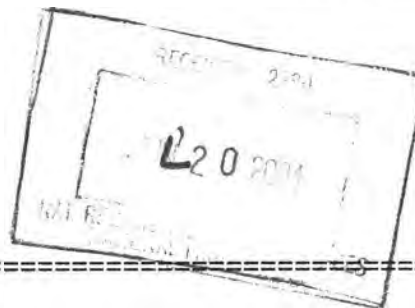


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name McLain Rogers Park

other names/site number Clinton City Park

=====

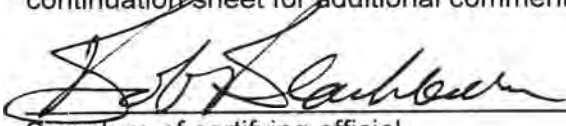
2. Location

=====

street & number Intersection of Tenth and Bess Rogers Drive not for publication N/A
city or town Clinton vicinity N/A
state Oklahoma code OK county Custer code 039 zip code 73601

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. (N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)


Signature of certifying official

July 19, 2004
Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO
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:

☒ entered in the National Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the

National Register

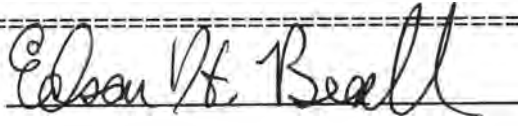
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the

National Register

☐ removed from the National Register

☐ other (explain): _____


Signature of Keeper Date
of Action

9/2/04

=====

5. Classification

=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

☐ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

☐ building(s)
☒ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>4</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<u>9</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<u>1</u>	<u>3</u> structures
<u>14</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
	<u>3</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: _RECREATION AND CULTURE_ Sub: __ outdoor recreation _____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: _RECREATION AND CULTURE_ Sub: __ outdoor recreation _____

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation _ CONCRETE

roof _ ASPHALT SHINGLE

walls _ BRICK

STONE: sandstone

CONCRETE

other _____

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

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McLain Rogers Park
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Description

Summary

Constructed as the result of efforts by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, the Civil Works Administration, and the Works Progress Administration between 1934 and 1937, McLain Rogers Park is a city park surrounded on three sides by residential areas and on the east by scattered commercial development. It holds varied recreational facilities that appealed in the 1930s and 1940s to local residents. The park consists of about twelve acres on a naturally undulating landscape between Tenth Street (on the east) and Thirteenth Street (on the west). Jaycee Lane forms the south border and Opal Avenue defines the north limit of the park, although the street does not go completely through to Tenth. The modern swimming pool, added in 1987, is north of the original park boundary.

Landscaped in the 1930s, mature hardwoods are often arranged in straight rows and conifers partially encircle the amphitheater. A paved street, Bess Rogers Drive, gently meanders through the park from the grand Art Deco gate on Tenth to the matching gate posts on Opal at Twelfth, separating as it does so the north portion of the park from the rest. The north section includes the tennis courts, children's playground, volleyball court and bleachers, and bathhouse. The area south and west of the drive includes the baseball field and stands, a pavilion, a restroom, the stone amphitheater, the miniature golf course, and the Highway Patrol building. Scattered throughout the west and south portion are numerous picnic areas with tables and fire pits. With the exception of specific features noted below, the park maintains integrity of location, appearance, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association dating to the overall landscape plan prepared in the 1930s.



Aerial photo, McLain Rogers Park, Clinton, Oklahoma. U.S. Route 66 (Tenth Street) on right, Bess Rogers Drive through the park, and amphitheater at bottom center. Photo © City of Clinton.

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The following is a list of resources found within the park:

East Gate

Located at the intersection of Bess Rogers Drive and Tenth Street, this striking gateway to the park was, and remains, the main entrance which welcomed visitors off Route 66. Thus even local visitors came to the park by Route 66. Built in impressive zigzag Art Deco style, the gate consists of two brick piers on either side of Bess Rogers Drive that support a cross member with neon lights with the name of the park. The piers are carefully, and elaborately, built so that the core of each has recessed corners, but are buttressed with additional staggered, reinforcing brickwork, each element capped with concrete painted dark green. The combination of light brick and progressively narrowing mass give the piers a tower-like impression. The horizontal metal beam connecting the piers continues the zigzag motif and neon lighting (still functioning) bears the name of the mayor for whom the park is named in a modernistic font: McLain Rogers Park. The East Gate is a **contributing** structure.

