

**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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

**1. Name of Property**

Historic name: Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

**2. Location**

Street & number: 118 North Lansing Avenue

City or town: Tulsa State: Oklahoma County: Tulsa

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

**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 at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ **national**      \_\_\_ **statewide**      \_\_\_ **local**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

\_\_\_ **A**      \_\_\_ **B**      \_\_\_ **C**      \_\_\_ **D**

Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK  
County and State

---

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

---

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

---

#### 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

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK  
County and State

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

---

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Industry/Processing/Extraction: manufacturing facility

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Industry/Processing/Extraction: industrial storage

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK  
County and State

---

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

No Style

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Metal, Brick

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

---

### Summary Paragraph

The Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building is located at 118 N. Lansing Avenue in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It sits on a 22-acre site just northeast of the city's Central Business District and on the eastern edge of the Greenwood District. The massive industrial building contains approximately 118,210 square feet and has an irregular massing that illustrates its evolution during the fifty year period from 1911 to 1961. The building is divided into six major components (designated as "Units" in this nomination) corresponding with this evolution as well as to the building's varied functions. Its exterior is characterized by red brick or metal-paneled walls, large expanses of steel-framed multiple-light industrial windows, and metal-covered gable roofs with skylights high above the ground. At the apex of some of the roofs are monitors with multiple-light clerestories and ventilators. The interior is characterized by high open volumes with the roofs supported by exposed steel columns and trusses. Above the columns and between trusses are networks of catwalks that provided access to cranes and other equipment, as well as to the clerestory windows and ventilators. The historic equipment has been removed with the exception of some overhead cranes. Floor finishes include concrete, wood blocks, and earth. In addition, the historic railroad siding along the east side of the building is counted as one

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building

Tulsa County, OK

Name of Property

County and State

contributing structure. Although the building has been altered, it retains many original features that convey its historic use as a manufacturing facility.

---

## **Narrative Description**

The Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building is a massive industrial building located on a 22-acre site northeast of Tulsa's Central Business District. It is on the eastern edge of the Greenwood District, the city's historic African American community that in recent decades has received renewed attention because of its association with the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot and has become a cultural, educational, and entertainment destination. South of the parcel is Archer Street and Interstate-244, the Crosstown Expressway, and the Frisco railroad tracks. To the east of the site is Lansing Avenue and U.S. Highway 75. To the west is the former Santa Fe railroad yard. Although most of the tracks have been removed, there are lines of tracks that are actively used. To the north is a light industrial park.

This 22-acre site was originally part of a 30-acre site acquired in 1911 for the manufacturing plant of the Oklahoma Iron Works and became home to the Bethlehem Supply Company in late 1938. The tract became the site for more than a dozen industrial buildings and structures, most of which have been removed. The 22-acre site has been divided into two tracts for the purposes of redeveloping the remaining buildings. However, according to the records of the Tulsa County Tax Assessor's Office, the nominated building actually lays within three legal parcels. For these reasons, the boundaries for the nominated property have been delineated to contain only the footprint of the building and the contributing railroad tracks along its east side. The building is currently owned by the City of Tulsa but is being leased by a construction company for warehousing construction materials and equipment.

The Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building is notable for its massive size. The oldest portions of the building have red brick walls, steel-framed multiple-light industrial style windows, and immense metal-covered gable roofs with skylights, steel-framed multiple-light clerestories, monitors, and ventilators. The windows and clerestories have sections that pivot open. The later additions typically had walls sheathed with sheets of galvanized metal and large expanses of steel-framed multiple-light industrial windows (some of which are now covered with fiberglass panels). The interior of all of the additions are characterized by open volumes with exposed steel columns and trusses. Throughout the interior, industrial style lights hang from the trusses. Because of the building's intricate composition, it has been divided into "units" that correspond to its evolution and varied functions. (See Figure 3)

### Foundry, 1911-1939 (Unit A)

The Foundry is the northernmost section of the building and was among the first units constructed when Oklahoma Iron Works purchased the 30-acre parcel at East Archer Street and North Lansing Avenue in 1911. Its physical characteristics include its metal-covered gabled-roof with monitors, red brick walls, multiple-light clerestories, and large expanses of steel-framed multiple-light windows (Photos 1, 2, and 5). The interior is notable for its three-story open

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building

Tulsa County, OK

Name of Property

County and State

volume. The Foundry has a width of approximately 100 feet and it is approximately 150 feet long.

The northern end of the Foundry has a dual-pitched gabled roof with clerestory windows between the two pitches and in the sides of the monitor. A metal ventilator is on top of the monitor. There are also skylights on the upper level of the gable roof although their windows have been removed. The north and east walls of this portion of the Foundry have been removed (Photos 1 and 2). The interior space features a concrete floor, a high open volume, exposed steel roof trusses and columns, and a catwalk (Photo 3). The lower portion of the south wall is brick (this is the wall that divides the north part of the Foundry from the south part of the Foundry). Above that, the wall is covered with sheets of galvanized tin. At the east end of the wall is a small, one-story room constructed of concrete block which is likely a later addition. At the west end of the north wall is an opening to the southern portion of the Foundry that is infilled with metal panels. At its center is a steel door. The lower portion of the west wall is composed of brick. Above the brick, the wall is covered with sheets of galvanized tin. On the opposite side of this wall is a room with brick walls (Photo 9). It is accessible from the interior of the southern portion of the Foundry.

The southern portion of the Foundry has a concrete foundation and brick walls above which are large expanses of steel-framed multiple-light industrial windows (Photo 6). Its gable roof also has a monitor with clerestories at its apex, above which are two ventilators (Photo 5). However, its gable roof lacks the dual pitch and second set of clerestory windows found in the northern portion. There is a small, one-story concrete block addition on the east elevation. It is labeled as an office on the 1962 Sanborn Map. The interior of this section also has the high open volume with exposed steel columns and roof trusses. Most of the window openings on the west wall have been covered with metal panels. The east wall has a large venting fan inserted into it. The interior has the large open volume and exposed steel roof trusses (Photos 10 and 11). The lower portion of the wall between the north and south parts of the Foundry is constructed of brick and the upper portion is constructed of clay tile. The southern end of the Foundry is open to the Machine Shop (Unit B). The floor is of earth and wood blocks. The floor of the Foundry is lower than the floor of the Machine Shop and the other sections of the building (Photo 12).

Historic documents suggest that the missing portions of the Foundry's north and east walls contained large expanses of multiple-light industrial style windows at the ground floor and at the height corresponding to the clerestory windows between the dual pitches of the gable roof. The east elevation likely had a large expanse of steel-framed multiple-light windows similar to those of the southern section of the Foundry. The walls were likely constructed of brick, an appropriate material for a foundry (see Figures 5 and 6).

#### Machine Shop, 1913-1939 (Unit B)

A newspaper article from 1913 mentioned that the Oklahoma Iron Works was preparing to construct a 300' by 118' machine shop, yet the addition does not appear on a 1915 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map or on Fowler and Kelly's 1918 Aero View (bird's eye) of Tulsa but it is possible that these sources did not reflect the actual appearance of the building at the time they were

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building

Tulsa County, OK

Name of Property

County and State

created. The Machine Shop does show on a 1939 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Therefore, the time frame for the construction of this segment of the building is given as 1913-1939. The Machine Shop now has a length of approximately 320 feet.

