad town during the early post-war period despite the decline in railroad mileage and changes in ownership. In addition to the associations of the old Muskogee Roads with the

⁴⁴ Stagner, 6.

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Missouri Pacific, the city maintained its connections with the MK&T core system, which grew to link Kansas City and St. Louis, Missouri; Tulsa and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and Dallas, Fort Worth, Waco, Temple, Austin, San Antonio, Houston, and Galveston, Texas; adding connections between Fort Worth, Texas and Salina, Kansas in the 1980s (Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas Railroad). The Missouri Pacific Railroad Company (MoPac) and its owner, the Union Pacific purchased the MK&T in 1988.

**COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL BUSINESSES
LOCATED NEAR RAIL FREIGHT FACILITIES**

With the expansion of rail transportation after the end of the Civil War, industrialization rapidly intensified. Production needs during the war stimulated a shift from animal or waterpower to steam driven machines that produced growing quantities of textiles, boots, and transportation equipment. The shift to peacetime production was a natural consequence of the return to prosperity after the war. By the 1870s, the nation's urban populations were large-scale consumers of manufactured and processed goods. The abundance of inexpensive factory-made items meant that even families of modest means could afford to purchase a variety of ready-made goods. Concurrently, the growing number of prosperous farmers in the Southwest and West created a thriving market for eastern goods, while newly mechanized western farms and large ranches in the southwest supplied the grain and meat to feed the swelling urban populations of the East.⁴⁵

Thus, Muskogee's economic development was very much the product of the bounty of the region and its strategic location along major transportation routes. The city received what farmers harvested and stockmen raised in the surrounding area — livestock, fruits, grain, timber, and cotton — passed them on or processed them into products people needed locally or, for an additional fee, shipped them to competitive markets outside the region. At the same time, the city's business concerns received the manufactured and processed goods from the East, stored them (for a fee) and reallocated them (for a fee) to markets in the Southwest and West.

Muskogee lies in the northeastern agricultural region of Oklahoma where mixed farming and raising livestock were the principal agricultural uses of the land. Here large cotton plantations and well-cultivated and well-stocked farms were numerous. In addition to hay, grain sorghum, corn, wheat, and soybeans as the main crops of the region, the region is also an area of specialty crops such as vegetables, fruits, and berries. Muskogee's location amidst a ten thousand square mile area of large reserves of bituminous coal added to its early prosperity. In addition, nearby deposits of glass sand and stone for

⁴⁵ Carol Rifkind, *A Field Guide to American Architecture* (New York: Times Mirror New American Library, 1980), 273.

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processing into sand and gravel were important natural resources to be mined, processed, and shipped via railroad to distant markets. Supplementing the exploitation of these natural resources was the discovery of oil springs in northeastern Oklahoma at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁴⁶

LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY

As early as 1870, by virtue of its central location along military and cattle roads, Muskogee became a terminus for the regional cattle trade. The development of this industry had its roots in the condition of the national cattle market at the end of the Civil War; longhorn cattle herds, many of which suffered from parasites and diseases, crowded the ranges of the Southwest. Soon after the end of the war, Texas stockmen began driving these herds north to rail junctures almost eight hundred miles to the northeast in central Missouri for shipping to packing houses in Chicago. Missouri farmers and livestock owners along the trails, fearing contamination of their own herds, opposed the trail drives and, as a result, incidents of open hostilities occurred. Railroad companies with connections to the slaughterhouses of Chicago and Kansas City soon vied to establish shorter more profitable routes to cattle market centers in the southwest; routes that took them through the sparsely populated Indian Territory and Kansas countryside, away from the ire of Missouri stockowners.

As depots were established, nearby there were cattle pens that served as a terminus for shipment of cattle or a way station where stockmen unloaded cattle to water, feed, and rest before the final leg of the journey to Chicago's slaughterhouses. In each railroad freight yard there were feed lots, livestock sales stables, and storage areas for baled hay and feed.

GRAIN INDUSTRY

Each railroad market center served as an arena for brokering and processing grain. At the time of initial Euro-American settlement, early railroad communities in Northeast Oklahoma produced all the grain they wanted from their crops locally. During the late nineteenth century, regional production began to exceed local demand and railroads delivered small amounts of grain to eastern markets. Soon, mills and grain elevators appeared near rail lines in major marketing centers. By the 1920s, the advent of motorized farm equipment opened the Southwest to winter wheat production. Most of the increased yield from this region found its way via Oklahoma railroad lines or river barges to Kansas City and the port of Galveston.

⁴⁶ Morris, et al., 69-71.

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WHOLESALE AND WAREHOUSING INDUSTRIES

Regional railroad freight centers such as Muskogee also spawned the production and distribution of wholesale goods and warehousing industries. Commercial warehouses near freight depots served as storage places for goods received by local retail businesses until they could be transferred to their stores, as holding and collection sites for goods recently received destined for other locations, and as storage areas near factories and mills for recently manufactured or processed goods. "Transfer houses" — buildings designed for businesses that specialized in receiving large amounts of goods, dividing them into smaller shipments, and distributing them to retail vendors or commercial businesses — reflected one sub-specialty of the warehousing industry. Another warehouse sub-type was the warehouse building erected to provide leased storage space.

Wholesale distribution buildings combined office and warehousing functions. Some served as district headquarters for a particular corporation and provided facilities to store and distribute the company's products. Others of the same design served as offices and showrooms for manufacturer's representatives. Many were designed to house the offices of wholesale "jobbing" companies that purchased a variety of goods from different manufactures and sold them to retail operations. Jobbers — middlemen who purchased manufactured goods from factories throughout the country and sold them (with a mark-up in cost) to retailers — dealt in a wide assortment of goods and often maintained headquarters in regional railroad market centers. Among the items sold to local retailers or packaged and shipped to retailers in the surrounding region were farm implements, dry goods, hardware, liquor, furniture, lumber and moldings, paint and varnishes, machinery, pharmaceuticals, flour and feed, poultry, paper, groceries, crackers, and cookies. Another type of wholesale house was designed for the distributors of breeding livestock (from poultry to cattle), local farm produce, and processed foods.

MANUFACTURERS

Muskogee's role as a rail center assured the establishment of a sizable manufacturing industry in the city. As each industrial enclave became established near freight lines, manufacturers of a wide array of products erected plants and warehouses. Products manufactured and distributed by Muskogee's industries included hardware, mattresses, oil well equipment, wood window sashes and doors, lumber, harnesses, and glass products. Clustered around the freight loading areas were canneries, hatcheries, flour and cotton mills, and creameries.

