

(Oct. 1990)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Route 66, SH 207 to Interstate 40

OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: NA

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: Texas Farm Road 2161, from I-40 to SH 207

CITY OR TOWN: Conway

VICINITY: X

NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A

STATE: Texas

CODE: TX

COUNTY: Carson

CODE: 065

ZIP CODE: 79068

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

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.)

Signature of certifying official

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission

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 commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

____ entered in the National Register

____ See continuation sheet.

____ determined eligible for the National Register

____ See continuation sheet

____ determined not eligible for the National Register

____ removed from the National Register

____ other (explain): _____

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: Public-Local

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: Structure

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING
	0	0 BUILDINGS
	0	0 SITES
	1	0 STRUCTURES
	<u>0</u>	<u>0 OBJECTS</u>
	1	0 TOTAL

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 0

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: Route 66 in Texas MPS

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: TRANSPORTATION: roadbed

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: TRANSPORTATION: roadbed

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: NO STYLE

MATERIALS: FOUNDATION
WALLS
ROOF
OTHER CONCRETE, ASPHALT

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheet 5).

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- 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: N/A

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Transportation, Engineering

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1930-1957

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1930

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: unknown

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 6 and 7)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheet 8).

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS): N/A

- 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 (*Texas Historical Commission*)
- Other state agency (*TXDOT*)
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: 36.6 acres

UTM REFERENCES	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
1.	14	283132	3898659
2.	14	272422	3900389

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: The boundary for the nominated property begins at the intersection of Texas Highway 207 in Conway. The north and south boundary lines extend along the highway's right-of-way and include the 22' wide roadbed as well as 10' of right-of-way on either side. The western terminus of the property is the Interstate 40 Frontage Road.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION: The boundary for this property is drawn to include the historic roadbed of Route 66 as well as additional right-of-way on either side of the highway. The eastern terminus ends at Texas Highway 207 in Conway. Further east there are numerous modern intrusions along the highway and its original profile has been widened. The western terminus is at the Interstate 40 Frontage Road and the original roadbed of Route 66 was removed for the construction of the interstate.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: Philip Thomason and Teresa Douglas

ORGANIZATION: Thomason and Associates

DATE: February 2006

STREET & NUMBER: 1907 21st Avenue S.

TELEPHONE: (615) 385-4960

CITY OR TOWN: Nashville

STATE: Tennessee

ZIP CODE: 37212

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS (see continuation sheet 9)

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet 10)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: Texas Department of Transportation (Michael W. Behrens, Executive Director)

STREET & NUMBER: 125 East 11th Street

TELEPHONE: 512/416-2628

CITY OR TOWN: Austin

STATE: Texas

ZIP CODE: 78701

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Route 66, SH 207 to Interstate 40
Conway vicinity, Carson, County, Texas

DESCRIPTION

This property is a 7.2 mile section of Route 66 between Conway and Interstate 40 in Carson County, Texas. Conway is located in the Texas Panhandle, twenty miles east of Amarillo. This section of roadbed was designated as Route 66 in 1930 and was paved later that year. It served as the roadbed for Route 66 from 1930 until ca. 1965 when Interstate 40 was completed 1.3 miles to the north. After the completion of Interstate 40, this section of Route 66 was incorporated into the Carson County highway system and is now known as Texas Farm Road 2161. From Conway to Interstate 40, the historic roadbed of Route 66 extends through open rangeland and farmland. There are few modern intrusions along the roadbed and it retains much of its mid-20th century integrity and design.

The original roadbed is 19' 2" in width with shoulders adding an additional 2' 10" on either side (Photo 1). The original surface of the roadbed was concrete which was covered with asphalt ca. 1950. Since ca. 1950, the asphalt has been repaired and replaced in various locations. From Conway west for several miles the highway is bracketed on the north by a fence line and on the south by the abandoned railroad bed of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad. The boundary for the roadbed begins at the intersection of Texas Highway 207 in Conway. For descriptive purposes of features, going east to west, the mileage starts at 0 at Texas Highway 207. At 0.3 mile the roadbed leaves the Conway city limits and continues west (Photos 2-3). The roadbed continues west and ascends a slight rise. After crossing the rise the road passes a windmill at 1.2 miles and continues west (Photo 3). At 1.4 miles the highway passes a group of agricultural buildings on the south side of the road.