Tennis Courts

The two tennis courts are located immediately south of the swimming pool, also next to Tenth Street which was Route 66. They are also thereby located immediately north of Bess Rogers Drive near the main entrance to the park. The tennis courts simply consist of a flat asphalt pad with posts for nets and a surrounding fence. The tennis courts were constructed as part of the original park construction but in the last several years the concrete pads peppered with WPA shield imprints were replaced with modern asphalt. While the materials have been replaced, the location, design, appearance, and feeling have not changed significantly since the 1930s. The tennis courts are a **contributing** structure.

Children's Playground

West of the tennis courts a sandy area has been enclosed in recent years with brick piers and metal rails. The interior includes a variety of playground equipment. Since this section of the park is modern it is **noncontributing**.

Volleyball Court and Bleachers

Located west of the children's playground, the volleyball court itself is simply a sandy area with nets and includes part of the area that once was the swimming pool, but the bleachers south of the court are a significant historical feature. Constructed in 1936, the bleachers formed one part of the WPA effort involved in the park. Still in use, the concrete bleachers face north with wooden benches on the steps that rise to the south. The east and west elevations are thus triangular with a concrete panel that rises to form a rail enclosure for the seating area. The east, west, and south elevations are pilastered and painted a dark green to offset the lighter color of the recesses. The pilasters divide the

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south elevation into five symmetrical bays, each with a window centered except for the middle bay which provides an entrance to interior lockers and storage areas. A metal pipe rail is atop the elevation on the south, and a concrete walk surrounds the bleachers. The bleachers are a **contributing** structure.

Wading Pool / Play Area

No longer used as a wading pool, this rectangular curb with appropriate indentations on east, north, and west for water outlets has been filled with sand. Constructed as part of the original park development program and located at the southwest corner of the swimming pool, this was one of the popular features of the park. Because park modernization programs have preserved the wading pool, albeit beneath sand, the outline and composition of the feature is clearly discernible and it retains its integrity and is a **contributing** structure.

Bathhouse and Annex

The bathhouse complex is an irregular shaped brick structure with two parallel gabled buildings joined on the north by a third wing, thus providing an open corridor on the between the two buildings. The east wing was the original bathhouse constructed in 1934 as a Federal Emergency Relief Administration project. Within two years, however, the city was able to construct an annex to the bathhouse, noting that "the new building will adjoin the present structure on the west side and will resemble the present building in color and architectural design."¹ The arrangement, completing the bathhouse complex, included "in the north wing, a lounge and hallway and locker room," while the addition to the south "would house the manager's office and small caretaker's apartment."² The east elevation—the original bathhouse—opened asymmetrically off center to the south with steps to the pool, the single door flanked by three horizontal windows positioned high on each side. An additional pair of double-hung windows separates the doorway from the horizontal windows on the north. The roof has two gabled dormers on the east slope, all with asphalt shingles. The south elevation of this wing contains a single horizontal window matching those on the east; a louvered vent above is centered in the gable. The north elevation includes the two gabled wings on the east and west which are joined by a third, central, gabled section that projects slightly; the peak of the center gable is lower than those on each side. The doorway is centered in this section under elaborate brickwork that forms an Islamic arch. The west wing is larger than the east, both in length and in width; while the two wings are not, therefore symmetrical or identical, they do maintain a consistent design and the materials are identical. The west elevation includes two gabled sections that project forward, thus making this building cross-gabled. Windows to the north are the same horizontal windows located on the east elevation, but multi-light metal windows, somewhat larger than the horizontal windows, are used in the remainder of the wing which was not used as changing rooms. This complex and intricate building for many years served as the residence of the park superintendent and retains its original structure and appearance although it is no longer in active use and is a **contributing** feature.

¹ "Work Starts on Bathhouse Annex" Clinton *Daily News*, September 1, 1936.

² "Bathhouse Annex Will be Erected," Clinton *Daily News*, August 26, 1936.

