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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name Park Hill Mission Cemetery

other names/site number Worcester Cemetery

2. Location

street & number South Park Hill Road, 1/2 mile south of East Murrell Road not for publication N/A  
city or town Park Hill vicinity X  
state Oklahoma code OK county Cherokee code 021 zip code 74451

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_ nationally  statewide \_\_\_ locally. ( N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Bob Bachman 10-25-06  
Signature of certifying official Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

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

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

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined eligible for the  
National Register

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.  
\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the  
National Register

\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall 12.6-06

[Signature] \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper Date  
of Action

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5. Classification

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Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register   0  

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

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: FUNERARY Sub: cemetery

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: FUNERARY Sub: cemetery

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

roof N/A

walls N/A

other METAL: iron (fence)  
STONE: sandstone, granite, limestone (markers)

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

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8. Statement of Significance

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

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HISTORY: Native American

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

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Period of Significance 1839-1905

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8. Statement of Significance (Continued)  
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Significant Dates 1839  
1859

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Boudinot, Elias (see continuation sheet)

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder N/A

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

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Geographical Data  
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Acreage of Property 5

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>15</u>	<u>322480</u>	<u>3968840</u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

N/A See continuation sheet.

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

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

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11. Form Prepared By  
=====

name/title Lois E. Albert; Anna Eddings; Shirley Pettingill

organization Oklahoma Archeological Survey date September 1, 2006

street & number 111 E. Chesapeake telephone (405) 325-7211

city or town Norman state OK zip code 73019

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Additional Documentation  
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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

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

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

name Oklahoma Historical Society - attn: Dr. Bob Blackburn

street & number 2401 N. Laird Ave. telephone (405) 522-5202

city or town Oklahoma state IN zip code 73106



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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Park Hill Mission Cemetery  
name of property  
Cherokee County, OK  
county and State

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*Summary Description*

The Park Hill Mission Cemetery, commonly referred to as the Worcester Cemetery, is located atop a small bluff overlooking Park Hill Branch Creek, which flows east to the Illinois River. To the south is Park Hill Mountain; to the north, across the creek, is the Murrell House (NHL 1970). Across a county road to the west is the larger Park Hill Cemetery while directly east one mile is the Ross Cemetery (NR 2002). The community of Park Hill is just north of the Murrell House and the town of Tahlequah, capital of the Cherokee Nation and county seat of Cherokee County, is three miles further north.

The cemetery lies on a gently south-facing slope and is reached by a lane leading eastward from Park Hill Road. This lane is not part of the historical cemetery, and is defined by a wooden post and barbed wire fence. The cemetery is roughly rectangular, with a gate on the west side, near the road. The perimeter fence of the cemetery is also constructed of wooden posts and barbed wire. Just inside the entrance to the cemetery is a sign erected by the Oklahoma Historical Society which gives information about the cemetery and its significance.

A number of large oak trees are scattered about the cemetery, especially in the central and northern portions. Graves, most of them marked only by plain pieces of sandstone, are scattered through this area. There appears to be an attempt to create a linear arrangement of the graves. (photo #1) Near the southern perimeter fence, a decorative woven wire fence defines the burial plot containing the graves of members of the Worcester family. This fence was added after the Civil War to protect the graves from livestock. A large white marble shaft marks the graves of Reverend Samuel Austin Worcester and his first (Ann Orr Worcester) and second (Erminia Nash Worcester) wives. (photo #2) Two of the Worcester daughters are also buried within this plot. These are Ann Eliza Worcester Robertson and Sarah Worcester Hitchcock. Ann Eliza's husband, Reverend William Schenk Robertson, and their twin sons are also buried here. The elder Robertson's headstones are simple red granite markers. In addition, several people who worked at the mission are buried in this plot. Just outside this iron fence, to the west, lie the graves of Elias Boudinot and two unidentified members of his family. Two flat, full length stone grave covers resting on squared stones flank a broken pile of stones next to the red granite historical marker identifying Boudinot's grave. (photo #3)