At 2.0 miles the highway intersects with County Road L, which is a dirt road and crosses Route 66. At 3.0 miles the highway intersects with County Road K which is also a dirt road. From this vantage point no buildings are in view with the exception of a windmill in the distance to the south and a bridge over I-40 in the distance to the north (Photo 5). The historic roadbed of Route 66 continues west passing agricultural buildings at 3.5 miles. After passing a windmill and small concrete farm building the highway intersects with County Road I at 5.1 miles (Photo 6). County Road I has a gravel roadbed north of Route 66 and a dirt roadbed south of the highway. Just past County Road I, the historic roadbed of Route 66 turns to the northwest and away from the abandoned railroad bed (Photo 7). Past this point the highway is defined on both sides by wood and wire fences. At 6.4 miles the highway intersects with County Road H which has a dirt surface (Photo 8). The highway continues northwest through open fields until the original pavement ends and asphalt begins for a new I-40 Frontage Road at 7.2 miles.

Throughout its 7.2 mile length this section of historic Route 66 does not pass by any notable modern intrusions after it leaves the Conway city limits. In Conway the landscape is dominated by several concrete grain elevators which date to 1914. West of the city limits there are no major buildings along the roadbed until the I-40 interchange. The landscape throughout the highway's length consists of the abandoned railroad bed, a scattering of agricultural buildings, and open range land and farm land.

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This segment of original Route 66 roadbed west of Conway in Carson County, Texas is nominated to the National Register under Criteria A and C at the state level of significance, in the areas of Engineering and Transportation. Route 66 was one of the nation's leading highways during the early to mid-twentieth century, and served as the primary corridor between Chicago and California. The road reflects the history of transportation from this era and both the forces which brought it into being and those that diminished its use. Under Criterion C, this segment of Route 66 is significant as a representative example of roadbed construction and engineering of the 1930s. The road retains much of its original form, design, materials and the surrounding setting has changed little since the road's construction. The roadbed segment conveys a strong sense of its historic time and place and is one of the longest and best preserved sections of Route 66 in Texas. The property meets the registration requirements for the property type of "Roadbeds" as set forth in the Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Route 66 in Texas MPS."

Route 66 crossed Texas through the panhandle of the state, a sparsely populated arid region largely characterized by a scattering of small towns and farming communities. White settlement of the area occurred relatively late, but extensive sheep and cattle ranching of the early twentieth century had displaced the Native Americans and buffalo herds that had once dominated the region by the late 19th century. During the 1920s, agriculture in the panhandle boomed and the oil industry boosted the local economy. The oil industry generated substantial growth in Amarillo, which became the commercial and corporate center of the region, and led to significant highway development through the panhandle.¹ Representative of this growth was the platting of the town of Conway in 1905 which became a small railroad community along the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad.²

Roads in this section of Texas were little more than dirt paths in the early twentieth century. The trip from Amarillo to Tucumcari, New Mexico, a journey of approximately 110 miles, averaged a full day. But as the oil industry prospered in the 1920s, activity in the region called for improved roads, and by 1928 this same trip required only three hours.³ The establishment of Route 66 through the Texas panhandle was a key event in the region's road development. Route 66 extended in a rather direct east-west alignment across the panhandle passing through a series of small towns most of which had fewer than five hundred residents. These included Shamrock, McLean, Alanreed, and Groom in eastern Texas, and Vega, Adrian, Landergin, and Wildorado in the western part of the state. Centrally located Amarillo in Potter County was the only sizeable city through which the road passed.⁴

When US Highway 66 was planned through Texas in the 1920s, various routes were recommended. There was also an extensive push across the panhandle to have the highway fully paved. In 1928, E.W. Bowen, a prominent highway booster from Tucumcari spoke to a group of Amarillo businessmen about the benefits of having a paved roadbed between their towns, citing ease of traffic and quicker travel as key advantages. Bowen encouraged Amarillians to attend a meeting between the governors of Texas and New Mexico and officials from both state highway departments regarding interstate highway improvements, which was scheduled to take place the following month.⁵ Bowen also boasted of a new paving process that had been used in his state. The new pavement material was of "sand and oil mixed on the road by machinery," and provided a layer about four inches thick that could be sloped for drainage. The

¹ Michael Cassity, "Route 66 Corridor National Historic Context Study." (Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, National Trails System Office – Intermountain Region, National Park Service, Santa Fe, New Mexico, December 15, 2004), 76-78.