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Concession Stand

This small rectangular brick building is located to the south of the bathhouse and annex. One of the original park buildings, it is a hip-roofed structure with very simple lines. The east elevation includes two large horizontal windows that open for the sale and dispensing of refreshments. North of those two windows is a multi-light vertical window. The north elevation has only a single small window centrally positioned. The west elevation exactly mirrors the east with two large sales windows on the south and a doorway on the north. The concession stand is a **contributing** building.

North Gate

The north gate, at the intersection of Twelfth and Opal, is similar to the main entrance on the east except that it does not have a crossbeam joining the two Art Deco piers. Indeed, without the horizontal sign, the two towers appear even taller and more imposing because of the art deco design. They, along with the gate at the main entrance, remain signature elements of the park and are a **contributing** structure.

Bess Rogers Drive and Stone Bridge

The two gates are connected by a short drive that gracefully curves through the north section of the park. This two-lane road is part of the park and was constructed in 1936 and 1937 with WPA funds. Although additional funds went for improving nearby streets (except for Tenth Street which was already improved highway), the proposal for WPA funds included "an oil and gravel surface" on these roads, making special mention of "the two-block street running on the north side of the park and for the drives through the park."³ Although that road has been improved with the addition of asphalt, it retains its integrity. Moreover, the road also includes a stone bridge near the east entrance that covers the concrete and stone drainage ditch that carried off the water from the swimming pool. That bridge is made of native red sandstone in coursed rubble with a concrete cap on both north and south rails. The south rail is straight, but the north rail, uphill, angles to the north on each end with a retaining wall function. Indeed, immediately west of the north rail is an original concrete retaining wall that serves both as curbing for Bess Rogers Drive and support for the raised elevation above it. The drive and the bridge are considered a **contributing** structure.

Restroom

About fifty feet from the west pier of the North Gate, a brick bathroom facility with a hipped roof faces Bess Rogers Drive from the west. A simple rectangular structure, the entrances are located on the north and south elevations. Constructed in 1934 or 1935 (the city included the facility explicitly in plans for the project in September 1934), this building uses the same light colored brick found in other park buildings and the design is consistent with others. The east elevation includes two large windows on either end, both now boarded. In the center is a utility entrance; the

³ "More City Park Work Sought in Works Program," *Clinton Daily News*, July 9, 1936.

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center section on either side of the entrance is now generally boarded over. The south and north elevations are mirror images of each other with the entrance located on the west end of the walls with a large window, boarded over, to the east. On both north and south, moreover, a brick rail extends out from the west elevation to a brick pier and then extends to the east to another brick pier in line with the east elevation. These piers, with concrete caps similar to the gate piers, are about three-fourths the height of the building eaves. They do not appear to have supported a canopy previously. On the west elevation four additional large windows, now boarded, are located high on the wall evenly spaced. The restroom is a **contributing** building.

Pavilion

The pavilion west of the Restroom is a large rectangular concrete pad with steel poles that support a gable roof. Movable picnic tables are located within. This is a modern structure and is **noncontributing**.

Picnic Tables and Drinking Fountains

Located east of the amphitheater are seven concrete picnic tables and two concrete drinking fountains. The picnic area originally had ten tables; the concrete pads where three once were are still visible. The tables have flared bases and simple benched. The fountains are square and tapered toward the top with bowls indented into the top. Neither functions. One picnic table is lower than standard, intended for use as a 'childrens' table." The seven tables and two fountains in the picnic area constitute one **contributing** object.

Baseball Stadium

The area west and south of the Pavilion is generally higher and more level terrain than the rest of the park and the baseball diamond and stands are located in the far southwest corner, near the intersection of Jacye Lane and Thirteenth Street. The baseball diamond appears to have been one of the first features in the park, requiring minimal construction, and may even have preceded WPA work. Soon afterwards, however, a petition drive called upon city leaders to include improvements to the baseball field in a future WPA project. In 1936, the petition sponsors noted that the cost of the project would be limited to constructing the grandstand since "the diamond is in good shape and the concrete dugouts for the players were built this spring."⁴ The grandstand is a concrete and steel structure with tiered benches for seating and a partial canopy overhead located on the diagonal facing northeast. The dugouts have been removed. A chain link fence encloses the entire field. The Baseball Stadium is a **contributing** structure.