During the Civil War, the cemetery became overgrown with weeds and brush. To the west of the Park Hill Mission Cemetery, Reverend Stephen Foreman established a new family cemetery near his home. This is now known as Park Hill Cemetery. The old mission cemetery became neglected and overgrown. By 1905, when Ann Eliza Worcester Robertson died, the cemetery had to be cleared for her burial. Livestock had been allowed to roam, and had damaged some of the stones. In the 1950s, students from Northeastern State University (at that time, Northeastern State College), cleared and repaired the cemetery as a project. After the Oklahoma Historical Society acquired the property, Boudinot's grave was marked with a large red granite monument by the Oklahoma Historical Society in 1964.

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There are some more modern, concrete markers placed by the DAR in the cemetery. These are small and do not detract from the overall integrity of the cemetery. (photo #4) The cemetery retains an overall sense of time and place, with few modern intrusions within its boundaries and fewer still within the viewscape accorded its position atop the hill overlooking Park Hill.

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Park Hill Mission Cemetery  
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Cherokee County, OK  
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Summary Statement of Significance

Park Hill Mission Cemetery is significant at the statewide level for its association with early Cherokee settlement in Indian territory and for the significance of persons interred within, notably Elias Boudinot and Reverend Samuel A. Worcester. The cemetery meets National Register Criteria A and B as in the areas of Exploration/Settlement and for Politics/Government due to its association with persons of significance, Boudinot and Worcester. The cemetery also meets the stipulations set forth in Criteria Consideration d, as a cemetery that derives its significance from the graves of persons of transcendent importance and for its association with events significant in the development of the Territory. The first person buried in this cemetery, Elias Boudinot, was a significant if not controversial man in Cherokee politics. A signer of the treaty that forced the Cherokee from their ancestral lands, he was assassinated on June 22, 1839, soon after arriving in the new territory. Reverend Samuel Worcester played a significant role in education in the tribe, operating a mission school as well as the first and most important printing press in Indian Territory. These two men, each of whom played significant roles in the history of the Cherokee nation, left no other intact places in Oklahoma to associate with them. The Worcester family, some of whom also played important roles in the development of the Cherokee nation, continued to use Park Hill Mission Cemetery until 1905, when Ann Eliza Worcester Robertson, Samuel's daughter, was buried.

Background

The teachings of missionaries played an important role in helping the Cherokees adopt American culture and civilization. In the 1790s, the Cherokees were having a hard time changing from a lifestyle based on hunting and warfare to one based on farming. So around 1800, the Cherokee chiefs' opposition to religion and education was softening, and they permitted permanent mission stations in their nation. They saw the value of learning the English language and vocational skills to adapt to their changing society. The Cherokee governing council permitted the Moravians to establish a school at Springplace in 1801, making clear that they did not want religious teaching unless it went along with education. The curriculum of Brainerd mission school contained elementary education, mechanical skills for males, household skills for females, and Presbyterian doctrine. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) supported the mission at Brainerd, which opened in 1817. In 1826, there were eighteen mission schools in the Cherokee Nation, which were the core of their educational system.<sup>1</sup>

Besides influencing their social order, the work of the missionaries also had a part in the political events of the Cherokee Nation. Influencing the Cherokees' political structure was one goal of Rev. Gideon Blackburn's mission work. When he was successful at teaching the children at the Cherokee Overhills school, Cherokee leaders conferred

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1. Baird, "Context," 109; Grant Foreman, The Five Civilized Tribes (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press), 17; William G. McLoughlin, Cherokees and Missionaries, 1789-1839 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 10, 15, 35; Grace Steele Woodward, The Cherokees (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 123, 140-41.