² Mrs. Ralph E. Randel ed., *A Time to Purpose, A Chronicle of Carson County*, (Panhandle, Texas: Carson County Historical Survey Committee, 1966), 248.

³ "Kiwanians Told How '66' Paving Helps," *Amarillo Daily News*, 13 July 1928.

⁴ Cassity, "Route 66 Corridor National Historic Context Study," 76-78.

⁵ "Kiwanians Told How '66' Paving Helps," *Amarillo Daily News*, 13 July 1928.

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process “made it possible to surface a road after it had been graded and culverts and bridges installed.” Other benefits of the pavement were its dust proof quality and low cost, which averaged around \$1,000 per mile.⁶ It does not appear that this type of paving was utilized on the section of roadbed west of Conway.

Although Route 66 was designated in 1926, its route through Texas remained in dispute for several years in Carson and Potter Counties east of Amarillo. Carson County officials including a local judge traveled to Austin in support of the road and helped to secure its location. The route through Carson County was finalized by August 24, 1930, when an article in the *Amarillo Daily News* declared the “U.S. 66 Highway Tangle Solved.” The paper stated that state and federal officials had approved relocation of the highway between the town of Conway to the Potter County line along a route north of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad. Local residents were jubilant over the announcement as the dispute over its location had delayed the paving of a ten-mile section of roadbed for over a year.⁷ Following this announcement, Carson County officials announced “We will start work at once on plans for the unpaved strip of the road” . . . “and we believe it possible to let a contract for grading and drainage structures when the state highway commission meets in September.”⁸ The road west of Conway was paved with concrete in 1930 and this hard surfaced road was opened to Amarillo.

From 1930 to the mid-1960s, this two-lane roadbed served as the alignment for Route 66 west of Conway. This roadbed extended through open range land and farm land and paralleled the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad for several miles. A 1956 highway map of Carson County shows the roadbed as Route 66 and with few houses or other buildings along this alignment.⁹ When Interstate 40 was completed through Carson County, federal management of Route 66 ended and it was incorporated into the county’s highway system as Texas Farm Road 2161. The highway continues to be used for local traffic south of the interstate as well as providing a sense of time and place for Route 66 travelers.

Throughout Texas, Route 66 is primarily an access frontage road for I-40 for much of its length. The 7.2 mile section of Route 66 between Conway and I-40 continues to be used as a state highway and possesses the highest degree of integrity of any rural section of Route 66 in Texas. The nominated property retains integrity of location, setting, feeling and association not only because of the preservation of the original roadbed, but also because of the largely unaltered farmland and rangeland through which it extends.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ “U.S. 66 Highway Tangle Solved Carson County,” *Amarillo Daily News* 24 August 1930.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Carson County Highway Map, Texas State Highway Department, 1956.

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Conway vicinity, Carson, County, Texas

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Amarillo Daily News, 13 July 1928 and 24 August 1930.

Carson County Highway Map, Texas State Highway Department, 1956.

Cassity, Michael. "Route 66 Corridor National Historic Context Study." Rute 66 Corridor Preservation Program, National Trails System Office, Intermountain Region, National Park Service, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 2004.