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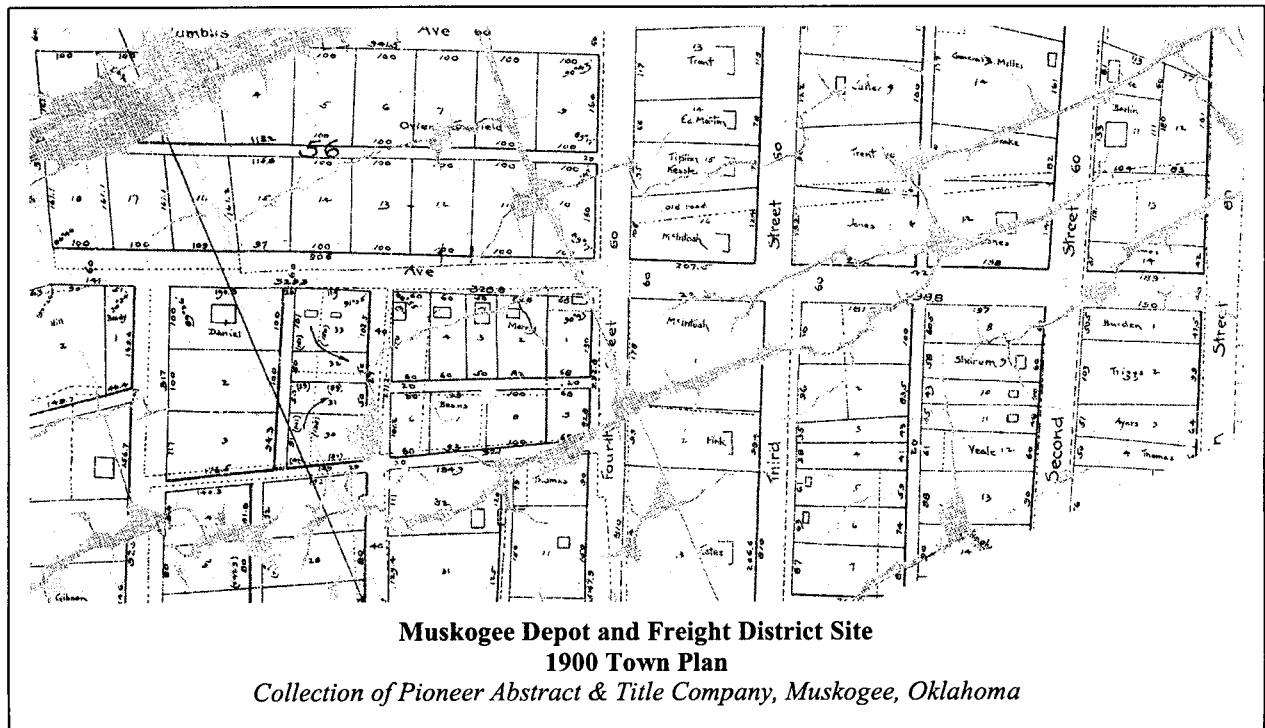
**Muskogee Depot and Freight District
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SPECIALIZED BUSINESSES

Each industrial freighting district included a considerable number of small specialized commercial businesses that provided necessary specialty services to those working in and visiting the freight areas, including bakeries, restaurants, saloons, dance halls, hotels, coal yards, boarding houses, theaters and movie houses, barber shops, gas stations, blacksmiths, livery stables, and auto garages.

EVOLUTION OF THE MUSKOGEE DEPOT AND FREIGHT DISTRICT

Prior to the adoption of the new town plan of 1900, the area along Elgin Avenue west of Main Street was sparsely settled with modest residential properties and a small neighborhood church at the corner of Elgin Avenue and South 5th Street. Due to such a lack of development, the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps did not cover the area until after the 1903-1904 arrival of both the SL&SF and MV rail lines and the establishment of associated transportation and freight buildings.

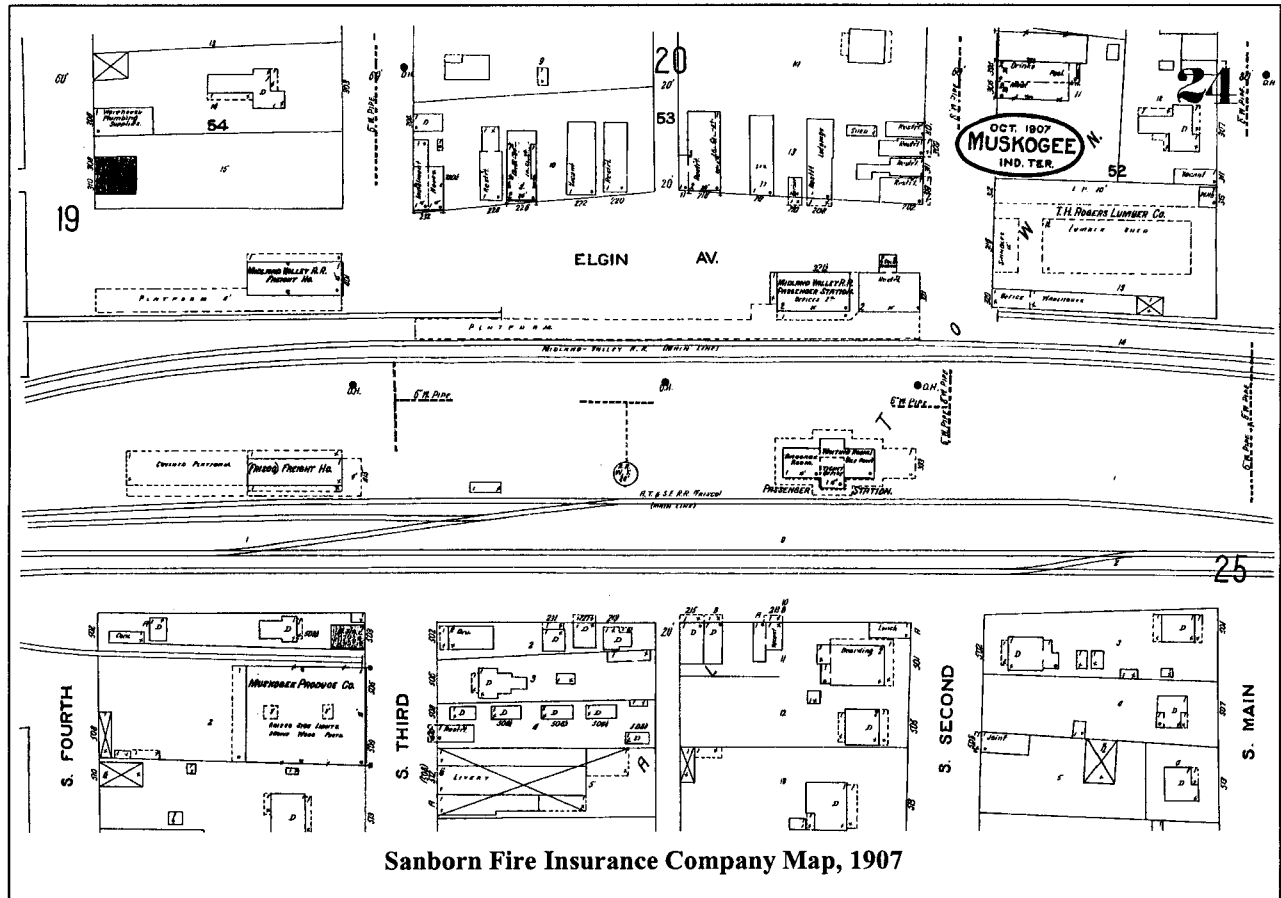


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By 1907, the spur that traveled up the alley west of South 4th Street was in place. Furniture and plumbing warehouses, a lumber company, boarding houses, and numerous restaurants and lunch counters operated in the vicinity, most facing onto or aligned with the tracks.