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Park Hill Mission Cemetery  
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with him about their government, and took much of his advice in their government reorganization of 1808, which included adopting a written constitution and vesting legislative and judicial powers in a general council. Cherokee leaders believed that reforming their government to become more like that of the United States, adopting Christianity, and improving educational opportunities in their nation would be an effective defense against the federal and state governments' efforts to take their lands and remove them to the West. They hoped that the large-scale educational program that the ABCFM planned for their nation would help them in these reforms. When the ABCFM missionaries began work in the Cherokee Nation in 1816, they brought Cherokee concerns to a larger group of people, because their publications, which had a wide circulation, contained information on the changes among the Cherokees. People in the ABCFM had influence with members of the United States Congress, so the Cherokees also hoped for political assistance from them.<sup>2</sup>

The invention of a written Cherokee language was an important event in their cultural and educational development. A mixed-blood Cherokee named Sequoyah (also known as George Gist, or Guess, or Guest) recognized the importance of knowing how to read. Not having a written language hindered the advancement of the Cherokee people. After years of development, Sequoyah completed a syllabary for the Cherokee language in 1821, in which symbols represented the language's syllables. This syllabary was simple enough to learn quickly, and Cherokees in great numbers learned to read and write using it. This invention improved their communication with each other and enabled them to learn more. Forward-thinking Cherokees, knowing the syllabary's importance, soon considered establishing a Cherokee-language press.<sup>3</sup> The ABCFM selected newly ordained minister Samuel Austin Worcester to begin the process of translating and publishing mission materials into Cherokee. In 1827, he and his wife Ann Orr Worcester moved to New Echota, the Cherokee capitol, to supervise the printing office established through the joint effort of the ABCFM and the Cherokee National Council. Elias Boudinot, a young Cherokee educated in the mission schools and at the Board's Foreign Mission School at Cornwall, Connecticut, was appointed editor. The collaboration between Worcester and Boudinot was a very prolific one. They not only published religious materials such as books of the New Testament and hymnals, but they also collaborated on the Cherokee Nation's national newspaper, the *Cherokee Phoenix*.

Because of the continued westward movement of an increasing EuroAmerican population, as well as the discovery of gold in the Cherokee lands, the state of Georgia and the federal government pressed for the removal of all Native American groups to lands west of the Mississippi River. This became especially forceful after the election of Andrew Jackson as president. Georgia annexed the Cherokee lands in 1830 and declared the Cherokee government and its

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2. Woodward, *Cherokees*, 123, 125-26, 139; Foreman, *Five Tribes*, 422; McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries*, 102, 106-07, 110.

3. Benjamin Levy, New Echota—National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1973 (NHL form), Historic Preservation Division, Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia, Section 8, page 1b; Barbara Francine Luebke, "Elias Boudinot, Cherokee Editor: The Father of American Indian Journalism" (Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri-Columbia, 1983), 10, 108, 111; Woodward, *Cherokees*, 143.

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laws null and void. The Cherokee land was divided and a lottery was instituted for the plots of land. The Cherokees fought these measures in court and in Congress, and tried to garner support from whites in the eastern states. While this delayed the implementation of the lottery, it did not stop whites from seizing Cherokee land and property. In order to neutralize the support of the missionaries, Georgia required whites living in the Cherokee lands to sign an oath of loyalty to the state in order to continue living in the area. Samuel Worcester and some of the other missionaries refused to sign this oath and were arrested in 1831. The printing press Worcester operated was seized. His case was appealed to the United States Supreme Court, where Chief Justice John Marshall's opinion in favor of the missionaries in Worcester v. Georgia reaffirmed the freedom of the press. The Supreme Court also declared the state laws of Georgia did not apply in Cherokee country, and that the laws under which Worcester and the others were indicted were null and void.