Amphitheater and Bandstand

Constructed in 1936 as part of one of the WPA projects improving the park, the amphitheater and bandstand represent one of the most distinctive and attractive features of the park. The amphitheater itself is built into a hill that slopes to the southwest; curved rows of benches radiate upward from the band shell and stage at the bottom. The

⁴ "Ball Fans Seek Park Grandstand," *Clinton Daily News*, July 9, 1936.

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benches, which seat approximately four hundred people, are made of native sandstone and capped with smooth concrete. Instead of a concrete floor, though, the benches are separated by rows of grassy lawn, a feature that contributes to the comfort and acoustics of the amphitheater. A concrete aisle bisects and borders the rows of seating and stone rails, similar to the benches, along the outside aisles provide a boundary on the perimeter of the seating. A row of cedars or junipers behind the rail at the top of the seating area and additional foliage on each side provides separation from the rest of the park.

The bandstand / stage toward which the seating is oriented is likewise distinctive and made of the same native sandstone. The stage rises from the concrete apron separating it from the seating and follows the same curve as the seats. The sandstone of the front of the stage then joins the stone that forms the rail along the side of the seating. The proscenium itself is concrete and, because the lowest part of the seating is sunken, the stage ends are level with the surrounding terrace. The bandshell is located to the rear (southwest) of the stage and consists of a dramatic white concrete half-dome positioned to project the stage sound forward to the audience. The white dome has three entrances to backstage utility / dressing areas, one on each side and in the middle at the rear of the dome. Sandstone walls extend outward to each side of the dome and then back to form a rectangular structure housing the backstage rooms. The windows in each elevation have been enclosed with brick that generally matches the sandstone. At the northwest corner—west of the stage—a shield medallion reads USA WPA 1936.

The amphitheater and bandstand are a single **contributing** structure.

Stone Drainage Ditch

When the park was originally constructed, it was necessary to provide a way for the removal of the substantial volume of water in the swimming pool so a drainage ditch was integrated into the park. This ditch, located under and south of Bess Rogers Drive, is a straight canal with a concrete floor and native stone sides capped with concrete. It extends directly from the bridge on the drive to the edge of the park at Tenth Street where it opens onto the former Route 66. This ditch is a **contributing** structure, but the small arched bridge crossing it near the miniature golf course is a minor, modern feature that is not contributing by reason of age.

Miniature Golf Course

Separated from the amphitheater by wooded picnic areas, the miniature golf course is located near the southeast corner of the park. The eastern edge of the course consists of the straight drainage ditch for the swimming pool water. This miniature golf course was constructed since the period of historic significance and is **not a contributing** structure. Because it is consistent with the historic use of the park and is separated from the other parts, it does not impact the integrity of other features.

Highway Patrol Building

Constructed in 1941, the last WPA project at the city park was this stone building located just south of the main gate at the east entrance to the park facing Route 66. The original section is the front, or east, building with a hipped roof

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and a gabled porch overhang on the east elevation. The entrance is in the center of that elevation, flanked by multi-light casement windows. The same casement windows are located on the north and south elevations. That building was enlarged at an unknown date with the addition of a gable-roofed structure of similar stone to the west. The north and south elevations on this addition each hold two double-hung windows; the windows on the west elevation of similar dimensions are now boarded. On the east elevation of the original structure, a shield medallion reads: USA 1941 WPA OKLAHOMA. Used as regional headquarters for the Oklahoma Highway Patrol from 1941 until well beyond the period of historic significance, the Highway Patrol building is a **contributing** building.



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8. Statement of Significance

=====

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.)

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or a 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.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ECONOMICS
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1934-1942

=====

8. Statement of Significance (Continued)

=====

Significant Dates 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1941

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Rich, E. M., builder
FERA, builder
WPA, builder

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

=====

9. Major Bibliographical References

=====

(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: Clinton Public Library, Clinton City Clerk Office

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Significance

Summary

McLain Rogers Park, conceived in 1934 as "City Park," is significant at the local level under Criterion A for its importance in the recreational and economic development of Clinton from 1934 to 1942. It is significant under Criterion C for its cohesive collection of buildings and structures and for its planned development. A unified design aesthetic in materials and style marks the various buildings and structures. The layout of the park was planned before any construction began; haphazard and wasteful utilization of space was to be avoided. The end result of the development plan is a park of unified theme, executed during the Depression, that provided not only needed recreational facilities for the citizens of Clinton, but also a living wage for the relief workers employed to carry it to fruition.