Within the following five years, the area surrounding the Frisco and MV rail yard and depots experienced rapid industrial and commercial development. At the northwest corner of Elgin Avenue and South 4th Street, the Muskogee Transfer & Storage Company Building was constructed entirely of reinforced concrete, reportedly the first all reinforced concrete building in Oklahoma.⁵¹ The unique building spanned the width of the block and featured twin three-story warehouses that straddled a rail spur and were connected by an upper-story passageway (Photograph Numbers 13 and 14). Additional buildings

⁵¹ Misty Claypole, Historic Preservation Resource Identification Form "Owen Building, Muskogee, Oklahoma," 1998. Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

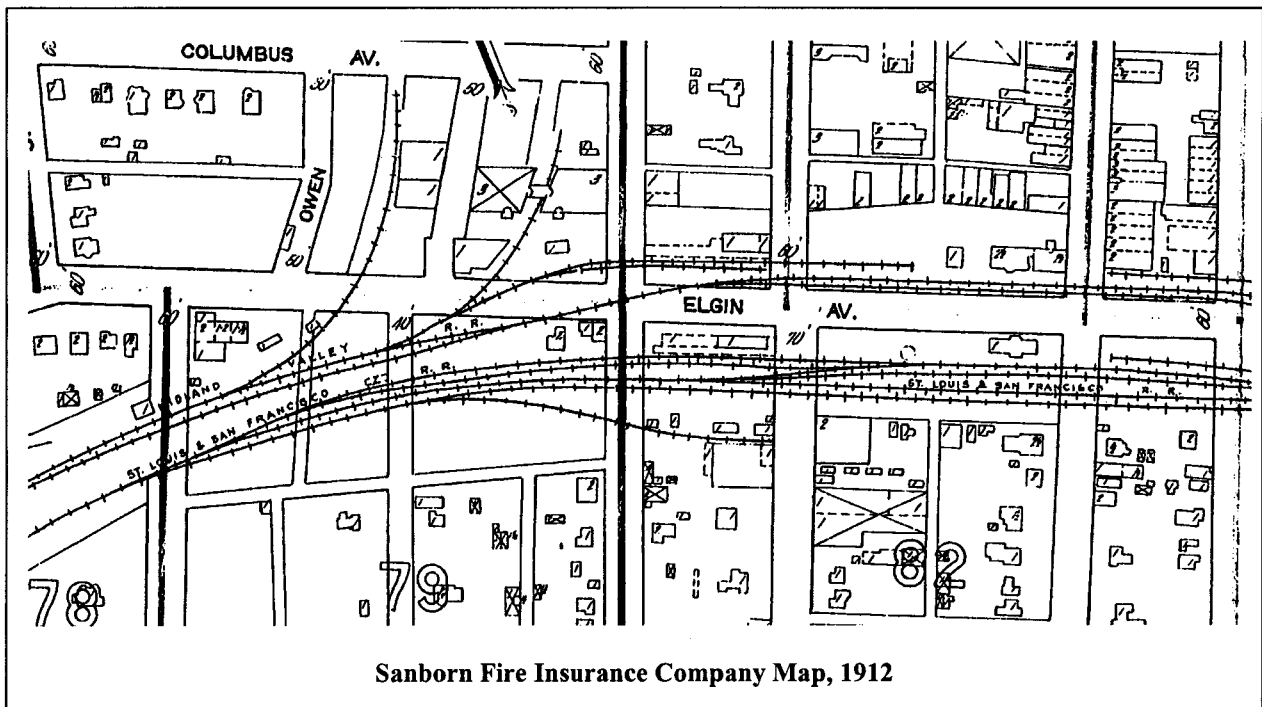
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constructed during this period were the circa 1910 building at 313 South 5th Street, which was built for the storage of baled hay (Photograph Number 19); the circa 1910 bottling works building at 306 South 4th Street (Photograph Number 12); the circa 1910 auto repair shop at 317-325 South 5th Street (Photograph Numbers 19, 20, and 21); and the circa 1912 Benton County Hardware Company wholesale distribution building at 502 South 3rd Street (Photograph Numbers 3 and 9).



Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, 1912

As the railroad companies invested in their freight and passenger infrastructure, businesses continued to locate within the vicinity for efficient access to the adjacent rail lines. The buildings at 305 South 3rd, 301-309 South 5th, and 327 South 5th Streets were all constructed during this period and represent a wholesale produce facility, an auto repair/freight building, and a creamery (Photograph Numbers 12, 18, and 19). In addition, the Muskogee Transfer & Storage Company expanded with the construction of their auto storage garage on South 5th Street and the one-part commercial block building located at 310 South 3rd Street was constructed (Photograph Number 17). The establishment of buildings in the area continued through the 1920s up to the eve of the Great Depression. The Loose-Wiles Biscuit Company Building (501 South 2nd Street; Photograph Number 2) and the Midland Valley Railroad Office Building's automobile shed (321A South 3rd Street; Photograph Numbers 6 and 7) were both constructed around 1930 and mark the end of historic development in the area.

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Significant construction ceased in the District during the remainder of the Great Depression and little construction occurred immediately after World War II. The demolition of buildings to make way for the construction of the Columbus Avenue overpass in 1979, as well as the 1990s demolition of both the Frisco passenger depot and the block of early twentieth century buildings that once faced the north elevation of the Midland Valley Passenger Depot, were significant losses to the historic character of the area.

In recent years, the District has experienced new investment in the form of rehabilitation of the two remaining depot buildings. The Midland Valley Passenger Depot building was rehabilitated in 1999 and is the home of the Three Rivers Museum. The Frisco Freight Depot was rehabilitated in circa 2003 and currently houses the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame.



Aerial View of the Muskogee Depot and Freight District, c. 1955
Three Rivers Museum, Muskogee, Oklahoma

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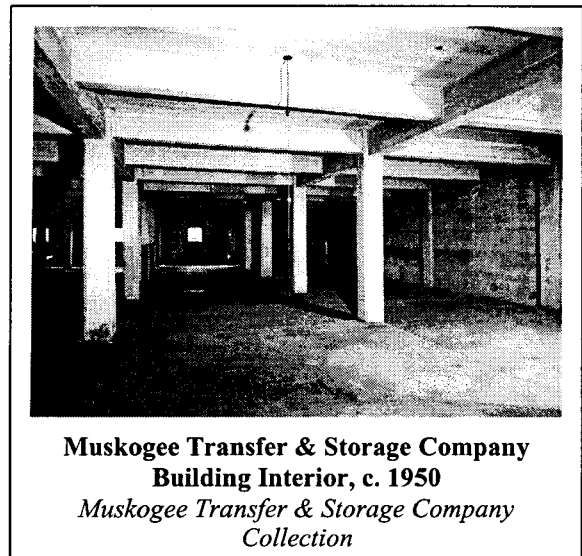
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HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL AND FUNCTIONAL PROPERTY TYPES

The architecture of the District is overwhelmingly industrial and commercial in character. With the exception of the depot resources, the buildings in the proposed District represent a typical assortment of commercial and industrial property types found in railroad freight areas during the first half of the twentieth century. Identified by their size, massing, and brick and/or concrete construction, the vast majority of these buildings feature little reference to architectural styles popular at the time of their construction.