Significance

Rev. Samuel A. Worcester and Elias Boudinot, both buried in the Park Hill Mission Cemetery, are figures of outstanding significance in Cherokee history. Their work was an important part of Cherokees' resistance to western removal. The Cherokees had already lost much of their land in the Southern states, and by 1825, when they made New Echota (in Georgia) their capitol, their nation was centered in northern Georgia and extended into western North Carolina, southeastern Tennessee, and northeastern Alabama. In the Compact of 1802, the federal government promised the state of Georgia the removal of the Cherokees, who were struggling to prevent it.<sup>4</sup> The work these men did translating and printing material in the Cherokee language had a major impact on the Cherokees' social history. The schooling and other services at the missions Worcester supervised at New Echota and Park Hill also were important in their social history. Other people involved in mission work among the Five Civilized Tribes are also buried in the Worcester Cemetery.

Work involving Sequoyah's Cherokee syllabary brought Worcester and Boudinot together early in their mission careers. In October of 1825, Worcester and his wife Ann Orr arrived at the Brainerd mission. The ABCFM had assigned Worcester there temporarily, to become familiar with the Cherokees and to learn their language. The Cherokee National Committee and Council formally recognized the syllabary's importance when they made it official in 1825, and appointed a committee to raise money to establish a printing office for a Cherokee newspaper. Also appointed by the Council, Elias Boudinot made a lecture tour through the eastern states to raise money for this newspaper. After Worcester advised them of how useful a Cherokee press would be, the ABCFM loaned money for purchasing printing equipment, and Worcester was in charge of its purchase. Boudinot, whose native language was Cherokee, began tutoring Worcester in the Cherokee language in 1826. Beginning in December of 1826, Boudinot began a temporary position as a missionary and schoolteacher at the High Tower mission station, supported by the

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4. William R. Mitchell, Jr., and Carole Summers, New Echota—National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1971, Historic Preservation Division, Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia, Section 8, page 1; Woodward, Cherokees, 139.

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ABCFM. In 1827, he became editor of the newspaper *Cherokee Phoenix* and moved to New Echota. Worcester also moved to New Echota in November of 1827 to establish a mission station.<sup>5</sup>

The *Cherokee Phoenix* recorded the political views and social changes in the Cherokee Nation, as the Cherokees were imitating the lifestyles and institutions of white people. Beginning publication in February of 1828, it was the first Indian newspaper in the United States, and was printed in both English and Cherokee. Some of the things printed in it included the published laws and public documents of the Cherokee Nation. The *Cherokee Phoenix* did an excellent job covering the removal controversy, being a strong influence against removal, in large part because of Elias Boudinot's leadership. He wrote against the Georgia legislature's efforts to take possession of the Cherokee land and make the Indians subject to Georgia laws. Cherokee leaders used this newspaper to defend and explain their positions while they were challenging the state of Georgia in court. The *Cherokee Phoenix* had a wide influence because it was sent throughout the United States, and some of its editorials recopied to other newspapers.<sup>6</sup>

Rev. Samuel A. Worcester supervised a mission station at New Echota, and a large part of his missionary work here was translating religious material into the Cherokee language. The school at the mission was in an upper room of the Worcester home, but classes were so large that they met in the buildings of the Cherokee National Council and Supreme Court when those groups were not in session. The ABCFM sent Worcester to translate religious material into the Cherokee language because his education at Andover Theological Seminary helped make him an expert in this area. Because there had been no type for the Cherokee syllabary, an earlier Cherokee translation of the New Testament had been circulated in manuscript form. Worcester and Boudinot were translating material printed at New Echota, such as chapters of the New Testament, a hymn book, and religious tracts.<sup>7</sup>

The Supreme Court case of Worcester v. Georgia was a turning point in the work of Worcester and Boudinot, as well as in the Cherokee removal controversy. In June of 1830, a Georgia law went into effect incorporating a large part of the Cherokees' territory into the state of Georgia, extending the state's laws over it and nullifying the Cherokee Nation's laws. In addition, Indians could not act as witnesses in lawsuits where whites were defendants. Encouraged by this law, whites began to take possession of the Cherokees' property. In 1831, the state of Georgia passed a law requiring all whites in the Cherokee Nation to take an oath of allegiance to Georgia. This law was aimed against

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5. Althea Bass, Cherokee Messenger (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1936), 15, 19, 20, 28, 87-88; Luebke, "Elias Boudinot," 106-07, 111, 121-22, 104-05; Woodward, Cherokees, 143-44; Ralph Henry Gabriel, Elias Boudinot, Cherokee, & His America (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), 95-96.