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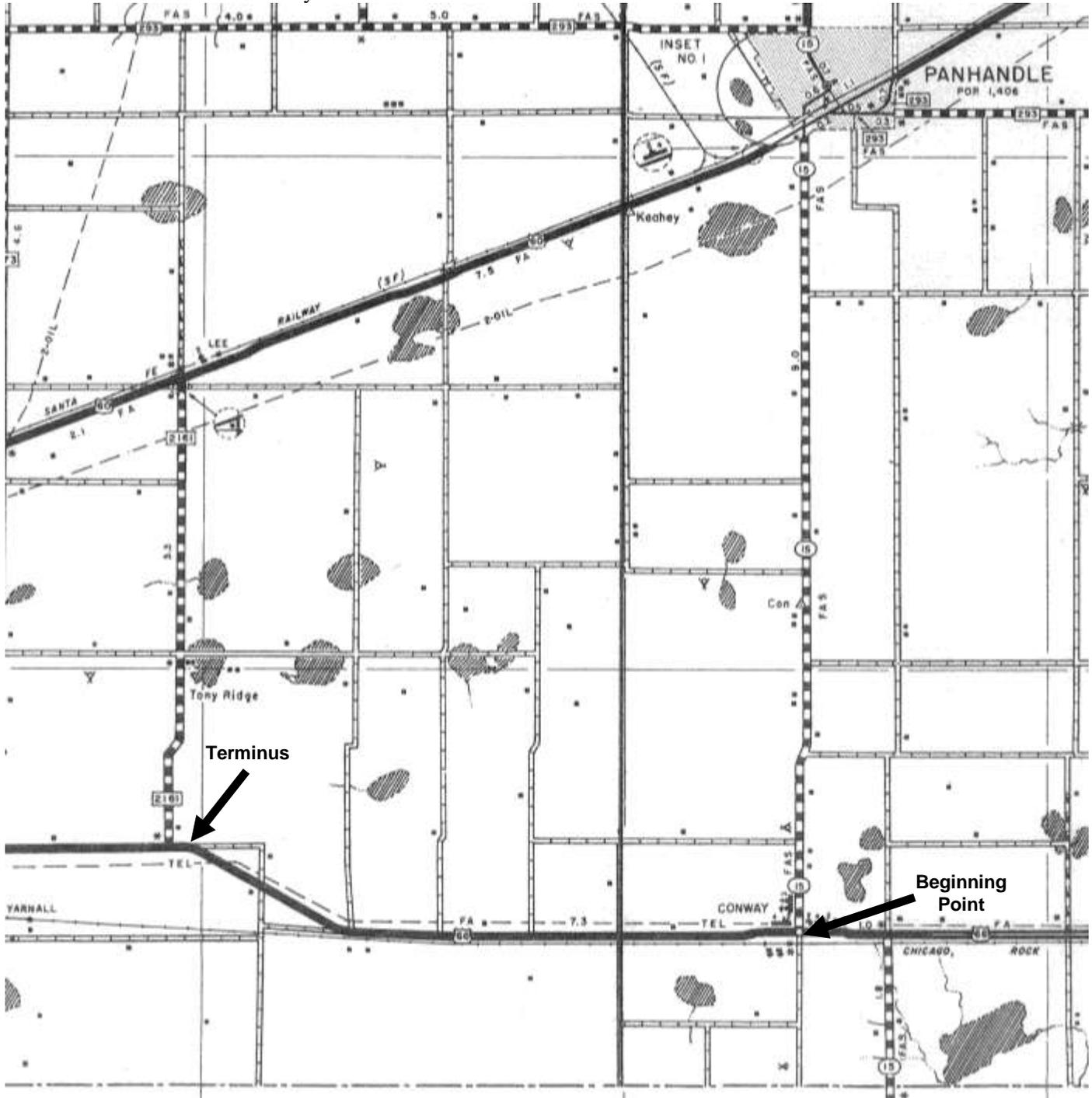
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Route 66, SH 207 to Interstate 40
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Route 66 in 1956 west of Conway.



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Route 66, SH 207 to Interstate 40
Conway vicinity, Carson, County, Texas

PHOTOGRAPHS

Route 66, Conway to Interstate 40
Carson County, Texas

Photographs by: Thomason and Associates

Date: February 22, 2005

Location of Negatives: National Park Service, Santa Fe, NM

- Photo No. 1: Route 66 roadbed profile and design, Conway city limits.
- Photo No. 2: Route 66 roadbed at the Conway city limits, view to the east.
- Photo No. 3: Route 66 roadbed at the Conway city limits, view to the west.
- Photo No. 4: View of the roadbed west of Conway, view to the east.
- Photo No. 5: View from County Road K, view to the east.
- Photo No. 6: View from County Road I, view to the east.
- Photo No. 7: View from County Road I, view to the west. Note the abandoned railroad line at left.
- Photo No. 8: View from County Road H to the northwest.