Their period of construction played an important role in the choice of architectural design and construction technique. While a number of the buildings are of solid brick construction, often resting on stone foundations, the durable construction of many of the buildings in the District reflects the introduction of reinforced concrete technology. Often faced with a brick veneer or featuring brick curtain walls in conjunction with reinforced concrete structural elements, these buildings, as a whole, share the use of simple, functional designs that reflect the prevailing commercial/industrial architectural preferences of the time; in particular, the goal of maximizing floor space using an economical cost-guided design.



Buildings erected in the District did not rise higher than one to three stories. Subtle differences in architectural design features provide clues as to their original intended use. For example, the lack of windows and a presence of loading docks reflect storage and freight transfer functions; pedestrian entrances and display windows indicate wholesale administrative and/or retail uses; and the use of large windows to capture natural light and provide ventilation reflects the industrial manufacturing/processing uses of the buildings in an era that lacked central heating and cooling systems and used electricity sparingly.

RAILROAD RELATED RESOURCES

A number of different types of buildings, sites, and structures were important to the viability of rail-reliant industrial and commercial areas. The most obvious are rail-related transportation resources that represent

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the types of railroad support services essential for the efficient operation of freight and passenger services. Rail-related property types include railroad depots, freight houses, rail spurs, and associated infrastructure found in rail yards. Most of these buildings and structures are generally simple in form, and their design is dictated by function. However, this property type also includes such support resources as depots that feature popular high style architectural treatments.

Railroad depot buildings are structures designed to accommodate passengers, freight, or both. Common characteristics include a rectangular footprint aligned parallel to the tracks and a lack of raised, stepped entrances to allow for baggage and freight to be trucked easily. They are usually only one to two stories tall and have roofs with a wide overhang to shelter passengers and freight.

Bustling rail yards in larger communities often featured multiple depots, separating passenger and freight handling functions into altogether separate buildings. Smaller communities that enjoyed rail access often did so through a combination depot that handled passengers at one end and freight at the other. During the early twentieth century, both the Frisco and MV railroad lines in Muskogee handled freight in such quantities that they each required separate freight and passenger depots.

The Frisco Freight Depot is a classic freight depot building with its rectangular footprint, angled siting parallel with the flanking tracks, multiple loading dock bays, and broad porch roofs to shelter the freight handling areas. In addition, its modest decorative treatments distinguish it as a freight depot as opposed to a passenger depot, a depot type that typically featured more attention to popular stylistic influences.



Midland Valley Passenger Depot, c. 1920

Louis Curtiss, Architect

A Proud Past: A Pictorial History of Muskogee, Oklahoma

The Midland Valley Passenger Depot is a classic combined depot building with distinct sections based on function — the handling of passengers and the handling of freight. Its passenger area features separate waiting rooms (segregated by gender and race), a ticket office, lavatories, and a newsstand; the multiple loading dock bays distinguish its freight area.

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The style of passenger depots was very important to railroad companies in their effort to stand out among the numerous competing rail lines. Among other architectural styles employed for passenger depots, the Mission Revival style was very popular during the early decades of the twentieth century. Mission Revival style depots are identified by their stucco or plaster finish, typically with a roof of curved tiles, and a colonnaded porch. Numerous railroad companies incorporated the style into many of their depots, especially in the western states. Known for their hallmark passenger depots, the Midland Valley Railroad Company chose to contract Louis Curtiss to design their new passenger depot in his own unique adaptation of the Mission Revival.

Louis Curtiss (1865-1924)

Kansas City-based architect Louis Curtiss, who designed the 1916 Midland Valley Passenger Depot, was a pioneer in building technology and a proponent of simplicity of design. Many of Curtiss' buildings are precursors of some of today's structural and architectural concepts. He was an early promoter of the use of reinforced concrete construction. He belonged to the architectural *avant-garde* of the period, designing Kansas City's first metal and glass curtain-wall building in 1909.⁵² Eschewing popular revival styles, his more innovative designs were clear expressions of structure.⁵³

Little is known about the early years of Louis Curtiss. A native of Canada, Curtiss studied at the University of Toronto. He went to Paris sometime after 1884, reportedly on a scholarship to study at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts*.⁵⁴ Curtiss arrived in Kansas City sometime around 1887 and worked as a draftsman in the architectural office of Adriance Van Brunt. From 1890 to 1899, he was a partner with Frederick C. Gunn. In 1890 and 1891, Curtiss also served as Assistant Superintendent of City Buildings. In this capacity, he worked on the design of the City Hall at 4th and Main Streets and specified that the building have a caisson foundation, which is thought to be one of the earliest uses of the construction technique in the region.⁵⁵ One of Gunn and Curtiss' earliest commissions of note was the Missouri State Building at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. After 1899, Curtiss practiced alone until his death in 1924. Among his first commissions as a solitary practitioner was the ten-story, U-shaped steel and concrete Baltimore Hotel in Kansas City.⁵⁶ Curtiss' work on this hotel illustrates his use

⁵² The Boley Building.

⁵³ Fred T. Comee, "Louis Curtiss of Kansas City," *Progressive Architecture* (August 1963): 1.

⁵⁴ According to various references, the director of the Archives of France has been unable to find records of Curtiss' enrollment at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* between 1884 and 1890. A photograph of Curtiss that is an Exposition Card for the French Salon of 1896 exists and his obituary notes that the official jury for exhibition in the Salon of 1896 accepted his design, *Palais de Justice*.

⁵⁵ Caissons (also called piers) were created by drilling a deep hole into bedrock and filling it with concrete to form the basis of a foundation system that is very similar to a post and pier foundation constructed of spot footings of concrete under wood posts or concrete piers that support beams. The building is no longer extant.

⁵⁶ The building is no longer extant.

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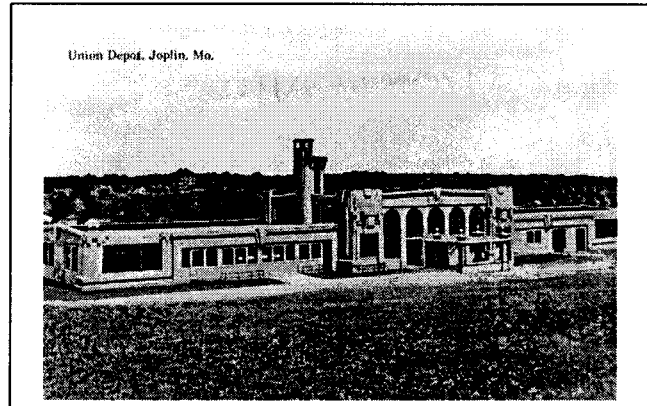
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of new construction techniques; in particular, the use in 1907 of reinforced concrete support members in conjunction with steel framing for projects designed to be phased from their inception. The Baltimore Hotel project led to lucrative contracts with the Santa Fe Railroad and other rail lines, which in turn led to work designing hotels, depots, and Harvey House restaurants in the Midwest and Southwest.⁵⁷ Among these works were the nearly identical Midland Valley Passenger Depot buildings in Muskogee (1916; Photograph Numbers 4 and 5) and Tulsa (1917). His stylized geometric adaptation of the popular Mission Revival style depot building is original and unique and although primary resource documentation has not been located to directly connect Curtiss with the design of the Muskogee Midland Valley Passenger Depot, a study of other Curtiss depots from the period reveals the same singular design motifs.