6. Luebke, "Elias Boudinot," 4, 112, 137, 149, 182, 201; Exhibit Copy, Murrell Home Historic Site, Park Hill, Oklahoma; Gabriel, Elias Boudinot, 122-23; Woodward, Cherokees, 167-68.

7. Bass, Messenger, 19, 37, 79, 124; Levy, New Echota, 8:1b; Mitchell and Summers, New Echota, 8:1; Luebke, "Elias Boudinot," 125, 182; Carolyn Thomas Foreman, Oklahoma Imprints, 1835-1907: A History of Printing in Oklahoma Before Statehood (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1936), xvi.

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missionaries, because taking it would damage their reputation with the Cherokees. Worcester and another missionary, Elizur Butler, went to prison for violating this loyalty oath law. Boudinot's reports of the state of Georgia's harassment of the missionaries created support for the Cherokees in their fight against western removal. The *Cherokee Phoenix* was the main source of news and comment sympathetic to the missionaries. Their case came before the Supreme Court as Worcester v. Georgia in 1832. In this case, Chief Justice John Marshall ruled that it was unconstitutional for Georgia's laws to apply to the Cherokee Nation, which set an important legal precedent strengthening the federal government's power. The court ordered that the two missionaries be released, but the governor of Georgia refused. Because the federal government did not enforce this court decision, and because influential Cherokee supporters were doubting whether they should continue opposing western removal, Elias Boudinot became less opposed to it also. He believed the Cherokees should consider western removal, which he discussed in the *Cherokee Phoenix*. This position was contrary to the strong anti-removal policy of principal chief John Ross, so under political pressure, Boudinot resigned as editor of the *Cherokee Phoenix* in August of 1832.<sup>8</sup>

Along with Major Ridge and John Ridge, Boudinot became a leader in the Treaty Party that formed among Cherokee political leaders who felt that it was in the Cherokees' best interest to move West, away from harassment by whites. The 1830 Indian Removal Bill had made it federal policy to favor western removal, giving President Jackson the power to take steps to get land exchanges from the Indians. Government agents gave the Cherokees notice to come to New Echota in December of 1835 to negotiate a treaty. Attendance at this meeting was relatively small, but the Ridges, Boudinot, and others signed a treaty with the government agents on December 29. The Cherokee Nation's delegates presented protests against this treaty to the United States Senate, and the Cherokees held councils and passed resolutions declaring this treaty null, but still the Senate ratified it. In the Treaty of New Echota, the Cherokees exchanged all their land east of the Mississippi River for five million dollars, and they received joint possession of the lands of the Cherokees who had already moved to the western Indian Territory in the present-day Oklahoma.<sup>9</sup>

A pardon from the Georgia governor allowed for the release of Worcester and Butler in January of 1833. Continuing his mission work as before grew difficult for Worcester; there was division among the Cherokees over western removal, whites were seizing Cherokee land, and the seizure of the press by the Georgia Guard was imminent. As a result, in the spring of 1835 Worcester and his family moved to the western Cherokee Nation to continue their work. The ABCFM sent Worcester a new, larger printing press and types, and he began operating it temporarily at the old Union Mission. Here he supervised the printing of books in the Creek and Choctaw languages, as well as Cherokee.

8. Bass, Messenger, 109-10, 130, 137, 143-44, 154-55, 164; Muriel H. Wright, "Samuel Austin Worcester: A Dedication," Chronicles of Oklahoma 37 (No. 1, 1959):3; Grant Foreman, Indian Removal (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1932), 229; Luebke, "Elias Boudinot," 243, 272; Levy, New Echota 8:1b; Gabriel, Elias Boudinot, 133-34.