The Machine Shop is the largest segment of the building and is characterized by a high gabled-roof with skylights in its north section (Photo 7). Its roof and monitor are continuations of those over the southern portion of the Foundry, and like the Foundry, are sheathed with galvanized metal. Steel-framed multiple-light industrial style clerestory windows are on the sides of the monitor (Photo 6). The Machine Shop has a concrete foundation, brick walls, and large expanses of steel-framed industrial style windows between the top of the brick wall and the roof overhang. Inserted in the walls are several sliding or roll-up freight doors. Near the center of the east elevation is a small one-story concrete block addition. The addition does not show on the 1962 Sanborn Map but appears in the 1963 aerial photo. The west elevation also has a concrete loading dock (Photo 8). Some clerestory windows and skylights are covered with metal or fiberglass panels.

The interior of the Machine Shop is impressive for its large open volume. Here, one gets a sense of the value of the clerestory windows and skylights for the additional light they provide. The interior's structural components such as the steel roof trusses and columns are also highly visible. There are also trusses below the clerestories that run the length of the Machine Shop that also supported overhead cranes. This network of columns and trusses creates a wide center corridor flanked by side wings that run the length of the Machine Shop. Within these components, one also finds ladders and catwalks that provided access to equipment, clerestory windows, and ventilators. Two concrete block rooms located along the west side of the corridor are later additions. The floor has a mixture of concrete paving as well as wood blocks (Photos 13, 14, 15, and 16).

#### Warehouse/Assembly Department Unit, 1918-1939 (Unit C)

This unit does not appear on the 1915 Sanborn Map but does appear on the 1939 map. The 1939 Sanborn Map labels this unit as a Warehouse and the 1962 map labels it as the Assembly Department. It is located at the base of the Machine Shop (Unit B) and has an east/west orientation measuring approximately 250 feet long and 63 feet wide. It has a gabled roof with a monitor in the middle (Photo 20). The southern plane of the gable roof has a ghost sign for Evans Electric, a former tenant of the building. The unit's walls are sheathed with metal panels. The west elevation has an expanse of steel-framed multiple-light industrial windows below the gable and at the first floor level (Photo 23). The south elevation also has large openings filled with multiple-light industrial windows. The windows of both elevations and the monitor are covered with fiberglass panels. The interior of this unit has a concrete floor and large open volume with exposed steel roof trusses and steel framing for the walls. The north side of the unit is open to the Machine Shop (Unit B), Unit D, and Unit E. The west end of the south side of this unit opens to the Assembly Department Addition (Unit F) (Photo 19).

#### Addition to Warehouse/Assembly Department Unit, 1939-1961 (Unit C-1)

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building

Tulsa County, OK

Name of Property

County and State

This addition appears on the 1962 Sanborn Map. As the owner of the building in 1962 scrapped Bethlehem Supply Company's equipment, it seems logically that the addition was built before 1962. It is approximately 63 feet wide and 70 feet long. Like Unit C, this unit's walls are sheathed with metal panels. Large openings of multiple-light industrial windows are on its south and east elevations. The south elevation windows are covered with fiberglass panels; the east elevation windows are mostly exposed (Photos 17 and 18). At the center of its north elevation is a large opening that lines up with the railroad siding along the east side off the building. The opening can be closed by large sliding steel doors. Expanses of multiple-light steel-framed industrial windows flank the opening (Photo 6). The interior of this unit has the same characteristics as Unit C.

#### Warehouse/Welding Shop, 1915-1939 (Unit D)

This unit does not appear on the 1915 Sanborn Map but does appear on the 1939 Sanborn Map. The 1939 map labels it as a Warehouse and the 1962 map labels it as a Welding Shop with a paint shop in its southeast corner. It is approximately 195 feet long and 65 feet wide. This unit extends north from Unit C, paralleling the Machine Shop (Unit B). It has a gabled-roof with ventilators and skylights. Its walls have a brick apron and metal panels above. The north elevation has a freight door and steel-framed multiple-light industrial windows (Photo 4). Its skylights are covered with fiberglass panels. A good portion of its interior is filled with a non-historic metal-sided room that has been used as an office in recent years.

#### Addition, 1939-1961 (Unit E)

Unit E does not appear on the 1962 Sanborn Map but it does appear in a 1963 aerial photograph. Because the owner of the building in 1962-63 scrapped Bethlehem Supply Company's equipment and only owned the plant for two years, it is likely that the addition was built before 1962. This unit is approximately 195 feet long and 40 feet wide. It sits between Units B and D at the location of a former railroad siding. It has skylights and clerestory windows along its east and west sides that are covered with fiberglass panels. At its north end is an overhead freight door flanked by steel-framed multiple-light industrial style windows. These windows are also covered with fiberglass panels (Photos 4 and 8). The interior features a concrete floor and exposed steel columns and trusses. Its east side is open to the Machine Shop (Unit B). Its west side borders the office area that fills Unit D (Photos 25 and 26).

#### Assembly Department, 1939-1961 (Unit F)

The Assembly Department is at the southwest corner of the building. It does not appear on the 1939 Sanborn Map but does appear on the 1962 map. An undated historic photo shows the steel skeleton of the unit as it was being constructed (see Figure 7). Its gabled roof and walls are sheathed with metal panels (Photos 21 and 22). The east and west elevations have two rows of steel-framed multiple-light windows that are covered with fiberglass panels (Photos 21 and 23). The south elevation has two overhead freight doors near the west end and large multiple-light industrial windows. The east elevation is similar to the west. The interior features a high open volume, exposed steel roof trusses and columns, and a concrete floor (Photo 24). It is open to the



Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building

Tulsa County, OK

Name of Property

County and State

Warehouse/Assembly Department (Unit C) along its north side. The Assembly Department (Unit F) is approximately 125 feet long and 75 feet wide.

### Railroad Siding, 1939-1961 (G)

The Oklahoma Iron Works and Bethlehem Supply Company plants were serviced by railroad sidings. According to Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, one ran along the west side of the Foundry (Unit A)/Machine Shop (Unit B) and another siding ran near the east side of the property. The siding that is currently extant does not show on the 1962 Sanborn Map but it does show in the February 1963 aerial photograph of the plant. Again, because the owner of the building in 1962-63 scrapped Bethlehem Supply Company's equipment and only owned the plant for two years, it seems likely that the siding presently adjacent to the east side of the building was laid before 1962. The siding starts north of the building's boundaries and extends south toward the freight door of the addition to the Warehouse/Assembly Department Unit (C-1). (Photos 1 and 6)

### Alterations to the Site

Significant alterations have occurred to the site containing the Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building. A Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from 1962 and an aerial photograph from early 1963 revealed that the plant site at those times retained numerous buildings which are no longer present, including a two-story brick manufacturing office immediately east of the addition to the Warehouse/Assembly Department (Unit C-1), a two-story power plant immediately north of the manufacturing office, a gate house, numerous storage buildings, a pattern shop, and a fabrication building. Northeast of the fabrication building was the welding shop, a crane and a forge. The fabrication building survives but is outside the boundaries of the nominated resource. Formerly, railroad tracks that ran along the west side of the Foundry (Unit A) and Machine Shop (Unit B) and through what is now the location of Unit E and through the middle of the Assembly Department (Unit C) have been removed. Portions of the railroad siding along the east side of the Foundry and Machine Shop remain. Railroad tracks near North Lansing Avenue have been removed.

The building's environment and the surrounding neighborhoods have been shaped by the construction of the sub-grade U.S. Highway 75 to the east and the elevated Interstate-244 and Crosstown Expressway (U.S. 412) to the south. A large rail yard to the west that formerly served the building has been reduced to a few tracks. To the west of the tracks is the recently developed Tulsa campus of Oklahoma State University.