1917 Midland Valley Depot, Tulsa, Oklahoma
Louis Curtiss, Architect
Midland Valley: Rails for Coal, Cattle, & Crude



Joplin Union Depot, Joplin, Missouri
Louis Curtiss, Architect
*Springfield-Greene County Library, Springfield,
Missouri*

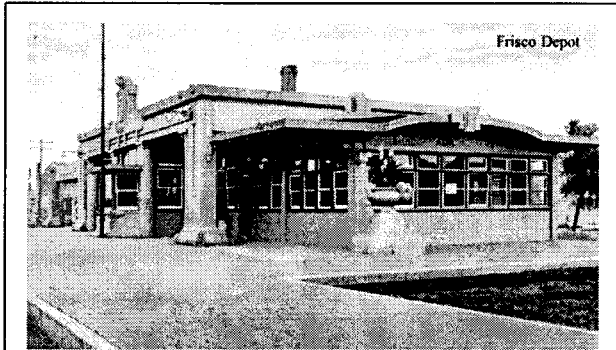
⁵⁷ Curtiss' work with the railroads includes the Wichita, Kansas Union Depot (1912); the Emporia, Kansas Harvey House and Hotel (1907); the Joplin, Missouri Union Depot (1910), which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places; the Kingsville, Texas depot and Harvey House (early twentieth century); the Sweetwater, Texas Santa Fe Depot and Harvey Eating House (1911); the Santa Fe depots in Snyder and Post, Texas and Ada, Oklahoma (all 1911); and a virtual twin to the Muskogee depot in Tulsa for the Midland Valley Railroad Company (1917).

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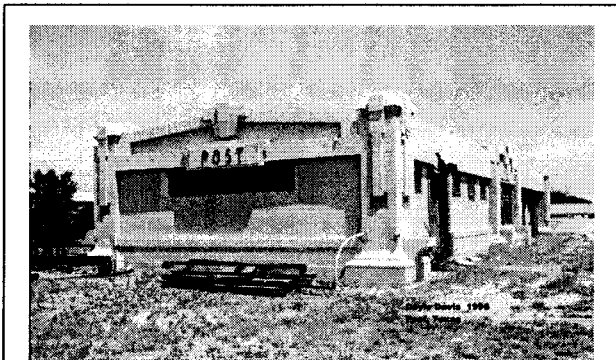
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Frisco Depot, Ada, Oklahoma
Louis Curtiss, Architect
City of Ada, Oklahoma



1911 Santa Fe Depot, Snyder, Texas
Louis Curtiss, Architect
Roscoe, Snyder, and Pacific Railroad Fan Site



1911 Santa Fe Depot, Post, Texas
Louis Curtiss, Architect
Doyle Davis Collection



1911 Santa Fe Depot, Sweetwater, Texas
Louis Curtiss, Architect
Don's Rail Photos

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INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES, WAREHOUSES, AND COMMERCIAL DISTRIBUTION BUILDINGS

Industrial fabricating and processing plants, commercial warehouses, and wholesale distribution offices and warehouses are related property types found in the Muskogee Depot and Freight District. Most are rectangular buildings aligned on a grid street pattern. A number have trapezoidal plans in response to active rail lines and spurs. Most are simple in form with restrained decorative treatments and have loading docks for boxcars and/or trucks. Their materials often reflect the desire for fireproof construction, which in the early twentieth century were brick, stone, and/or reinforced concrete.

The Industrial Manufacturing and Warehouse property type is based on associations with the original industrial manufacturing use of the building. These facilities incorporate space in the building plan for manufacturing and processing, offices, and storage. The Commercial Distribution Office and Warehouse property type has associations with the wholesale commercial businesses that located near railroad shipping facilities. They are buildings designed to serve as district or regional headquarters for a particular corporation and to store and distribute the company's products. The plan of this property type incorporated offices and storage areas. This property type was also used by wholesale "jobbers" who purchased particular types of goods from different manufactures, assembled them in their warehouses, and sold them to retailers in the region.

The Commercial Warehouse property type has associations with the commercial warehousing businesses involved in receiving and distributing raw and manufactured products that developed near railroad shipping facilities. They are buildings designed specifically to store products for distribution or use locally, either as "transfer houses" or leased storage space. The plan of this property type incorporates large open storage areas with minimal office space. The design is understated with no pronounced sense of pedestrian entry. Because of the obvious marketing value, their design reflected the latest in fireproof construction.

AUXILIARY SUPPORT RESOURCES

This property type consists of buildings, sites, and structures that are important to the viability of rail-reliant industrial and commercial areas. These resources represent the types of support services essential for the efficient operation of freight districts and associated industrial manufacturing, distribution, and storage of raw materials and manufactured goods. Their function dictates their form and design.

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Road-related resources contributed to the movement of goods and provided ancillary services within railroad freight areas. Road-related resources include garages, roads, streets, alleys, bridges, ramps, and other infrastructure providing vehicular access to and within industrial and commercial freight areas.

The Specialized Business property type includes commercial buildings that housed businesses or vendors typically found in railroad industrial and commercial districts. Visually they do not differ from certain classifications of retail commercial buildings found elsewhere in the city; however, they are a distinct property type in freight areas due to associated functions. These resources include small retail and wholesale businesses and vending operations that provided specific services in the sale, receipt, and disbursal of goods. Restaurants, saloons, hotels, and other retail establishments used by railroad employees, salesmen, commission agents, and other workers are an important property sub-type. Most have rectangular plans, masonry construction, and a well-defined ground-floor storefront.

CONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES

The following contributing properties and their histories reflect the presence of a significant concentration of resources that are united historically by their associated functions with railroad freight districts. As a group, they derive their importance as a physically and thematically unified entity, which conveys the visual sense of a distinct historic environment significant for its role in the emergence of Muskogee as a regional railroad distribution center.

01. 220 Elgin Ave. Midland Valley Railroad Passenger Depot

Constructed in 1916, the Midland Valley Passenger Depot replaced the original circa 1904 passenger depot located at the southeast corner of the property at the corner of Elgin Avenue and South 2nd Street. The building served as both the passenger and freight depot for the Midland Valley Railroad until the mid-1960s.

The building is likely the design of renowned Kansas City architect, Louis Curtiss who designed the Midland Valley depot in Tulsa, which is a virtual twin to the Muskogee depot and was constructed in 1917 by the same contracting firm, Manhattan Construction Company of Muskogee.