Narrative

Founded in 1903 on lands previously assigned to Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians, and opened to white settlement by land run in 1892, the town of Clinton was still young in 1934 when the city purchased a block of land adjacent to the city limits on the south between Tenth and Thirteenth Streets with the intention of developing a municipal park.⁵ A committee had earlier been appointed to study the issue of a park and to present a plan. All along, the thought was to use the Civil Works Administration (CWA, phased out in 1934) or Federal Emergency Relief Administration (parent organization to the CWA) to provide labor support. A swimming pool was at the top of the list of amenities desired for the new park. "Neighboring towns have swimming pools, it was pointed out. It was felt that a pool here would receive strong support."⁶

The City of Clinton, in April, 1934, purchased a parcel of land acquired directly adjacent to the joining of the two alternate routes of U.S Highway 66 on Tenth Street. The fifteen acre site had previously been used at various times for rodeos, circuses, and even baseball games. The FERA would supply the workforce to complete the park.⁷ Work was to almost immediately. The initial committee had suggested that in addition to a swimming pool, other desired amenities would include softball and baseball fields and room for expansion. A few months after purchasing the land the city officially extended the city limits southward to include the property.

The future park site was first examined by professional engineers to determine the best use of the topography in relation to the desired amenities. City officials called on outside help to create a plan that would maximize the recreational use of the land. "A park expert from Oklahoma City will be here soon, perhaps this week, to survey the

⁵ Clinton City Council Minutes, March 22, 1934, p. 436.

⁶ "New Swimming Pool Proposal is Made Here," Clinton *Daily News*, March 21, 1934.

⁷ "City Buys Park Site, Swimming Pool Materials," Clinton *Daily News*, April 10, 1934.

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site and make recommendations as to how it should be laid out," noted the Clinton *Daily News* on April 11, 1934. The City of Clinton had just changed governmental format, adopting a commission system. The new commissioners wanted this first project done right, desiring a "park laid out scientifically" allowing for phased construction as FERA funding and labor became available.⁸

As it built the park, the city drew heavily on the newly available resources of the federal government. Although much of the construction in the park was done under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration, the WPA was not created until 1935. In the first several months of the Franklin Roosevelt administration, Congress approved an omnibus, temporary agency—the Federal Emergency Relief Administration—charged with the responsibility of helping the nation's cities and states address the problem of unemployment through work programs at the same time that they improved the public infrastructure. This was augmented by the creation of the Civil Works Administration in November 1933. Clinton's city leaders drew upon each of these agencies to build the park: the FERA, the CWA, and subsequently the WPA. Between 1933, when the federal relief programs were launched, and 1941, when the last WPA building was constructed in what was known commonly as the City Park, the city and the federal government, under a proportional matching funds arrangement, created a recreational park over an area of around twelve acres that included a variety of public facilities. In fact, the city creatively and impressively managed to secure one project after another during these years and shifted resources adroitly from one project to another, adding to previously approved projects, and developing plans for additional facilities.

The progress of the construction of the park is sometimes difficult to follow given the multiple projects and the uneven reporting of that work in the documentary record. But it is clear that by the summer of 1934 some of the work had begun. The first sign may have been the issuance of an order for two cars of rock to be delivered from the state reformatory at Granite in the spring of 1934.⁹ Work on the pool started in June, with 25 FERA laborers beginning work on a pool that was to measure 60' x 150', located on the north edge of the park.¹⁰ In July 1934, the local newspaper reported that the Federal Emergency Relief Administration had approved additional funds for the construction of a bathhouse at the city park, "for the new swimming pool being built here." The bathhouse was to be constructed of brick. The concrete footings for the pool were to be poured the next day.¹¹ Within a month the city announced that "completion of the swimming pool in the city park here will likely be followed by construction of a wading pool and two tennis courts." (Two days later the city limits were extended south to include the park.) This was an ambitious program that included also the installation of floodlights at the pool and tennis courts. The newspaper reported that "the visualized park promises to be an outstanding recreation place, and is expected to prove quite popular. Facilities will be available for summer playground activities, making a more comprehensive

⁸ "Park Plans to be Drawn," Clinton *Daily News*, May 5, 1934.