9. Gabriel, Elias Boudinot, 145, 154; Bass, Cherokee Messenger, 163, 170; Foreman, Removal, 21-22, 267-69; Levy, New Echota, 8:1.

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In December of 1836, Worcester and his family moved from Union Mission to Park Hill, and in 1837 he also moved the press to Park Hill. Worcester urged Boudinot to move to Park Hill because his help in the translation work was crucial, and in November of 1837, Boudinot and his family moved there.<sup>10</sup> J. F. Wheeler, a Cherokee citizen through marriage, was employed as a printer, as was John Walker Candy. These men were married to sisters of Elias Boudinot and Stand Watie. In addition to the press, Worcester organized a mission school and a church, which opened on June 3, 1837 with 19 members.

Boudinot's involvement in the treaty that led to western removal brought about his death. During their forced emigration to the West in 1838 and 1839, the Cherokees suffered much from disease, death, and ill-treatment; this event came to be known as the Trail of Tears. A large group of these emigrants arrived in the western Indian Territory in the spring of 1839. Because most of the Cherokees opposed the treaty, Boudinot was so unpopular that Worcester feared the Cherokee government would not allow him to continue operating the mission and press at Park Hill with Boudinot's help. The revival in 1829 of an old law that called for death to any person who sold the Cherokees' land without their government's authority shows how much they opposed giving up territory. Upon the pretext of this law, some recent emigrants assassinated Boudinot, Major Ridge, and John Ridge on June 22, 1839. Three men attacked and killed Boudinot as he accompanied them to Worcester's house to get medicine they said they needed.<sup>11</sup>

Boudinot's assassination occurred about three-hundred yards south of his grave in what came to be known as the Worcester Cemetery. Soon after the establishment of the Park Hill Mission, the Cherokee Nation set this acre aside for burial, but it is possible that it had been used for a graveyard even before a missionary named this settlement Park Hill around 1835. The rocky soil here may have been a reason why this spot became a burial ground. Worcester presided over Boudinot's funeral service one day after his death. A large, rough sandstone slab marked his grave; it had no inscription, possibly because of the bitter factionalism among the Cherokees at that time.<sup>12</sup>

The cemetery was near the mission buildings and the printing office, where the work of the printing press contributed to increasing the literacy of the Cherokees and other Indian nations. Indicative of the press's output, in 1845 it printed

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10. Gabriel, Elias Boudinot, 133; Bass, Cherokee Messenger, 158-59, 176, 179, 206; Foreman, Removal, 269n; T. L. Ballenger, "Restoration of the Worcester Cemetery, Old Park Hill," Chronicles of Oklahoma 31 (Summer 1953):137; Nevada Couch, Pages from Cherokee Indian History (St. Louis, MO: R. P. Studley & Company, Printers, 1884), 21; Foreman, Oklahoma Imprints, 1-2; Baird, "Context" 32, Luebke, "Elias Boudinot," 312.

11. Woodward, Cherokees, 205, 208-09, 214-18; Foreman, Five Tribes, 284, 291-93n, 296-98; Gabriel, Elias Boudinot, 139.

12. Ballenger, "Restoration," 138-39; "Indian-Pioneer History," unpublished manuscript, Research Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, vol. 98, p. 282, vol. 42, p. 452; "A Weird Burial," from a Fort Smith Newspaper, November 29, 1905, reprinted in "Notes and Documents," Chronicles of Oklahoma 37 (Spring 1959): 106; Carolyn Thomas Foreman, Park Hill (Muskogee, OK: The Star Printery, Inc., 1948), 36; Luebke, "Elias Boudinot," 320.