### Integrity

The Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Steel Company Building has been altered over the years including the loss of the north and east ends of the Foundry. It has lost its historic association as a manufacturing facility as it is currently being used as a warehouse. As described above, the site has experienced significant losses of historic buildings and its setting also has been shaped by the construction of adjacent highways. However, the building's massive size attests to its former status as an important facility in a manufacturing plant and the missing walls are only a small

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK  
County and State

part of the building's overall massing. Design features such as massive roofs with ventilators, clerestory windows, pivoting industrial windows, and brick walls were integral to the building's function as a foundry and machine shop. Windows, clerestories, and skylights that are covered can be revealed again. Portions of the building with mostly metal-sided walls speak to the function of those spaces as well. As such, the Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building retains its integrity of location, feeling, design, materials, and workmanship.

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK  
County and State

---

## 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 grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK  
County and State

**Areas of Significance**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Industry  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1911-1961  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1911; 1913-39  
1938  
1939-1961

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK  
County and State

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building in Tulsa, Oklahoma is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Industry. Located in Oklahoma's petroleum capital, the nominated resource is important for its association with two companies that played a vital role in the production of oil field equipment widely used in the state and beyond. Originally part of a much larger plant, a portion of the nominated building was first constructed in 1911 as Oklahoma Iron Work's foundry and then greatly expanded over the next twenty-seven years. The plant was purchased by Bethlehem Supply, a subsidiary of Bethlehem Steel, in 1938 and the building was further enlarged under its ownership. Bethlehem Supply continued to manufacture oil field equipment that was also used throughout the petroleum industry. The period of significance begins in 1911 when the foundry was constructed and ends in 1961 when Bethlehem Supply sold the plant, after which, the new owner dismantled the equipment, selling it across the country.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Oklahoma's oil fields are located in the Mid-Continent Region that stretches from eastern Kansas, across Oklahoma, and into north and west Texas, as well as into Arkansas, Louisiana, and New Mexico. Some of the country's greatest oil discoveries were located in this region. They included Kansas' Neodesha, Augusta, El Dorado, and Paola; Texas' Desdemonda, Eastland, Ranger, Breckenridge, Electra, and Burkburnett; and Oklahoma's Cleveland, Red Fork, Glenn Pool, Osage, Cushing, Three Sands, Greater Seminole, and Oklahoma City, among others. Between 1900 and 1935, the Mid-Continent Region produced 8,804,000,000 barrels of crude oil. During the majority of that period, it ranked first in the nation in the production of crude, and between 1924 and 1935, it produced half of the country's crude oil.<sup>1</sup>

Oklahoma's first known oil well was completed in 1859 in what is today Mayes County in the northeast corner of the state. Several factors made it difficult for successive drillers to exploit the potential of the area, including the legalities faced by non-citizens attempting to drill on Indian-owned land, lack of adequate transportation facilities, and access to markets. It would be another 38 years until Oklahoma's first successful commercial oil well, the Nellie Johnstone No. 1 in Bartlesville, Indian Territory, began producing in 1897. Once the railroad reached Bartlesville in 1899, a cascade of oil seekers descended on the town, making it the first oil boom town in the

<sup>1</sup> Kenny A. Franks, Paul F. Lambert, and Carl N. Tyson, *Early Oklahoma Oil* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1981), 3.

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building

Tulsa County, OK

Name of Property

County and State

state's history. Yet oil production elsewhere in Indian Territory was tempered as the legal status of leases on Indian-owned land was uncertain.<sup>2</sup>

The first commercial oil well in Tulsa County was the Sue A. Bland which began operation in 1901. It was located west of the city across the Arkansas River in Red Fork. Its initial drilling was aided by two physicians from Red Fork, Dr. John C. W. Bland and Dr. Fred S. Clinton. The well was named for Dr. Bland's wife, Sue, a prominent mixed-blood Creek citizen who helped secure the lease where the well was drilled. Although the pool's production was minimal, word of the strike quickly spread and it was being compared to Texas' famed Spindletop discovery.<sup>3</sup>

Within a month, thousands of oilmen had flocked to the area. In 1902, the U.S. Department of the Interior removed many of the restrictions placed on leasing of Indian-owned land, which greatly added to the frenzy. Within a few years, other lucrative pools in the area were tapped, including Cleveland (actually located in Oklahoma Territory), Cherokee Shallow Sand District, and Muskogee, all in 1904, and the Glenn Pool in 1905.<sup>4</sup>

Although there were no oil fields directly in Tulsa, it became the state's center for the petroleum industry. Tulsa's origins were tied to the removal of the Creek from Alabama and Georgia during the Trail of Tears in the late 1820s-early 1830s. The arrival of the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad (Frisco) in 1882 secured the city's survival. By 1900, there were 1,390 residents. At the time of statehood in 1907, it had a population of 7,298. This dramatic growth coincided with the growth of the oil industry. By 1910, the city's population had risen to 18,182, and ten years later, the population was 72,075. Large and small oil companies alike established their headquarters in the city and it became home to the largest independent oil refinery in the world, the Cosden & Company refinery.<sup>5</sup> In addition to the many oil companies headquartered in Tulsa, it also became home to professional organizations such as the Southwestern Association of Petroleum Geologists (later renamed the American Association of Petroleum Geologists).<sup>6</sup> In 1923, the International Petroleum Exposition was organized in the city. Hundreds of thousands of people attended the exposition during its heyday. By 1927, the city was home to the headquarters of 1,500 oil companies. It proudly bore the title "Oil Capital of the World."<sup>7</sup>

### James W. Sloan and the Oklahoma Iron Works

James W. Sloan was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania on February 5, 1870. At the age of 14, he worked in the state's lumber industry and on his father's farm, and later attended the State Normal School at Clarion, Pennsylvania for a time. By 1894, he was working as an independent

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 3, 18-20.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 33-36; James O. Kemm, *Tulsa: Oil Capital of the World* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2004), 8.

<sup>4</sup> Franks, *Early Oklahoma Oil*, 37-39.

<sup>5</sup> Carl Gregory, "Tulsa," *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma*

(<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/T/TU003.html>) accessed June 20, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Kenny A. Franks, "Petroleum," *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma*

(<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/P/PE023.html>) accessed June 20, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Bobby Weaver, "International Petroleum Exposition," *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma*

(<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/I/IN030.html>) accessed July 22, 2014; Danney Goble, *Tulsa! Biography of the American City* (Council Oak Books, 1997), 108.

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building

Tulsa County, OK

Name of Property

County and State

contractor in the oil fields of West Virginia and Ohio. After working for three years in this field, he returned to his father's farm and then sold it. In 1898, he moved to Corsicana, Texas, where he again became engaged in the rapidly growing oil industry in that area of the state. A few years later, he relocated to Beaumont, Texas as that area was benefitting from oil exploration. He became one of the organizers of Producers' Oil Company and was named its vice president. His business interests expanded and he contracted for the installation of the waterworks system at Sour Lake, Texas, 20 miles northwest of Beaumont and home to Texas's first oil refinery. In 1903, he sold his interest in Producers' Oil Company because, as one source would later state, "he was expected to 'make good' and make money with the oil he produced selling at 7 cents a barrel."<sup>8</sup>