⁹ Clinton City Council Minutes, April 9, 1934.

¹⁰ "Swimming Pool Work Here Will Begin Tomorrow," and "Swimming Pool Work is Started," Clinton *Daily News*, June 7 & 8, 1934.

¹¹ "Funds Available for Bath House," Clinton *Daily News*, July 10, 1934.

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program possible next summer.¹² Soon the city modified an additional project so that when bids were let for future work at the park the expansion would include a ladies restroom, a feature evidently not included previously.¹³

With the creation of the Works Progress Administration in May, 1935, the park began to take a more systematic shape, and in August 1935 E. M. Rich was appointed by the city council to develop "plans and specifications for our WPA Park Project" and to be appointed as the engineer or superintendent for the work.¹⁴ Work continued on the park and in the summer of 1936 the city estimated that three-fourths of the park plan was complete. Some parts of the original proposal had, however, been removed and the city in 1936 added them back in to new proposals to secure additional funding. One of the more substantial parts was the addition to the bathhouse; plus, the city wanted to oil and gravel the drive through the park.¹⁵ In a movement that initiated outside city hall, baseball supporters circulated a petition to include the construction of a grandstand for the baseball stadium; dugouts for the teams and a diamond had already been completed.¹⁶ At the same time, the local newspaper revealed an important dimension of the ongoing work when it noted in 1936 that "the Clinton Park, the city's outstanding improvement under the various work relief actions, has been in progress almost three years. The swimming pool, concrete tennis courts, croquet courts, baseball diamond, amphitheater and other improvements have been approved under the old CWA [Civil Works Administration], the FERA and the WPA"¹⁷

And the development continued. In July 1936 the band shell—the quarter dome acoustical feature on the stage at the amphitheater—was nearing completion too.¹⁸ While the amphitheater was usable, and in fact appears to have been put to official use by groups who preferred not to wait, its finishing touches remained, and a grand celebration was scheduled for late August or September in a ceremony that would constitute a dedication of the park.¹⁹ The Clinton Chamber of Commerce, moreover, considered a proposal to plant between two hundred and five hundred trees in the park.²⁰ Whether or not this became part of the WPA project or was performed independent of the WPA, or even independent of the city, is not clear. Moreover, once the season was over and the swimming pool was closed, work began on construction of the annex to the bathhouse.²¹ One additional aspect of this park construction,

¹²"Wading Pool at Park is Planned," *Clinton Daily News*, August 2, 1934.

¹³Clinton City Council Minutes, September 18, 1934, page 512.

¹⁴Clinton City Council Minutes, August 26, 1935, page 584.

¹⁵"More City Park Work sought in Works Program," *Clinton Daily News*, July 9, 1936.

¹⁶"Ball Fans Seek Park Grandstand," *Clinton Daily News*, July 9, 1936.

¹⁷"More City Park Work sought in Works Program," *Clinton Daily News*, July 9, 1936. The location of the croquet courts, at one time a popular form of outdoor recreation in Oklahoma and elsewhere, has not yet been identified; the courts, however, are no longer extant.

¹⁸"To 'Finish Band Shell in Month," *Clinton Daily News*, July 27, 1936.

¹⁹"Celebration at Park is Planned," *Clinton Daily News*, August 4, 1936. See also "Goodbye Concert for Lloyd Friday," *Clinton Daily News*, August 26, 1936; ironically the band's performance to bid farewell to their leader may have been the inaugural performance of the amphitheater.

²⁰"May Plant Trees at Clinton Park," *Clinton Daily News*, August 4, 1936.

²¹"Bathhouse Annex Will be Erected," *Clinton Daily News*, August 26, 1936; "Work Starts on Bathhouse Annex," *Clinton Daily News*, September 1, 1936.