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37,200 books and pamphlets. One important product of the press was the yearly Cherokee Almanac, which was useful for farmers because it gave directions for planting crops. Worcester also printed tracts for the Cherokees' spiritual education, and a beginning textbook called the Cherokee Primer. In service to other tribes, the press produced tracts and books in the Choctaw language, as well as copies of Muskogee Hymns, and the New Testament and parts of the Old Testament in the Creek language. After Boudinot's death, Rev. Stephen Foreman helped Worcester in his translation work. A graduate of the Princeton Theological Seminary, Foreman was also a Cherokee. Together, they translated the New Testament and parts of the Old Testament from the original Greek into the Cherokee language, and printed them. Because of Worcester's work in linguistics, his alma mater, the University of Vermont at Burlington, gave him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. The work of the press and the influence of the missionaries helped make Park Hill a cultural center of the Cherokee Nation.<sup>13</sup> Park Hill also attracted other influential residents, including John Ross, Principal Chief of the Cherokee, and other influential members of his family.

Ann Worcester died after giving birth to her seventh child, Mary Eleanor, in 1840. She was interred in the mission cemetery near the grave of Elias Boudinot. Samuel Worcester married Ermina Nash, a fellow missionary, on April 2, 1841. Worcester continued to operate his press, producing the *Cherokee Phoenix*, religious materials, and documents for the Cherokee Nation. In addition to publishing items in Cherokee, Worcester also produced documents for the Choctaws and Creeks who had also been removed west.

Samuel Worcester died in 1859 at the age of 61. He was buried in the mission cemetery, next to his first wife. His funeral drew a large crowd. At the time of his death, the ABCFM was embroiled in controversy. Many of the missionaries were from the northeast and were perceived as being anti-slavery at best and abolitionists at worst. The Cherokees were slaveholders. And as tensions arose the ABCFM recalled their missionaries soon after the death of Worcester. The mission properties, on Cherokee land, were sold to Abijah Hicks, an educated Cherokee who had served as the mission's farmer. He married Hannah Worcester, Samuel & Ann's daughter.

Along with Samuel Worcester and Elias Boudinot, other persons of note buried in the Park Hill Mission Cemetery include:

Ann Eliza Worcester Robertson – Ann Eliza was born November 7, 1826 at Brainerd Mission, Tennessee. After attending mission schools, she was sent to her father's relatives in Vermont to further her education. She attended Peacham Academy and St. Johnsbury Academy, where her studies included Latin and Greek, as well as music and art. After her return to the Cherokee Nation, she taught at the mission school. Not long after she arrived, she met a young teacher from Tullahassee Mission (Presbyterian) in the Creek Nation. William Schenck Robertson and Ann Eliza Worcester were married in 1850 by her father at Park Hill. The wedding was attended by leading citizens of the

13. Baird, "Context" 195; Bass, Cherokee Messenger, 212, 221, 301, 325; Foreman, Park Hill, 5, 43, 60, 74; Foreman, Oklahoma Imprints, 17; Ballenger, "Restoration," 138.

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area as well as teachers and students at Park Hill Mission. Immediately after the wedding, the young couple traveled by horseback to Tullahassee for a wedding supper. Ann Eliza immediately set about learning Creek because only a small number of young people could attend the schools taught in English, and the missionaries needed materials in Creek in order that the people could become literate. She taught some classes in the mission school, but her major contribution was in her translations of the New Testament into Creek, Creek hymn books, and other works. Her contributions to Creek education was much the same as her father's had been for the Cherokees, although she did not have the same access to a press.

During the Civil War, the Robertson family went north for five years, including a stay in Kansas where her husband was in charge of the Indian Orphan Institute at Highland. When they returned to the Creek Nation and Tullahassee, the mission was in a state of disrepair. William was appointed superintendent of the mission. Ann Eliza was in charge of the supervision of the domestic arrangements for the institution, which was a boarding school. In spite of these duties and ill health, she managed to work on her translations. In 1880, the mission burned, and near the end of the rebuilding process, William died. He was buried in the Park Hill Mission Cemetery. Ann Eliza and her daughters ran Tullahassee for a short time until another superintendent was sent out by the Presbyterian Board. Ann Eliza lived with one or another of her daughters from that time. Wooster University in Ohio awarded her with an honorary doctorate in 1892, making her the nations first woman recipient of such a degree, and the second woman in the United States to be so honored. She had tremendous influence on the pupils at the mission school, including at least one future chief of the Creek Nation. She died in 1905 and is buried in the Park Hill Mission Cemetery next to her husband and near the graves of her parents.