Sloan's entrepreneurial spirit drew him to the emerging oil market in Oklahoma. A major oil field near Cleveland in Pawnee County, Oklahoma Territory (O.T.), was struck in July 1904. That same year, Sloan was one of three incorporators of the Cleveland Tool Company of Corsicana, Texas. The company was organized with a capital stock of \$25,000 for the "manufacture and sale of every kind of mining tool."<sup>9</sup> A few weeks later, Sloan and three others, including F.S. Kerr of Cleveland (acting as Territorial agent), filed articles of incorporation for the same company in Guthrie, O.T., with the same capital stock as the Texas firm.<sup>10</sup> Sloan followed the company to Oklahoma where his knowledge of the oil and gas industry served him well. When the company started in Cleveland in 1905, it had five employees. In 1906, Sloan and partners purchased the Tulsa Foundry Company and moved the business to that city where it continued to manufacture supply tools.<sup>11</sup> An Oklahoma City newspaper stated that it was understood that the company "was under the control of the Texas company which is building a pipe line from Tulsa to the gulf," perhaps a reference to Sloan's varied business interests. The new company was known as the Oklahoma Iron Works with Sloan serving as its president and general manager. The Articles of Incorporation stated that the company would engage in the manufacture, trade, and selling of "machinery of all kinds, oil well supplies, mining machinery, harvesting machinery, and all kinds of iron and steel appliances of every kind and nature . . ." It was incorporated with a capital stock of \$25,000.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> "James W. Sloan," in *A Standard History of Oklahoma: An Authentic Narrative of its Development from the Date of the First European Exploration Down to the Present Time, Including Accounts of the Indian Tribes, both Civilized and Wild, of the Cattle Range, of the Land Openings and the Achievements of the Most Recent Period* by Joseph B. Thoburn, Volume III, pp. 477-78. Chicago and New York: The American Historical Society, 1916 (available at <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/wu.89063270797>), Public Domain, Google-digitized, [http://hathitrust.org/access\\_use#pd-google](http://hathitrust.org/access_use#pd-google), accessed February 3, 2014; Robert Wooster, "Sour Lake Oilfield," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/dos02>), accessed on June 22, 2014. Uploaded on June 15, 2010. Published by the Texas State Historical Association; *Morning Tulsa Daily World*, October 11, 1921.

<sup>9</sup> *Fort Worth Telegram* (Texas), November 22, 1904.

<sup>10</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, December 26, 1904; Territorial Incorporation Records, Incorporation Entry #6051A, December 24, 1904 (available at [www.okhistory.org/images/research/ledgers/2011.065.015/2011.065.015.02.pdf#page+171](http://www.okhistory.org/images/research/ledgers/2011.065.015/2011.065.015.02.pdf#page+171)), accessed June 21, 2014.

<sup>11</sup> *The Trade Bulletin* (Oklahoma City), March 23, 1907.

<sup>12</sup> *Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City), December 26, 1906; Articles of Agreement and Incorporation, Oklahoma Iron Works, Indian Territory, Western District, January 15, 1907.

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building

Tulsa County, OK

Name of Property

County and State

Once in Tulsa, the company grew quickly. Six months after its arrival, a foundry was added and the number of employees increased from six to twelve. At that time, the foundry and machine departments were located at First Street and Detroit Avenue. In 1908, the company's capital stock was increased to \$100,000. The construction of a "mammoth" machine shop was quickly followed by the construction of a reinforced concrete building.<sup>13</sup> A warehouse was added in 1909, and an office building, sales room, and stock supply room in 1910.<sup>14</sup>

In 1910, Hoffhine's Tulsa City Directory stated that the company was the manufacturer of the O.K. Iron Sand Reel, steam engines, pumps, pumping powers and jacks, and hydraulic oil and gas well fittings.<sup>15</sup> Its steady increase in business left it with no room to expand at the First Street and Detroit Avenue site. In 1911, Sloan purchased 30 acres northeast of downtown, just outside of the city limits, to accommodate the growing business. The site was bordered on the south by Archer Street and was in the vicinity of other industries including the John Finlayson & Son company (oil well supplies), Tulsa Brick Company, Tulsa Boiler & Sheet Iron Works, McCune Boiler & Pump, and the Queen Bee Stove Company. It was also bordered on the west, north, and east by Tulsa's African American community. At the new location, the company constructed a foundry, blacksmith shop, pattern shop, structural shop, and foreman's homes. The property was completely fenced and was serviced by the Frisco tracks to the south. For a time, the firm's warehouse, machine shops, offices, and sales room continued to operate from the location at First and Detroit. The company also operated a machine shop in Drumright that catered to oil companies working in the Cushing field.<sup>16</sup>

The Archer Street plant's Foundry building had seven-foot high brick walls, above which were large expanses of multi-light, steel-framed industrial windows, and an iron-clad gable roof with a full-length monitor at its peak that was 45 feet above the earthen floor. A variety of design features provided for ventilation of the Foundry building, an important consideration for a building producing extremely high temperatures and the potential for toxic fumes. The large expanses of multiple-light industrial style windows in the lower parts of the building and in the clerestories in the monitor contained pivoting sections that could be opened. The high interior volume allowed the heat to rise and ventilators on the roof pulled hot air up and out of the building. But such features may have been of little consequence in the heat of the summer. In July 1914, the *Tulsa Democrat* noted that both machines and humans suffered under the heat. At the Oklahoma Iron Works, it was expected that "at least 35 per cent might be deducted from the amount of work accomplished by a man" during the summer than at cooler times of the year. As for machines, "[c]utting edges do not last so long, bearings become overheated more quickly. There is a general slowing down all the way 'round." Although some manufacturers shut down

<sup>13</sup> *Bryan Morning Eagle* (Bryan, Texas), April 25, 1908; *Dallas Morning News*, April 20, 1908; *Tulsa Daily World*, August 31, 1913.

<sup>14</sup> *Tulsa Daily World*, August 31, 1913.

<sup>15</sup> Hoffhine's *Tulsa, Oklahoma Directory for 1910*, p. 39.

<sup>16</sup> *Tulsa Daily World*, November 15, 1912 and August 31, 1913; U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Final 1921 Tulsa Race Riot Reconnaissance Survey* (November 2005), 39. The companies in the vicinity of the Oklahoma Iron Works were listed in an advertisement for the Lynch & Forsythe Addition in the *Tulsa Daily World*, April 14, 1912.



Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building

Tulsa County, OK

Name of Property

County and State

during portions of the summer and increased output during the winter, this did not appear to be the case at Oklahoma Iron Works where the laborers worked ten-hour days year around.<sup>17</sup>

The Oklahoma Iron Work's products were used beyond the Mid-Continent oil field. In 1913, its tools were being used in the test for an oil field in Washington.<sup>18</sup> Such demand made the company one of Tulsa's leading industries. The August 31, 1913 issue of the *Tulsa Daily World* featured a number of the city's most prominent industries. The newspaper described Oklahoma Iron Works as a "Tulsa institution" and one of the largest plants west of the Mississippi. By that point a 300' by 118' machine shop, one entirely run by electricity, was being planned for the new plant site and a power plant was nearing completion. The article gave descriptions of each of the company's departments which were mostly organized around the four major crafts represented at the plant: forgers, structural iron workers, moulders, and blacksmiths. The Foundry Department had forty men and was run by compressed air and electricity. It produced both ferrous and nonferrous castings. Special molding, jarring, and core-making machines were in constant use. Twenty tons of gray castings were produced each day. The department had special equipment for brass and aluminum castings producing one ton per day. Thirty men were employed in this department. The Pattern Department recently had been enlarged which doubled its capacity. This department employed five men. The Blacksmith Department had a capacity of ten tons per day. It was equipped with steam hammers, one of which was said to be the largest west of the Mississippi River. Thirty men worked in this department.<sup>19</sup> The Structural Department created bridge and building components. Recent projects included the production of material for the Phoenix Refining Plant and the Water Pierce Refinery at Sand Springs, the J.S. Cosdon Refinery in West Tulsa, and the power plant for Tulsa Fuel Manufacturing Company in Collinsville. Future projects would include the building for a glass company in Sapulpa in 1915 and structural components for the Ardmore-Akron Tire and Rubber Company Factory in Ardmore in 1918. Twenty men were employed in this department under the supervision of a civil engineer. The Sales Department and Warehouse employed 15 men. The newspaper noted that the warehouse was stocked with everything in the oil well supply line and the company's goods could be found through the Mid-Continent field. Forty men were employed in the machine shop. The Power Plant employed 10 men. It was anticipated that once the new power plant was completed, everything would be unloaded by electric magnet and that large casting would be broken in the

<sup>17</sup> *Tulsa Democrat*, July 17, 1914.