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which suggests something of the importance to the community and the size of the effort was that when the season closed in 1936, the staff at the park was cut back to only four—a number that suggests that the seasonal employment had been quite substantial. Plus, the city set a salary for a full time park superintendent in 1936, and one of the purposes of the bathhouse annex was to provide a residence for the superintendent.²² In December 1936 the city officially accepted the bleachers that had been constructed under a WPA project in the park.²³

All the while, of course, traffic on Route 66 continued to increase and flowed past what was still known as the City Park. In response to that increase in traffic, in 1941 the Oklahoma Highway Patrol increased its own activities. The last WPA project in the park contributed to this effort. Directly south of the main entrance gates a new building was constructed in 1941 drawing upon WPA funds. This building housed the regional headquarters for the Oklahoma Highway Patrol. Situated directly on Route 66, it had immediate access to probably the most important highway in this region. That same year, because of the growing traffic on the nationally important highway, traffic in Clinton was divided along the two alternate routes so that the westbound traffic followed Choctaw to Tenth and then south, but the eastbound traffic turned onto the alternate route that, coming from the south, followed Opal to Fourth and then to Choctaw. The Y where the traffic divided, of course, was exactly opposite the park entrance, and exactly opposite the new Highway Patrol Building. (At an unknown date, moreover, a Route 66 tourist court was located immediately north of the park, exactly, in fact, in the location where the new swimming pool was built in 1987.)

At some point in the period of historic significance not yet identified, the park was renamed from the informal "City Park" to honor the mayor of the city during much of the 1930s when the park was developed: Dr. McLain Rogers.

Architectural and Historical Significance

McLain Rogers Park exhibits an significant collection of buildings and structures that represent the New Deal's influence on public property at a local level. The type, style and period of construction relevant is that characteristic of federal work relief projects.

In addition to the scattered WPA shield medallions in park structures identifying them with this effort, the materials, style, and purpose of the structures firmly affix them to this kind of architecture. In fact, it is important to remember, some of the buildings preceded the existence of the WPA and were constructed by its antecedent agencies, the Civil Works Administration and Federal Emergency Relief Administration. One study of WPA projects in western Oklahoma defined the core of this construction effort. According to that study, the defining qualities of such resources include their general usefulness and community sponsorship and their employment base (at least 90% of the workers had to come from employable persons on the relief rolls). They also drew upon local building materials, a way in which

²² Clinton City Council Minutes, July 30, 1936, August 4, 1936.

²³ Clinton City Council Minutes, December 11, 1936. An indication of the proportional matching expenses can be seen in this particular project. The city expended \$8109.29 and the WPA contributed \$34,990."

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sponsors could contribute a portion of the construction costs; when native stone was available nearby, this was often used. They WPA projects were also characterized by careful workmanship, quality that was aided by the labor-intensive tasks and the fact that "given depressed economic conditions, the WPA program was less concerned with productivity than with 'useful' employment. This translated into time, time for the workers to do their construction jobs right—to make the rock fit perfectly and bricks run smoothly or to tear down a wall that was not plumb and to build it again. With some exceptions, therefore, WPA workmanship in the central, southwestern, and panhandle counties was of remarkable quality."²⁴

McLain Rogers Park conforms to this definition in that the construction was both sponsored by the community and broadly used by the public. The workers on the project, as newspaper and city council records demonstrate, were overwhelmingly from the unemployed population of the area. The building materials appear to have been local in origin, with the most distant coming from the reformatory at Granite in nearby Greer County. As for workmanship and quality, one need only stand in the amphitheater to be in awe of the accomplishment, and to reflect on the nearly seven decades since its construction to be reminded of its enduring strength. One can even see the evolution as the structures moved from a bricks-and-mortar practical form of construction in the bathhouse and related buildings to an elaborate, highly artistic expression in the amphitheater and bandstand, the stone bridge, and the drainage ditch.

Summary

Putting both of these areas of significance and criteria together, McLain Rogers Park in Clinton, Oklahoma qualifies for the National Register of Historic Places Criterion A in the area of significance Entertainment / Recreation and under Criterion C in the area of significance Architecture. The desire to have a recreational park in Clinton culminated with the purchase and rapid development of a parcel of land on the south edge of the city. The number and quality of the buildings and structures in the park demonstrate the city's commitment of providing top of the line facilities for its citizens. The concerted effort by the city to use federal work releife programs to construct the park shows a two-fold interest. First, it was an expedient, inexpensive way to get the kind of work done that they wanted and it also provided a needed economic boost to local men who were on the relief rolls. The park offered an economic and recreational boon to the city.