The Midland Valley Railroad Passenger Depot underwent a renovation in 1999, at which time the west wing was added.

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02. Elgin Ave., between S. 2nd St. and S. 6th St. St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad ("Frisco") and Midland Valley Railroad Yard

This site functioned as the rail yard for both the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad ("Frisco") and Midland Valley Railroad from circa 1903 until the mid-1960s. The site and its rail alignments were essential to the efficient operation of the surrounding freight district and the associated industrial manufacturing, distribution, and storage of raw materials and manufactured goods that made the District viable. The tracks remained in use under the operation of Missouri Pacific through the mid-1970s and until their removal during the 1980s.

03. 501 S. 2nd St. Loose-Wiles Biscuit Company Warehouse Building

Constructed around 1930, the Loose-Wiles Biscuit Company warehouse is on a site formerly occupied by the Atlanta Boarding House. Loose-Wiles occupied the building until the late 1940s when Swift & Company moved the hatchery branch office of their wholesale meats and produce company into the building. Swift & Company's hatchery department occupied the building well into the 1960s.

04. 310 S. 3rd St. Commercial Building

Constructed in circa 1915, this building has four storefronts that originally contained two retail shops and a restaurant. It is an excellent example of the Specialized Business property type. The building was vacant for much of the late 1920s and early 1930s. In 1940, Dorothy's Coffee Shop operated in the building, but the entire building was vacant by the mid-1940s. By 1950, the Pepper Mattress Company factory occupied the entire building where they manufactured mattresses throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

05. 321 S. 3rd St. Midland Valley Railroad Office Building

Constructed around 1920 on the footprint of the original, circa 1904 Midland Valley freight depot, the Midland Valley Railroad Office Building served as the general office headquarters for the Midland Valley Railroad and, after the company's mid-1920s acquisitions, the Kansas, Oklahoma & Gulf Railroad and the Oklahoma City, Ada & Atoka Railroad companies. During the early 1960s, James D. Gibson, esquire leased office space in



Midland Valley Railroad Office Building, 1950
Midland Valley: Rails for Coal, Cattle & Crude

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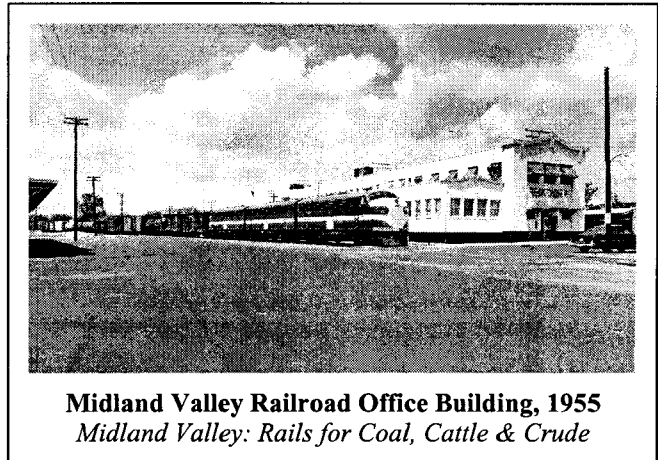
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the building. The one-story addition to the west end of the south elevation was erected in circa 1950 and the one-story addition to the east end of the south elevation was constructed in circa 1955.

06. 321A S. 3rd St. Automobile Garage

Constructed around 1930 as an automobile shelter for the neighboring Midland Valley Railroad Office building, this ancillary building accommodated approximately twenty cars.



07. 401 S. 3rd St. St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad ("Frisco") Freight Depot

Constructed in circa 1903 and significantly expanded and remodeled to its current appearance around 1920, the Frisco Freight Depot exclusively served the rail lines freighting needs in Muskogee. A separate depot building that once stood at the southwest corner of the intersection at South 2nd Street and Elgin Avenue provided passenger service. The freight building served as the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad freight depot until the mid-1960s. The building was restored in circa 2004.

08. 502 S. 3rd St. Benton County Hardware Company Building

Constructed in circa 1912, the Benton County Hardware Company building is on a site previously occupied by a cluster of small dwellings and one-story commercial buildings. The company advertised as a jobber and manufacturer, as well as distributor of hardware, implements, and automobile accessories. The west wing addition dates to circa 1920. During the mid-1930s and well into the 1950s, Western Hardware Corporation occupied the building.

09. 305 S. 3rd St. Commercial/Auto Freight Building

Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps documented the construction date as occurring sometime between 1912 and 1925 on a site previously occupied by two houses. Around 1925, Lantz W. R. Supply Company moved from their original location at 128 South 4th Street to this building where they operated an auto repair and trimming business. By 1930, OC&E Motor Freight Lines Company operated their business from the east half of the building (305 South 3rd Street) and Franklin Motor Freight Lines Company operated out of the west half of the building that faces onto

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South 4th Street. Throughout the 1940s, Yellow Transit Company occupied the building. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the east half of the building served as a beer distribution warehouse and Kershaw Steel & Pipe Company occupied the west half of the building. At an unknown date after circa 1955, the neighboring building to the north was removed.

10. **317-323 S. 4th St. Muskogee Transfer & Storage Company (Owen Building)**

Constructed in circa 1908, the large reinforced concrete Muskogee Transfer Company building features a twin warehouse configuration. Lauded as a fireproof warehouse, the use of poured reinforced concrete was reportedly the first of its kind in Muskogee, and possibly in the State of Oklahoma.⁵⁸ The railroad siding that runs through the building was in place by 1907. Founded as a horse and carriage baggage transfer and packing company in 1892 by a Mr. Owens,⁵⁹ the Muskogee Transfer Company subsequently operated under the direction of D. H. Linebaugh and T. C. Evans. In 1922, it became known as Muskogee Transfer and Storage Company. W. L. Hamman became General Manager of the corporation in 1952 and according to corporate history, Hamman developed the concept of "mini-storage" units and constructed the first one in Muskogee in 1971 at the southwest corner of the intersection of Main Street and Elgin Avenue. During the 1940s, Muskogee Transfer and Storage Company established national transport connections as a



Muskogee Transfer Company Carriage, c. 1910
*A Proud Past: A Pictorial History of Muskogee,
Oklahoma*



Muskogee Transfer & Storage Company, c.1950
Muskogee Transfer & Storage Company Collection

representative of Allied Van Lines, Inc. The company continues to occupy the building and operate it as a storage and transfer warehouse. In the 1940s, the State Board of Welfare used the west portion of the building as a warehouse. During the 1950s and 1960s, various subsidiary companies also occupied space in the Owen Building, including National Carloading Corp., Santa Fe Trail Transportation Co., A & A Transfer & Storage, and King Transfer & Storage.

⁵⁸ Claypole.

⁵⁹ Mr. Owen's first name unknown. One account credits the name of the building to senator R.L. Owen.