<sup>18</sup> *Daily Oklahoman*, June 9, 1913.

<sup>19</sup> *Tulsa Daily World*, August 31, 1913. Most foundries were composed of the following departments: pattern, molding, core, melting, and finishing. Foundries were classified by the type of metal they cast with the major divisions being ferrous and nonferrous. Ferrous castings include gray iron, steel, and malleable iron. Of these, gray iron was the most popular in Oklahoma during the first half of the twentieth century because of the low cost of materials, moderate casting temperatures, and simple methods of molding. Steel castings were stronger than cast iron but were less prevalent in Oklahoma because of the expensive melting equipment that was required, thus making the final product more expensive. Oklahoma Iron Works produced both gray iron and steel castings. Oklahoma did not have a malleable foundry. Nonferrous castings include aluminum, copper-based, magnesium, lead, zinc, and other alloy castings. Brass, bronze, and similar metals were heavy and expensive to cast, but in high demand for things such as bearings and machinery parts, the type of products manufactured by Oklahoma Iron Works. Foundries producing industrial machinery were the most numerous in the state. For more information on foundries in Oklahoma, see Jarrell L. McCollum, "Status of the Foundry Industry in Oklahoma," *Proceedings of the Oklahoma Academy of Science for 1953*, Volume 34, pp. 235-37.

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building

Tulsa County, OK

Name of Property

County and State

same manner. The Office employed 11 people. In addition to the machine shop servicing the Cushing field, the company also had a branch in Tampico, Mexico that carried a large line of oil well supplies and employed 20 men who performed general repairs on large boats. This branch made news six years later when it constructed concrete barges for a Mexican oil company.<sup>20</sup>

As Tulsa grew throughout the 1910s, so too did the Oklahoma Iron Works. By 1915, it employed 250 workers and had branches in Mexico and other oil-producing countries. The *Tulsa Daily World* boasted that it was “by far” the largest institution of its kind in the state.<sup>21</sup> A 1915 Sanborn Map gives an indication of the size of the Archer Street plant at this time. The foundry building was the largest building. A 25 horse-power electric motor was located along the building’s west wall. At its northwest corner of the building was a core oven. To the east of the foundry building was the pattern shop. South of the foundry was a scale house and a chipping room with a 10 horse-power electric motor. Further to the south was the power house and blacksmith shop. To the west of the foundry, power house, and blacksmith shop was a railroad siding that curved toward the southeast and crossed Archer Street. On the west side of the siding were coke and coal bunkers and the structural shop. At the southern end of the property by Archer Street were a small office building and a garage.<sup>22</sup>

In 1917, the company added an electric furnace when it received a contract to manufacture a fine grade of steel. At the time, there were only three electric furnaces west of the Mississippi and Oklahoma Iron Works’ would be the fourth. The new furnace would enable the plant to make steel castings by converting the company’s scrap iron into a high grade of steel similar to that used for shrapnel. The *Tulsa Daily World* boasted about this advancement, too, by proclaiming that “the Oklahoma Iron [W]orks takes on added significance in the eyes of the United States as an industrial preparedness factor” helping Tulsa achieve the status as the “Pittsburgh of the West.” Perhaps as a reflection of this new operation, the company increased its capital stock from \$300,000 to \$1,250,000 three months later.<sup>23</sup>

As the Santa Fe Railway was planning for the construction of a first-class passenger depot and improvements to its freight business in Tulsa in 1918, it had already installed a lead switch to accommodate rail service to Oklahoma Iron Works. This improvement may have contributed to the Oklahoma Iron Works ability to expand its plant in 1919 when it took out a building permit for \$500,000 for the construction of a group of buildings.<sup>24</sup> By 1921, it was the largest manufacturing company in terms of employees (300) and had an annual output of approximately

<sup>20</sup> *Tulsa Daily World*, August 31, 1913, August 10, 1914, January 31, 1915, and April 23, 1917; *Daily Ardmoreite* (Ardmore, Oklahoma), February 17, 1918. Three National Register-eligible bridges fabricated by the Oklahoma Iron Works in 1908 and 1914 were documented during a survey of the state’s historic bridges in the early 1990s. The bridges were located in Tulsa and Okmulgee counties. See Joseph E. King, *Spans of Time: Oklahoma Historic Highway Bridges* (Oklahoma Department of Transportation, June 1993), 89; *El Paso Herald* (Texas), September 17, 1919.

<sup>21</sup> *Tulsa Daily World*, May 18, 1915.

<sup>22</sup> *Tulsa Daily World*, January 31, 1912; Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Company, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1915, Sheet 36.

<sup>23</sup> *Tulsa Daily World*, March 9, 1917; *Oklahoma City Times*, June 4, 1917.

<sup>24</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, July 1, 1919 and *The Independent* (Cashion, Oklahoma), July 24, 1919.

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building

Tulsa County, OK

Name of Property

County and State

\$7,000,000. Among the state-of-the-art equipment it had at this time were 8,000 pound air hammers and a diesel engine.<sup>25</sup>

The International Supply Company, wholly owned by the Oklahoma Iron Works, was formed on June 7, 1923 to act as a distributor for the parent company's products throughout the Mid-Continent Field. It also distributed products manufactured by other oil and gas well suppliers. It was located at the original site of Oklahoma Iron Works at First and Detroit. By 1923, International Supply Company had fifteen distributing houses, warehouses, and repair shops in Kansas and Oklahoma, and later expanded into Texas. As of June 30, 1923, the two companies had assets valued at \$6,449,788. That year, the companies issued joint serial gold bonds at seven percent interest. These bonds were secured by a mortgage on the companies' assets.<sup>26</sup> Perhaps these bonds financed the further expansion of the Oklahoma Iron Works plant in Tulsa between 1923 and 1938, when the two companies were sold to Bethlehem Steel following the death of their founder, James W. Sloan, on February 21, 1938.<sup>27</sup>

### **Bethlehem Steel's Entrance into the Oil Well Supply Field**

The Industrial Revolution of the mid-nineteenth century and the corresponding growth of the nation's railroad network gave birth to what became known as Bethlehem Iron Company in 1861, renamed Bethlehem Steel Company in 1899, and then Bethlehem Steel Corporation in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Following the discovery of iron ore in the Saucon Valley of western Pennsylvania, iron and steel companies took root in the area around Pittsburgh and the Lehigh valley. Bethlehem Steel became the nation's second largest steel company. At one time, its main plant, in South Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, known as Bethlehem Steel Company, covered 1,500 acres containing a complex of blast furnaces, machine shops, foundries, rolling mills, a rail mill, and other facilities. Through Bethlehem Steel Company and its other subsidiary companies, Bethlehem Steel Corporation produced a variety of iron and steel products including rails, structural components, armaments, gas and pumping engines, and armor plates for battleships. It owned an ore mine in Cuba, its own railroad, and ship building plants on the east and west

---

<sup>25</sup> *Morning Tulsa Daily World*, August 11, 1920; Clarence B. Douglas, *The History of Tulsa: A City with a Personality* (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1921), 579; *Oklahoma Weekly* (Norman, Oklahoma), February 2, 1922.

<sup>26</sup> International Supply Company, Articles of Incorporation, Filing Number 2300042752, Oklahoma Secretary of State's Office (<https://www.sos.ok.gov/corpinformation.aspx?id=2300042752>) accessed April 12, 2014; *Daily Oklahoman*, November 22, 1923 and *Dallas Morning News*, November 22, 1923; *Dallas Morning News*, July 27, 1926.