²⁴ W. David Baird, *Final Report: WPA Structures Thematic Survey (Phase III)*, Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, August 30, 1987, 16.

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McLain Rogers Park
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Major Bibliographical References

- Anderson, Kathy, Jim Ross, and Gary Ray Howell, Oklahoma Route 66 Association, *Oklahoma Route 66 Roadbed Documentation Project (1926-1970): A Survey of Roadbed and Integral Structures* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma SHPO, 2002).
- Aneshansley, Brad, Parks Director, City of Clinton, interview.
- Baird, W. David, *Final Report: WPA Structures Thematic Survey (Phase III)*, Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, August 30, 1987
- Clinton *Daily News*, 1933-1937.
- McAlester, Virginia and Lee, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000).
- Moorhead's Clinton Oklahoma Directory, 1956 (Clinton Public Library).
- Office of the Custer County Clerk, property records.
- Oklahoma Route 66 Museum, Clinton, Oklahoma, photograph collections.
- Polk's City Directory for Clinton, Oklahoma, 1940-1941 (Clinton Public Library).
- Rittenhouse, Jack D., *A Guide Book to Highway 66* (Los Angeles: J. D. Rittenhouse, 1946; reprinted by University of New Mexico Press, 1988).
- Scott, Quinta, *Along Route 66* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000).

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property approximately 12 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	14	502219E	3929011N	3	14	502560E 3928840N
2	14	502560E	3929011N	4	14	502219E 3928836N
N/A See continuation sheet.						

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

=====

11. Form Prepared By

=====

name/title Michael Cassity, Ph. D., edited by Jim Gabbert, architectural historian

organization Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office date December 12, 2003

street & number 304 West Albuquerque telephone 918 451-8378

city or town Broken Arrow state OK zip code 74011

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Additional Documentation

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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)

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Verbal Boundary Description

This property is a rectangular shaped property bounded on the east by Tenth Street, on the south by Jaycee Lane, on the west by Thirteenth Street, and on the north by Opal from Thirteenth east to Eleventh and from that intersection continuing east to Tenth Street.

Boundary Justification

This boundary includes the property associated with McLain Rogers Park during the period of historic significance.

=====
Property Owner
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Clinton

street & number 415 Gary Blvd. telephone 580 323-0261

city or town Clinton state OK zip code 73601

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY McLain Rogers Park
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: OKLAHOMA, Custer

DATE RECEIVED: 7/20/04 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/20/04
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/04/04 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/02/04
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 04000944

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: Y

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 9/2/04 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the
nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

A black and white photograph of the entrance to McLain Rogers Park. A large, dark, rectangular sign with a decorative, stepped top and a central circular ornament spans the road. The sign reads "McLAIN ROGERS PARK" in white, serif, all-caps letters. The sign is supported by two brick pillars. The left pillar has a small sign that reads "NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES IN PARK". The road is paved and curves to the right. In the background, there are bare trees, a utility pole, and a building. A speed limit sign for 5 is visible on the right side of the road.

McLAIN ROGERS PARK

NO ALCOHOLIC
BEVERAGES
IN PARK

5

KEEP
CARP

PARK





















ONE WAY
DO NOT
ENTER

ONE WAY
DO NOT
ENTER





















Oklahoma Historical Society

Founded May 27, 1893

State Historic Preservation Office • 2704 Villa Prom • Shepherd Mall • Oklahoma City, OK 73107-2441
Telephone 405/521-6249 • Fax 405/947-2918



July 19, 2004

Ms. Carol Shull
Keeper of the Register
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 I Street, N.W. 8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

We are pleased to transmit two (2) National Register of Historic Places nominations for Oklahoma properties. The nominations are for the following properties:

McLain Rogers Park, Clinton, Custer County

U.S.S. Batfish (SS310), Muskogee, Muskogee County
(Included are CLG Report and 41 letters of support)

We look forward to the results of your review. If there may be any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either Jim Gabbert of my staff or myself.

Sincerely,

Melvena Heisch
Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer

MKH:jg

Enclosures