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11. 306 S. 4th St. Manufacturing/Industrial Building

Constructed in circa 1910, this building originally housed two businesses: a bottling works and a blacksmith/wood working shop. During the 1920s, alterations extended the building to the east and the exterior stucco finish was applied. In 1925, Coca-Cola operated a bottling plant in the building. The building was vacant in 1930; however, during the 1930s, a plumbing and pipe supply company and, later, an auto repair shop occupied the building. In 1940, Imel Cabinet Company occupied the rear portion of the building. By the mid-1940s, Raymond's Furniture Company, which had a retail store on Okmulgee Street in downtown Muskogee, used the building to store merchandise. Raymond's used the building as such until at least 1960. By 1965, the building was vacant.

12. 308 S. 5th St. Muskogee Transfer Company Garage

Constructed by the Muskogee Transfer Company around 1920, the building served as an auto storage building through the 1950s.

13. 301-309 S. 5th St. (429 Columbus Ave.) Commercial Distribution Office and Warehouse

Constructed around 1920, this building served as a wholesale produce warehouse and distribution facility through the early 1950s.

14. 313 S. 5th St. Warehouse

Constructed in circa 1910, this building originally was used for baled hay storage. During the 1930s and early 1940s, the Robert Mattress Factory occupied this building and the neighboring building to the south (317-325 South 5th Street) where the company manufactured and sold mattresses wholesale. By 1946, Southwest Furniture & Mattress Company operated in the two buildings located at 313 and 317-325 South 5th Street. During the 1950s, Muskogee Supply, Inc., a wholesale plumbing supplies warehouse, operated in both of the buildings.

15. 317-325 S. 5th St. Commercial/Industrial Building

Constructed circa 1910, this building originally functioned as an automobile repair shop. During the 1930s and early 1940s, Robert Mattress Factory occupied this building and the neighboring building to the north (313 South 5th Street) where they manufactured and sold mattresses wholesale. The south half of the building was added in circa 1945. By 1946, Southwest Furniture & Mattress Company took over the space in both buildings. During the 1950s, Muskogee Supply, Inc., a wholesale plumbing supplies warehouse, also operated out of the two buildings located at 313 and 317-325 South 5th Street.

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16. 327 S. 5th St. Southern Creamery Company Building

Constructed between 1912 and 1925, the Southern Creamery Company Building functioned as a creamery through the 1950s. In the late 1920s, the company name changed to Southern Butter Company and they occupied the building throughout the 1940s. During the 1950s, Lakeside Butter operated in the building.

SUMMARY ARGUMENT FOR SIGNIFICANCE

The history of Muskogee's rapid commercial and industrial development during the first three decades of the twentieth century left a physical record. The dominant commercial and industrial character of the Muskogee Depot and Freight District reflects the development of rail transportation corridors and its stimulus on the expansion of industrial and commercial facilities within the city.

The District contains a significant number of buildings that retain a sufficient degree of their original architectural integrity and possess historical significance as a grouping of industrial and commercial facilities and railroad buildings associated with the creation and early development of freight railroad facilities in Muskogee. As a group they represent a distinguishable entity, and while some of the components may lack individual distinction, as a whole they contain sufficient architectural integrity to convey information about the variety of uses and designs of buildings found in commercial freight yards in the early twentieth century. Individually and as a group, they reflect the subtle differences in design based on their intended functional use. All retain a strong integrity of association and location. Individually, they retain sufficient levels of the distinct architectural characteristics that qualify them as a functional and/or stylistic property type. Because of its architectural integrity, the Muskogee Depot and Freight District conveys feelings of a distinct period of time and visually demonstrates associations with a period of time in which Muskogee's rapidly developing railroad connections established the city as a regional market center.

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Muskogee County, Oklahoma

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**Muskogee Depot and Freight District
Muskogee County, Oklahoma**

PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION

Photographer: Kerry Davis, Architectural Historian
Sally Schwenk Associates, Inc.
Kansas City, Missouri

Date of Photographs: May 2006

Location of Negatives: Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office
2401 North Laird Avenue
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Photograph Number	Description of View	Direction of View
1.	Elgin Avenue and South 2 nd Street	NW
2.	501 South 2 nd Street, Loose-Wiles Biscuit Company Building	SW
3.	502 South 3 rd Street, Benton County Hardware Company Building	SW
4.	220 Elgin Avenue, Midland Valley Railroad Passenger Depot	NE
5.	220 Elgin Avenue, Midland Valley Railroad Passenger Depot	SW
6.	321 South 3 rd Street, Midland Valley Railroad Office Building	NW
7.	321 South 3 rd Street, Midland Valley Railroad Office Building	SW
8.	401 South 3 rd Street, Frisco Freight Depot	SW
9.	View south from Elgin Avenue and South 3 rd Street	S
10.	310 South 3 rd Street	SE
11.	305 South 3 rd Street	SW
12.	305 South 3 rd Street (west elevation) and 306 South 4 th Street (at right)	SE
13.	317-323 South 4 th Street, Muskogee Transfer & Storage Company	NW
14.	317-323 South 4 th Street, Muskogee Transfer & Storage Company, detail of rail spur passage	N
15.	Rail yard south of Frisco Freight Depot	E
16.	Rail yard freight ramp structure	NW
17.	South 5 th Street from Columbus Avenue	SE
18.	301-309 South 5 th Street (429 Columbus Avenue)	SW
19.	313, 317-325, and 327 South 5 th Street	SW
20.	317-325 and 327 South 5 th Street; freight façades	S
21.	317-325 South 5 th Street; interior view	W

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Photograph Number	Description of View	Direction of View
22.	500 Elgin Avenue, Muskogee Tool Company Building	SW
23.	400 Elgin Avenue	NW
24.	Rail yard, view northeast from South 5 th Street	NE
25.	Rail yard, view east from South 5 th Street	E