<sup>27</sup> *Tulsa Daily World*, February 22, 1938. James W. Sloan was associated with numerous companies following his relocation to Oklahoma. In 1906, he was one of the incorporators of the Continental Petroleum Company of Cleveland and Tulsa. In 1916, he was one of the incorporators of the Oklahoma Structural Steel Company and the Oklahoma Tool and Supply Company, both located in Tulsa. Four years later, Sloan was named to the board of directors of the Bessamer Oil Corporation which was formed to take over the oil production and gas leases of C.E. Stalker and associates, which represented 35,000 acres of leases in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. He served on the board of the Tex-La-Homa Oil Corporation, was vice president of the Thompson Oil Company, and president of the Bradshaw Oil Company. See *Dallas Morning News*, December 26, 1906 and December 6, 1916; *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, January 14, 1920; *Kansas City Star* (Missouri), May 21, 1919; *Tulsa Daily World*, February 22, 1938.

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building

Tulsa County, OK

Name of Property

County and State

coasts. The Bethlehem Steel Products Company marketed and sold Bethlehem products across the nation and around the globe.<sup>28</sup>

Bethlehem Steel entered the oil well supply field in late 1936 when it acquired the Taubman Supply Co., a company established approximately twenty years before. At the time of the purchase, Taubman had offices in the major oil centers of the Mid-Continent Field. The company's name was changed to Bethlehem Supply Company.<sup>29</sup> A recent corporate history of Bethlehem Steel provides no information on this acquisition or of the company's entrance into this market.<sup>30</sup>

Bethlehem Steel entered Tulsa's oil field market in late 1938 when Bethlehem Supply Company purchased the Oklahoma Iron Works, and its subsidiary, the International Supply Company. The exact purchase price for the two firms was not revealed but it was speculated that it was between \$1.5 and \$2 million. Eugene G. Grace, president of Bethlehem Steel, made the announcement in a presentation to 200 oil company executives in Tulsa. Grace stated that the company would go to any length to develop oil field business east of the Rockies with Tulsa becoming its headquarters for oil field equipment manufacturing and distribution. He was quoted as saying "We believe we have made no mistake in the selection of a headquarters. We are swinging toward home after an inspection tour that carried us the depth of the west coast and into some of the principal cities of Texas and in all our travels we have seen nothing to surpass Tulsa for our purpose in this undertaking."<sup>31</sup> He speculated that the company would spend \$500,000 refurbishing the properties which would allow the company to make "a complete line of oil field equipment . . . Everything we can produce efficiently and profitably."<sup>32</sup> Grace's appearance in Tulsa a day before the announcement generated excitement in the business community as it was noted that the last time a "high officer" in the Bethlehem organization had visited Tulsa was in 1928 when Chairman of the Board Charles M. Schwab participated in the opening of the International Petroleum Exposition.<sup>33</sup> The business community declared the sale to be the most important industrial development in Tulsa that year.<sup>34</sup> Shortly after the purchase, the management of the International Supply Company was spun off to the Bethlehem International Supply Company, a newly formed subsidiary, and the former Oklahoma Iron Works was placed under the umbrella of the Bethlehem Supply Company.<sup>35</sup>

Just as advances in oil field drilling practices and the development of oil field tools and equipment were reaching a high point, World War II essentially stopped this progression. With

---

<sup>28</sup> Kenneth Warren, *Bethlehem Steel: Builder and Arsenal of America* (Pittsburgh: Pennsylvania: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008), 15-17; "Bethlehem Steel Company" [originally published in the *Souvenir History Book of the Borough of South Bethlehem, Pennsylvania*, issued in conjunction with the city's semi-centennial celebration in October 3-9, 1915], *Bethlehem, PA Online*, (<http://www.bethlehempaonline.com/bethsteel.html>), accessed July 24, 2014.

<sup>29</sup> *The Oklahoman*, December 12, 1936.

<sup>30</sup> See Warren's *Bethlehem Steel: Builder and Arsenal of America*.

<sup>31</sup> *Tulsa World*, December 8, 1938.

<sup>32</sup> *The Oklahoman*, December 8, 1938.

<sup>33</sup> *Tulsa World*, December 7, 1938.

<sup>34</sup> *The Oklahoman*, December 8, 1938.

<sup>35</sup> *The Oklahoman*, January 1, 1939.

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building

Tulsa County, OK

Name of Property

County and State

the exception of refineries, petroleum related-industries ceased plant expansions and improvements. Yet the war-time demand for petroleum led to the tapping of new fields during this period which placed a strain on the existing equipment. As one historian of the industry noted, "Only the essential expendable items and replacement parts were produced, barely enough to keep the old rigs running. During [the later war years], however, much thought was given to new equipment and new designs. By the time the war was entirely over, the drawing boards and blue print machines were being worked overtime." This effort resulted in improved equipment that fueled petroleum production in the postwar years. In addition, the old rigs that were kept in service during the war were in need of replacement, thus further increasing the demand for new equipment after the war. Perhaps it was in anticipation of these events that Bethlehem Steel Company purchased the American Well & Prospecting Company in Corsicana, Texas in 1944. Although it continued to operate under its original name, this new acquisition was placed under the management of Bethlehem Supply Company in Tulsa.<sup>36</sup>

Tulsa's reign as the Oil Capital continued into the early post-war years. By 1948, it was home to "more than 450 large oil producing, refining, transporting and marketing, and industry supply manufacturing companies." This statistic included "20 refining companies operating 36 refineries and 165 natural gasoline plants throughout the Mid-Continent Oil Field, the world's greatest producing field." It was the home of "more than 150 manufacturing and supply firms handling oil equipment exclusively."<sup>37</sup> This capacity was put on display at the twentieth anniversary International Petroleum Exposition and Congress held in Tulsa that year. Bethlehem Supply was among the companies proudly displaying its wares in a 11,799 square-foot exhibit in a new building, the fourth largest exhibit at the show. The company had the tallest portable mast at the show and a partially erected derrick.<sup>38</sup> Five years later, a deal made between Bethlehem Supply and Western Services Drilling Company of Longview, Texas just prior to the opening of the exposition made news across the oil field equipment industry. That deal involved Western Services purchasing a portable rig from Bethlehem Supply for \$500,000 before the show opened to the public.<sup>39</sup>

Changes to the organizational and manufacturing arms of Bethlehem Supply Company occurred in the mid to late 1950s. In late December 1956, the company announced that it was removing its central division office from Tulsa to Fort Worth, Texas.<sup>40</sup> In July 1959, it announced that it would quit manufacturing oil field drilling equipment which was produced by the Corsicana plant it purchased in 1944. This line of product was turned over to a Dallas-based company. The Corsicana's utility pump line was transferred to Tulsa.<sup>41</sup> Even bigger changes were on the horizon.

<sup>36</sup> J. E. Brantly, *History of Oil Well Drilling* (Houston, Texas: Gulf Publishing Company, 1971), 324, 305; Franks, "Petroleum"; *Dallas Morning News*, August 1, 1944.

<sup>37</sup> "A Story of Tulsa: Monument to Oil," *Oil Digest* 5 (May 1948): 5.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 7. The companies with larger displays were Dresser Industries (17,703 square feet), Continental Supply Company (second largest, square footage not given), and General Motors Corporation (11,970 square feet). In all 1856 exhibitors participated that year.

<sup>39</sup> "Biggest, Newest Shiniest Oil Field Equipment on Show," *Breckenridge American* (Breckenridge, Texas), May 14, 1953.

