

Book copy

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Kansas City-Southern Depot

other name/site number: BE3036

2. Location

street & number: State Highway 59

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Decatur

vicinity: N/A

state: AR

county: Benton

code: AR 007

zip code: 72722

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic Railroad Depots of Arkansas, 1870-1940

=====  
**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**  
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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Cathryn A. Boyd \_\_\_\_\_ 4-27-92  
Signature of certifying official Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

=====  
**5. National Park Service Certification**  
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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

=====  
**6. Function or Use**  
=====

Historic: TRANSPORTATION Sub: Rail-related  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Current: COMMERCE/TRADE Sub: Office building  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification:

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS  
Craftsman

Other Description: Plain Traditional

Materials: foundation CONCRETE roof ASPHALT  
walls CONCRETE other WOOD BRACKETS  
WOOD SHINGLES

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Locally.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: TRANSPORTATION  
ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: 1920-1940

Significant Dates: 1920

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Kansas City-Southern Railroad  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.  
X See continuation sheet.

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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See *Historic Railroad Depots of Arkansas, 1870-1940* Multiple Proper Documentation Form, Section H.

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

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 -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreage of Property: Less than one

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing      Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>15</u>	<u>368890</u>	<u>4021920</u>	B	___	_____	_____
C	___	_____	_____	D	___	_____	_____

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: \_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Beginning at a point formed by the intersection of the western edge of State Highway 59 with the southern edge of West North Street, proceed westerly along the latter edge for a distance of approximately 200 feet to its intersection with the eastern edge of the Kansas City-Southern Railroad tracks; thence proceed southerly along said edge for a distance of approximately 250 feet to its intersection with a line running parallel with the depot's southern elevation; thence proceed easterly along said line for a distance of approximately 125 feet to its intersection with the western edge of State Highway 59; thence proceed northerly along said line for a distance of approximately 225 feet to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification: \_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

This boundary includes all the property historically-associated with the resource that retains its integrity.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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Name/Title: Patrick Zollner, National Register Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: April 17, 1992

Street & Number: 225 E. Markham, Suite 300 Telephone: (501) 324-9346

City or Town: Little Rock State: AR ZIP: 72201

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National Park Service**

## **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

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### **Summary**

The Kansas City-Southern Depot in Decatur is a single-story, concrete block freight and passenger railroad depot constructed circa 1920 in the Plain Traditional style. The composition-shingled hipped roof features two eyebrow dormers, projecting eaves with Craftsman brackets underneath, and a cross gable with decorative fishscale wood shingles over the three-sided telegrapher's bay. No original windows remain. The depot is currently owned by Peterson Industries.

### **Elaboration**

The Kansas City-Southern Depot in Decatur is a single-story, concrete block freight and passenger railroad depot constructed circa 1920 in the Plain Traditional style. The composition-shingled hipped roof features two eyebrow dormers, projecting eaves with Craftsman brackets underneath, and a cross gable with decorative fishscale wood shingles over the three-sided telegrapher's bay. A single brick chimney rises through the ridge to the north of center. A continuous, cast concrete foundation supports the entire structure.

The eastern elevation is lighted by five one-over-one windows to the north of a sliding wood freight door. The western elevation opposite is accessed via a sliding wood freight door at its southern end, a single-leaf entry placed just to the north, and another single-leaf entry at the northern end of the elevation. The telegrapher's bay is lighted with a single window on each of its sides and two windows in the front. This bay is flanked to either side by a single window.

The southern elevation is blank except for a single, central horizontal window placed beneath the broad cornice. The northern elevation is lighted with two symmetrically-placed windows.

Significant exterior details include the wood knee braces that ornament the cornice around the entire building and the diagonal cross-timbering on the freight doors.

Though no original windows remain, the one-over-one aluminum replacement windows are of the same sash configuration as would have been found on a depot of this age, and they are a dark brown, anodized aluminum type that is chromatically-compatible with the building's historic appearance.

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### Significance

Criteria A and C, local significance

The Kansas City-Southern Railroad was the realization of the dream of Arthur E. Stilwell, a native of Rochester, New York. Stilwell envisioned a railroad that would be "straight as the crow flies" to connect Kansas City to the Gulf of Mexico. Farmers, ranchers, lumber and coal men were being exploited by the rates charged to ship goods by way of the east, ignoring the ports to the south, in order to get them to waters for European markets. With "his" railroad Stilwell could ship faster, cheaper and preserve the perishables that were often spoiled along the normal shipping channels. At the age of thirty Stilwell organized the Kansas City Suburban Belt Railroad and in 1889 started the Kansas City, Pittsburgh & Gulf (later named Kansas City Southern), stretching 789 miles to the sea, ending at his namesake, the city of Port Arthur, Texas.

The tracks had been laid to Siloam Springs, Arkansas, only 228 miles from Kansas City, when, in 1893, an economic depression hit. Most other railroads went into the hands of receivers, as did many well established businesses, but not Stilwell. When he needed more money to operate, one of his "hunches" came to him and in February 1894 he left for Amsterdam, Holland, to try and raise the capital from Dutch and German investors.

He had never been to that country before and knew only one person, the wealthy coffee merchant he had met aboard the 5,000-ton steamer in 1885. After two unsuccessful weeks of trying to sell his securities, he spent a couple of days in his hotel rooms thinking, and remembered the Dutchman. He did not remember his name, only that he was a coffee merchant. He left the next morning for the coffee exchange board, where he obtained a list of brokers from the doorman, and on the list he recognized De Goeijen. De Goeijen was summoned to meet the American and recognized him at once. He was overjoyed to see his old acquaintance, and they left together for a most rewarding luncheon.