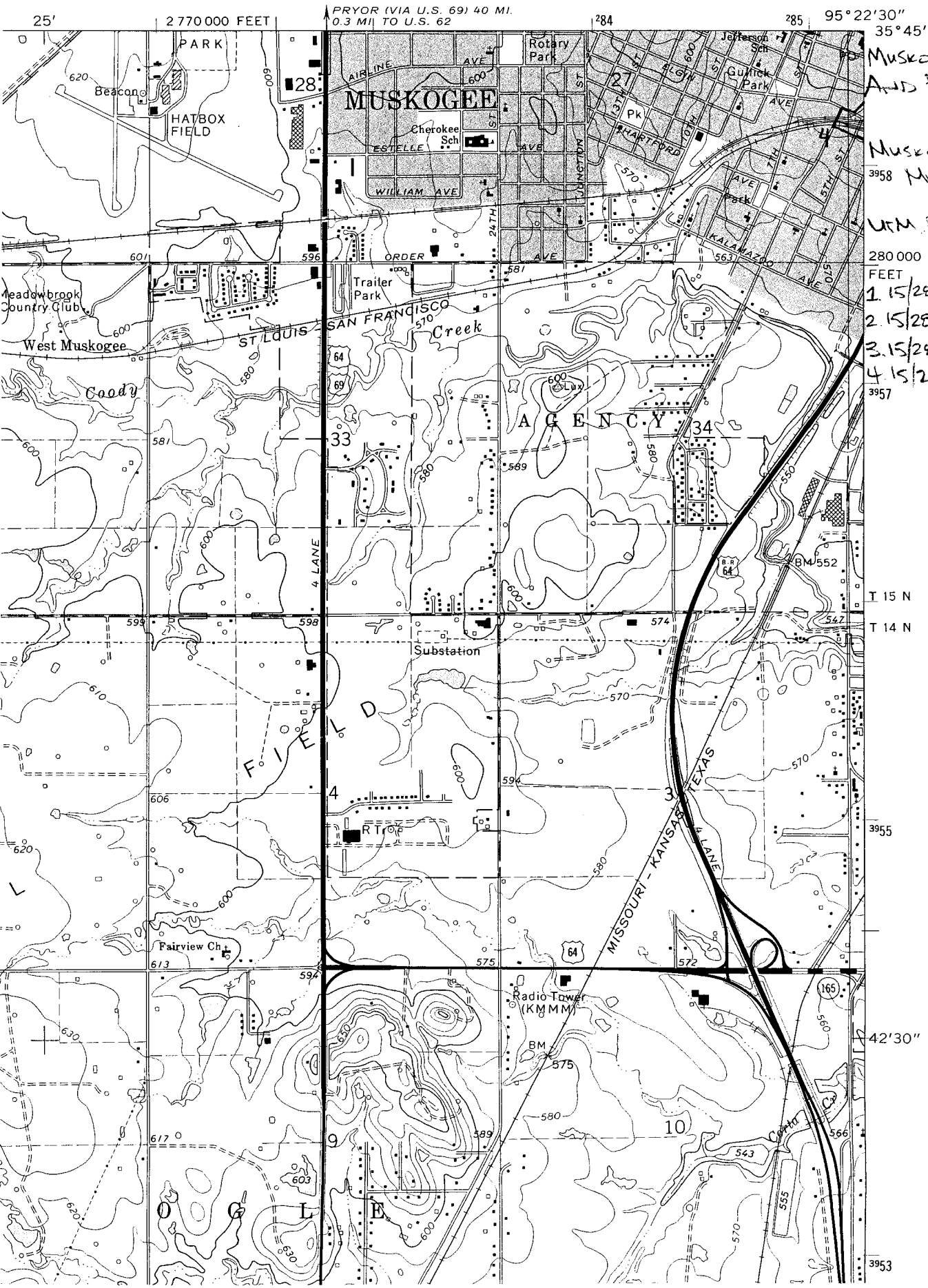
SOUTHWEST MUSKOGEE QUADRANGLE

OKLAHOMA—MUSKOGEE CO.

7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

NW/4 KEBFETON 15' QUADRANGLE

6955 IV SE
(NORTHEAST
MUSKOGEE)



MUSKOGEE DEPOT
AND FREIGHT
DISTRICT

MUSKOGEE,
3958 MUSKOGEE CO., OK

UTM REFERENCE:

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- 2. 15/285545/3958326
- 3. 15/285474/3958174
- 4. 15/285080/3958387

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Muskogee Depot and Freight District





Muskogee Depot and Freight District



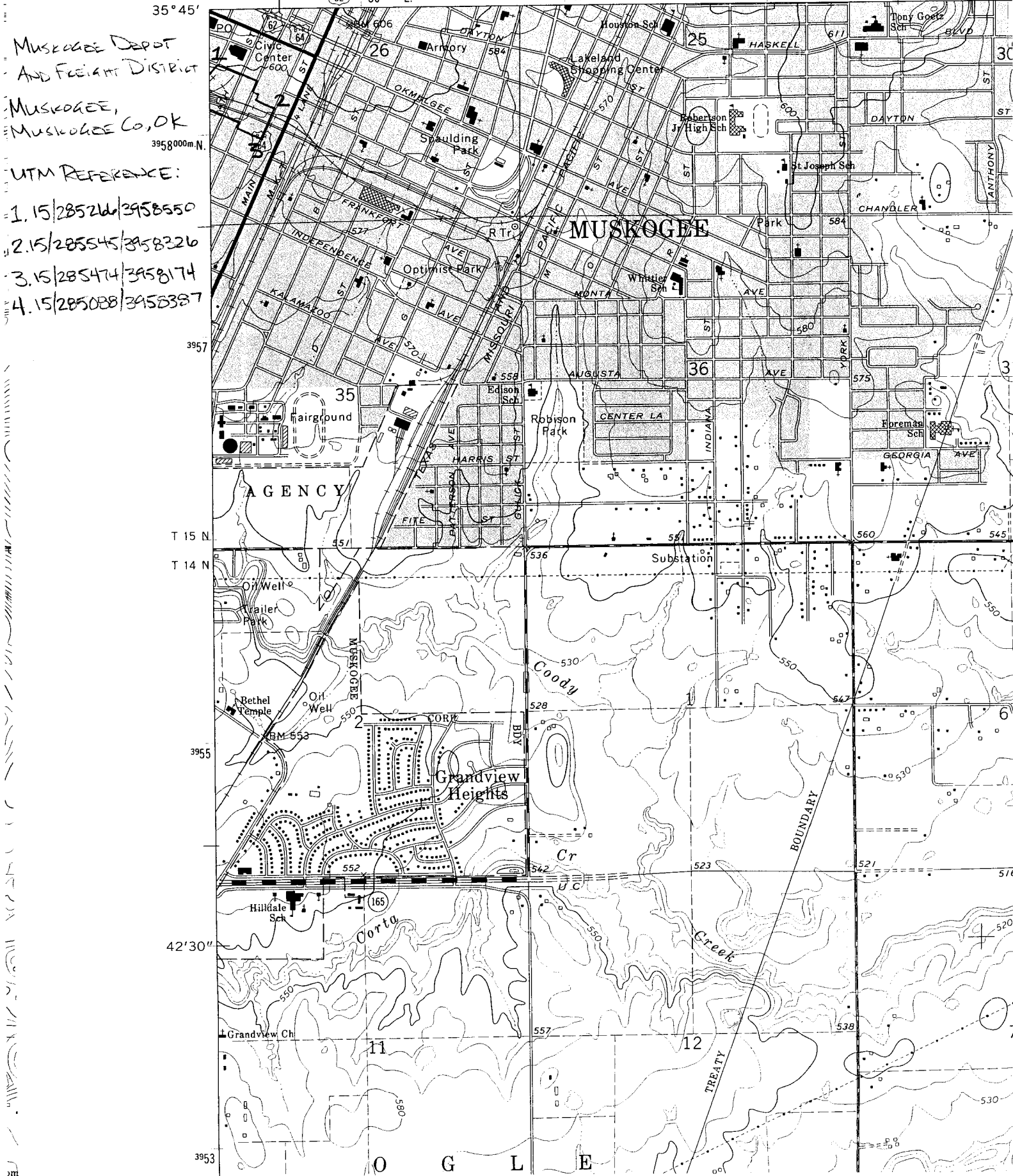
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(NORTHWEST
MUSKOGEE)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

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MUSKOGEE DEPOT
AND FREIGHT DISTRICT
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