<sup>40</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, December 23, 1956.

<sup>41</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, July 5, 1959 and November 21, 1959.

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK  
County and State

## The Closing of Bethlehem Supply's Archer Street Plant

On December 31, 1961, Bethlehem Supply left the oil well pump manufacturing market in Tulsa when it closed the plant on East Archer Street. Prior to the closure, it had sold the property to Luria Industrial Division of Luria Brothers and Co. of New York. Although Bethlehem Supply had 10 to 12 percent of the world market for pumping units, industry insiders speculated that the decision to sell was prompted as much by the higher wages paid to the plant's employees compared to other plants in the Southwest, rather than a decline in sales. Bethlehem Supply Company's employees were affiliated with the United Steel Workers of America, CIO, which may have accounted for their ability to negotiate higher wages. However, C. R. Zimmerman, vice president of the company's supply division, said that it was a combination of factors that included a decline in sales and higher wages that forced the decision to close the plant. Approximately 200 employees were affected by the decision although another 200 employees would remain with Bethlehem Supply's division headquarters in Tulsa and in sales operations.<sup>42</sup>

Bethlehem sold its manufacturing operations to Lufkin Foundry & Machine Co. of Lufkin, Texas. Lufkin Foundry & Machine Co. would continue to manufacture pumps and equipment under the Bethlehem name. E.P. Trout, vice president of Lufkin Foundry & Machine Co. reported that this arrangement benefited employees of his firm, not only because of the wide use of the Bethlehem Supply's equipment throughout the world, but also because of the way it was manufactured. In particular, it would be good news to his company's welding and structural shop employees because "the Bethlehem unit required more structural parts and weldments" than his company's units. Trout predicted that the arrangement would result in the hiring of more employees and stated that many Bethlehem Supply employees had contacted the company in hopes of being hired by his firm.<sup>43</sup> In fact, by mid-January 1962, Lufkin Foundry & Machine Co. had added 100 employees and was expected to hire an additional 150 workers within the next few weeks.<sup>44</sup>

After weathering the oil bust of the 1980s, Bethlehem Supply's presence in Tulsa ceased in 1986 when Cevin Industries, an investment group from Chicago, purchased the company. At that date, Bethlehem Supply was located at 5110 S. Yale.<sup>45</sup>

Considering the importance of both the Oklahoma Iron Works and Bethlehem Supply Company to Tulsa's manufacturing and petroleum industries, it is curious that there is little mention of either in secondary sources on the history of Tulsa or of the oil industry in the state. Danney Goble's *Tulsa! Biography of the American City* (1997), Kenny A. Franks, et al's *Early*

<sup>42</sup> *Tulsa World*, December 15, 1961, from "Tulsa Businesses Be to Bi" vertical file, Tulsa City-County Library, Tulsa, Oklahoma; "Annual Message to Employees," *The Foundry Roundup* [newsletter of the Lufkin Foundry & Machine Company, Lufkin, Texas], December 1961, 3-4. Retrieved from The History Center [Diboll, Texas], [www.TheHistoryCenterOnline.com/upload/resources/Lufkin\\_Roundup\\_1961\\_12\\_December\\_OCR.pdf](http://www.TheHistoryCenterOnline.com/upload/resources/Lufkin_Roundup_1961_12_December_OCR.pdf) (accessed June 30, 2014); *Dallas Morning News*, January 22, 1946.

<sup>43</sup> *Tulsa World*, December 15, 1961; "Annual Message to Employees."

<sup>44</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, January 21, 1962.

<sup>45</sup> *Tulsa World*, November 26, 1987, from "Tulsa Businesses Be to Bi" vertical file, Tulsa City-County Library, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building

Tulsa County, OK

Name of Property

County and State

*Oklahoma Oil: A Photographic History, 1859-1936* (1981), and James O. Kemm's *Tulsa: Oil Capital of the World* (2004) did not mention either company. As mentioned previously, Kenneth Warren's recently published corporate history titled *Bethlehem Steel: Builder and Arsenal of America* (2008) makes no mention of the Bethlehem Supply Company.

### Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building after 1961

Ralph Ablon, president of Luria Brothers and Co., stated that it was not the company's intention to conduct a "scrapping or dismantling operation" at the Bethlehem Supply plant.<sup>46</sup> But that is what happened with the equipment sold throughout the country. In early 1963, Central States Steel, Inc. purchased the plant site from Luria at an undisclosed price. Central States sold a variety of wire, steel, and building material products to steel fabricators, sheet metal, lumber, and plumbing firms. The company was based in Kansas City but had been in Tulsa for approximately 20 years. At the time of the purchase, Central States had warehouses at 801 E. First Place and 501 S. Quaker Avenue in Tulsa. The former Bethlehem complex afforded the company the opportunity to consolidate the two warehouses at the new site which at this time consisted of 18 acres and 11 "major" buildings in addition to the office building. Central States planned to occupy five buildings north of the office building that had formerly been used for manufacturing but would not occupy the foundry building or the office building. It hoped to lease the unused buildings.<sup>47</sup>

Central States' parent company, Warehouse Properties, owned the complex into the 1980s. A number of tenants occupied the site over the next thirty years. They included Bankoff Scrap and Metal and Recycle America Processing Facility.<sup>48</sup> The plant site was later divided into two parcels with Fintube Technologies acquiring the northern portion containing a concrete reservoir, a forge, and welding and fabrication shops. Evans Electric acquired the southern portion which included the foundry/machine shop building that is the subject of this nomination. Over the years, many of the ancillary buildings of the original property were demolished. The Tulsa Development Authority acquired the Evans parcel in 2003 and the Fintube parcel in 2005 with the goal of redeveloping them for non-industrial uses. In 2011, ownership of the parcels was transferred to the City of Tulsa.<sup>49</sup> Currently Manhattan Construction Company leases the Evans property (which includes the Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Building) for warehousing construction equipment and materials. The City of Tulsa is seeking parties to develop the sites. In addition, it is pursuing the listing of the Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building on the National Register of Historic Places to provide the potential for the use of tax credits available for the rehabilitation of historic buildings.

<sup>46</sup> *Tulsa World*, December 15, 1961.

<sup>47</sup> *Tulsa Tribune*, February 22, 1963, from "Tulsa Businesses Be to Bi" vertical file, Tulsa City-County Library, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

<sup>48</sup> Tulsa County (Oklahoma) Clerk's Office, Deed Records, Book 3316, page 201, December 15, 1963 and Book 4612, page 210, May 10, 1982; *City Directory, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1970*, (Dallas, Texas: R. L. Polk and Company, Publishers), 296

<sup>49</sup> Tulsa County Assessor's Office, Tax Records for 118 N. Lansing Avenue, Parcel 99201-92-01-11270 (<http://www.assessor.tulsacounty.org/assessor-property.php?account=R99201920111270>) and 186 N. Lansing Avenue, Parcel 90236-02-36-30930 (<http://www.assessor.tulsacounty.org/assessor-property.php?account=R90236-02-36-30930>), both records accessed April 6, 2014.

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK  
County and State

### **Significance under Criterion A: Industry**

The Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building is significant for its association with two companies that played important roles in Tulsa's industrial history. At one point, Oklahoma Iron Works was Tulsa's largest manufacturing facility, producing structural components and oil well equipment and supplies that were used throughout the state and beyond. The nominated building was initially constructed in 1911 and significantly expanded over the next 27 years. Bethlehem Supply Company's association with the building began in late 1938 and signaled the commitment of the country's second largest steel manufacturer to the oil well supply business. At the time of the plant's closing in 1961, it held 10 to 12 percent of the world's market for pumping equipment. The nominated resource was a multi-purpose building originally containing a foundry, machine shop, assembly department, and warehouse. It is the best extant resource to represent the historic importance of both companies to Tulsa's industrial past. Listing of the Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building in the National Register of Historic Places will acknowledge this significance.



Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK  
County and State

---

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Brantly, J.E. *History of Oil Well Drilling*. Houston, Texas: Gulf Publishing Company, 1971.

City of Tulsa, Oklahoma, Planning and Economic Development Department. "Request for Proposal TAC 1019, Land Development in the City of Tulsa-EvansFintube Site," 2013.

*Dallas Morning News*. Various issues between 1904 and 1962.

Douglas, Clarence B. *The History of Tulsa, Oklahoma: A City with a Personality*. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1921.

Franks, Kenny A., Paul F. Lambert, and Carl N. Tyson. *Early Oklahoma Oil: A Photographic History, 1859-1936*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1981.

King, Joseph E. *Spans of Time: Oklahoma Historic Highway Bridges*. Oklahoma Department of Transportation, June 1993.

Library of Congress, Thaddeus M. Fowler Map Collection. Aero View of Tulsa, Oklahoma 1918. Fowler & Kelly, Pasaic [sic], New Jersey, 1918. Call Number G4024.T8A3 1918 .F6 Fow 23. (available at [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/queryD?gnd:2:./temp/-ammem\\_H0kG::@@@mdb](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/queryD?gnd:2:./temp/-ammem_H0kG::@@@mdb)).

Meacham, Mary Jo and Danney Goble. *Architectural/Historical Survey of Certain Parts of Tulsa, Oklahoma*. Design/Research Center, College of Architecture, University of Oklahoma, 1991.

McCollum, Jarrell L. "Status of the Foundry Industry in Oklahoma" *Proceedings of the Oklahoma Academy of Science for 1953*, Volume 34, pp. 235-37.

"Oil Drilling," vertical file. Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Company. Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1915, Sheet 36; April 1939, Sheet 65; June 1962, Sheet 65.

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK  
County and State

Territorial Incorporation Records, Articles of Incorporation and Appointment of Agent, Cleveland Tool Company, December 12, 1904, Entry #6051A and 6052A.

Territorial Incorporation Records, Articles of Incorporation, Oklahoma Iron Works, January 1, 1907.

Thoburn, Joseph B. *A Standard History of Oklahoma: An Authentic Narrative of its Development from the Date of the First European Exploration Down to the Present Time, Including Accounts of the Indian Tribes, both Civilized and Wild, of the Cattle Range, of the Land Openings and the Achievements of the Most Recent Period.* Volume III. Chicago and New York: The American Historical Society, 1916 (available at <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/wu.89063270797>, Public Domain, Google-digitized, [http://hathitrust.org/access\\_use#pd-google](http://hathitrust.org/access_use#pd-google), accessed February 3, 2014.

“Tulsa Businesses Be - Bi.” Vertical file, Tulsa City-County Library, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

*Tulsa Daily World.* Various issues between 1912 and 1961.

U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service. *Final 1921 Tulsa Race Riot Reconnaissance Survey.* 2005.

Warren, Kenneth. *Bethlehem Steel: Builder and Arsenal of America.* Pittsburgh: Pennsylvania: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008.

---

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK  
County and State

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

---

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** approximately four acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 36.162051                      Longitude: -95.982974

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Beginning at a point at the southwest corner of the building, proceed approximately 320 feet due east; thence approximately 610 feet due north; thence approximately 190 feet due west; thence approximately 500 feet in a southwesterly direction to a point; thence approximately 133 feet south to the point of beginning.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.) Because the nominated resource lays within three separate legal descriptions, the boundaries were delineated to include only the footprint of the building and the associated railroad siding along its east side.

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK  
County and State

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Susan Allen Kline, consultant  
organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number: 2421 Shirley Avenue  
city or town: Fort Worth state: Texas zip code: 76109  
e-mail: sskline@sbcglobal.net  
telephone: 817-921-0127  
date: August 19, 2014

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Figure Log:

**Figure 1:** Boundaries of nominated property

**Figure 2:** Context map

**Figure 3:** Components of the Building and Site

**Figure 4:** Photo key

**Figure 5:** Views of Oklahoma Iron Works from the *Tulsa Daily World*, May 18, 1915.

**Figure 6:** Detail of Fowler & Kelly's *Aero View of Tulsa, Oklahoma 1918* showing the Oklahoma Iron Works plant.

**Figure 7:** Bethlehem Supply Company Building, date unknown. View from Archer Street of the south end of the building as the steel framework for the Assembly Department (Unit F) is going up. Beryl Ford Collection/Rotary Club of Tulsa, B7832. Courtesy of the Tulsa City-County Library and the Tulsa Historical Society.

**Figure 8:** Aerial photo of former Bethlehem Supply Company plant, from *Tulsa Tribune*, February 22, 1963.

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK  
County and State

## Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

## Photo Log

Name of Property: Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building

City or Vicinity: Tulsa

County: Tulsa

State: Oklahoma

Photographer: Susan Allen Kline

Date Photographed: April 9-10, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 26. North and east elevations of Foundry and Railroad Siding (Feature G), view south
- 2 of 26. North and east elevations of Foundry, view southeast
- 3 of 26. Interior of north end of Foundry, view south
- 4 of 26. North elevations of Addition (Unit E) and Warehouse/Welding Shop (Unit D), view south
- 5 of 26. West elevation of Foundry and Machine Shop, view east
- 6 of 26. East elevation of south end of Foundry and the Machine Shop, Railroad Siding (Feature G), and north elevation of Addition to Warehouse/Assembly Department (Unit C-1), view south
- 7 of 26. East elevation of Machine Shop and Foundry, view west
- 8 of 26. Loading dock on west elevation of Machine Shop and north elevation of Addition (Unit E), view southeast
- 9 of 26. Interior, room to the west of Foundry, view north
- 10 of 26. Interior, south portion of Foundry, view north
- 11 of 26. Interior, north portion of Foundry, view northeast
- 12 of 26. Interior, south portion of Foundry and Machine Shop, view south
- 13 of 26. Interior, detail of wood block floor in Machine Shop, view west
- 14 of 26. Interior of Machine Shop, view north
- 15 of 26. Interior of Machine Shop, view south
- 16 of 26. Interior of Machine Shop, view northwest

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building

Tulsa County, OK

Name of Property

County and State

- 17 of 26. West elevation of Addition to Warehouse/Assembly Department (Units C and C-1) and east elevation of Machine Shop and Foundry, view northwest
- 18 of 26. South and east elevations to Warehouse/Assembly Department and its Addition (Units C and C-1), view northwest
- 19 of 26. Interior of Warehouse/Welding Shop, view west
- 20 of 26. South elevation of Assembly Department and Warehouse (Units C and C-1), view north
- 21 of 26. East and south elevations of Assembly Department (Unit F), view northwest
- 22 of 26. South elevations of Assembly Department and Warehouse/Assembly Department (Units F and C/C-1), view northeast
- 23 of 26. West elevations of Warehouse/Assembly Department (Unit C) and Assembly Department (Unit F), view northeast
- 24 of 26. Interior of Assembly Department (Unit F), view west
- 25 of 26. Interior of Addition (Unit E), view north
- 26 of 26. Interior of Addition (Unit E), view south

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK  
County and State



Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK  
County and State





Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK  
County and State



Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK  
County and State



Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK  
County and State



Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK  
County and State



Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK  
County and State



Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK  
County and State



Oklahoma Iron Works/Bethlehem Supply Company Building  
118 North Lansing Avenue  
Tulsa, Tulsa County, Oklahoma



-95.982974, 36.162051

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i-cubed, Earthstar  
Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX,  
Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User  
Community