Arthur Stilwell set upon one of his best selling jobs and overwhelmed the Dutchman. He convinced him to sell his coffee holdings and go to work for him and his American friends as the agent for the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Trust Company at a salary of \$5,000 a year, more than twice his present salary. De Goeijen accepted, and Arthur stayed in Holland to teach the Dutchman to sell the securities. The Regalement Van Het Arkansas Construction Company syndicate was formed and became the vehicle for their operations in Holland.

Stilwell returned to Philadelphia and went to the offices of Drexel and Company asking them to draw a \$500,000 draft on the Bank of Amsterdam. They laughed. He could not seem to

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convince them that in the middle of an international depression he had raised \$3,000,000 to build a railroad through Western Arkansas and Northwestern Louisiana. Finally they were convinced and Stilwell left for Kansas City.

Robert Gillham (for whom the town of Gillham is named) was named Chief Engineer of the KCP&G and the construction company. Gillham had introduced the Cable Car to Kansas City and was Chief Engineer of the Metropolitan Street Railway. Gillham rode on horseback south of Siloam Springs to the Arkansas River, surveying the route. The Arkansas bridge site was selected and men put to work. However, the rugged Ozark topography proved too difficult, and Gillham decided to shift the main line west into Indian Territory, reaching Fort Smith by a branch line. Crossing the virgin territory in the midst of the depression began to cause financial troubles for Stilwell and his investors.

A central division point was needed for the railway, and the town of Gentry in Benton county was chosen. Named for Richard Gentry, a chief engineer and large investor. The town was laid out and formed by the Arkansas Townsite Company, a Stilwell firm. George M. Craig became the agent for Gentry, and the town was advertised as a future division point on the KCP&G. The town did not boom, and it was decided to move across the state line into Indian Territory, where the first town was formed and named for Stilwell.

Stilwell, Indian Territory, located 30 miles south and west of Siloam Springs, first appeared on the map in 1895. The brick roundhouse was built and contained eight stalls, a 65-foot turntable, a coal chute with a trestle approach, a water tank, depot and fine track yard. Many railroad employees were stationed there. The KCP&G also formed the towns of Howe and Spiro.

Many still did not consider Stilwell a successful developer - until he crossed back into Arkansas, where he became known for his "egoistic" habit of naming towns for himself, friends, and investors. Stilwell's success as a developer partly stemmed from his far-sightedness and salesmanship concerning these new towns. He always went or sent someone ahead of the tracks to write publicity, form parks, recreation sites and tourist attractions so that by the time "his" railroad reached a destination point he would have people to fill up the town.

Stilwell's dream was ultimately fulfilled, as by the arrival of the twentieth century the Kansas City-Southern Railroad had become the principal transportation route for both passengers and freight between the agricultural heartland of America and the Gulf of Mexico.

Though the early history of Decatur is difficult to establish (due to the lack of surviving primary



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sources), it is known that the first post office was established in 1883, when a John Cotton was made the postmaster. It seems likely that the town as such remained small, with only a few stores and blacksmith shops, until 1893, when the Kansas City, Pittsburg and Gulf Railroad (later the Kansas City-Southern Railroad). As was almost always the case, the arrival of the railroad caused a dramatic spurt of growth, resulting in the construction of several hotels, a sawmill, two churches and a large shipping yard by 1903. The Bank of Decatur opened by 1906, and by 1915 had grown prosperous enough to garner a Dun rating. By then its primary commercial enterprise was the processing and shipping of locally-grown apples.

This increased prosperity required the construction of a new, formed concrete block railroad depot by 1920, when this structure was built. This passenger and freight railroad depot is associated with the Railroad Growth and Development in Arkansas, 1870-1940 historic context as a structure financed and erected under the auspices of one of the larger late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century railroads in the state. As such, it is eligible under Criterion A by virtue of those associations; however, it is also significant by virtue of its status as the best and most intact example in Decatur of a Craftsman-influenced design featuring this type of construction, where the edges of the concrete blocks were beveled to resemble rusticated stone. Therefore, it is also eligible under Criterion C.





KANSAS CITY - SOUTHERN DEPOT (BE 5836)  
DECATUR, BENTON Co, ARKANSAS  
V. DE ROSE  
AUGUST, 1990  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT ANPP  
VIEW FROM SOUTHWEST



DECATUR

KANSAS CIVIL-JOURNALISM DEPOT (BE 3436)  
DECATUR, BENJAMIN O., ARKANSAS  
J. DE ROSE  
AUGUST, 1990  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP  
VIEW FROM NORTHEAST

7056 1 NE  
COLCORD NE

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF  
GEOLOGICAL  
LITTLE ROCK

36° 22' 30"

94° 30'

1860000m. E.

367

368

369 27' 30"

370

NOEL. MO. 14 MI.  
GRAVETTE 3.5 MI.

71  
(GR)

4076000m. N.

4075  
T. 20 N.  
T. 19 N.

4073

4074

7 MI. TO ARK. 43

KANSAS CITY -  
SOUTHERN DEPOT  
(BE 5036)  
DECATUR, BENTON  
CO., ARKANSAS