William Schenk Robertson – William S. Robertson was born January 11, 1820 at Huntington, Long Island, New York. He was the son of Reverend Samuel and Dorcas Robertson. He earned a Master of Arts degree in 1843 from Union College in Schenectady, New York. He volunteered for the mission field in 1849. He was assigned to become a teacher and missionary at Tullahassee Mission near present-day Muskogee, Oklahoma, which was still under construction. He reached the mission on July 1, 1849. This mission was a boarding school for both boys and girls. On April 15, 1850, he married Ann Eliza Worcester, the daughter of Samuel Austin and Ann (Orr) Worcester. William set about producing a reader in Creek with David Winslett, a Creek. The first edition of the first primer was published in 1856, with a second edition in 1867. The second primer was produced in 1871. He had also studied classical languages, and worked on the first rough translations of the New Testament in Creek, which his wife and other collaborators refined. Because of an interest in natural history begun as a boy, he also collected plants and animals to be sent east for study by a life-long friend, entomologist Asa Fitch.

During the Civil War, the Robertson Family fled first to Winneconnee, Wisconsin, where William's father was a missionary preacher. After teaching in Illinois, he took his family to Kansas where he took charge of the Indian Orphan Institute near Highland. At Highland, William became an ordained minister. After the war, they returned to Indian Territory at the request of the Creeks, and William became superintendent at Tullahassee. After the damage to the buildings was repaired, the school reopened. In 1872, the purchase of a small printing press allowed the

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Robertsons to produce a bilingual newspaper, *Our Monthly*. William's support allowed his wife to continue her studies and translation into the Creek language in spite of family and mission obligations, as well as poor health. In 1880, Tullahassee burned. William supervised the rebuilding at Tullahassee while ill, but died on June 26 1881.

Among the other individuals known to be buried in the cemetery outside of the Worcester plot are:

*Lydia Lowrey Hoyt*, a daughter of Major George Lowrey, a Cherokee and his wife Lucy Bengé Lowrey born in 1803, on the Tennessee River. George Lowrey was elected an Assistant Chief in 1843 and 1847. Before removal, Lydia was educated at Brainerd Mission, Tennessee, where she joined the Presbyterian Church on January 31, 1819. She wrote the first hymn in the Cherokee Language. She married Milo Hoyt, son of Reverend Ard Hoyt, an ABCFM missionary. She died in 1862.

*Caleb Covel*, was a missionary teacher who died September 22, 1850, at the age of 33 years.

*Austin Worcester Foreman* and *Erminia Nash Foreman*, children of Reverend Stephen Foreman. Their graves do not have headstones.

*Charles M. Delano* was born in 1812. He was the last superintendent of the Cherokee National Female Academy before the Civil War. He died April 25, 1861. Although he is buried outside of the Worcester plot, his tombstone has been moved inside the iron fence.

*Reverend Hamilton Balentine* was born in 1817 in Pennsylvania. He was a missionary for 28 years among the Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws and Cherokees. He died on February 21, 1867.

A number of plain, uninscribed headstones are scattered through the cemetery. Many of these are probably mission personnel and students, some of whom died in a cholera epidemic.

Conclusion

The Park Hill Mission Cemetery, sometimes referred to as the Worcester Cemetery, is significant in the areas of Exploration and Settlement, in Politics and Government, and in the history of the Cherokee Nation. Two persons of transcendent importance in the history of the Cherokee people are interred within the boundaries of the cemetery – Elias Boudinot and Reverend Samuel Worcester. These men were among the most influential in shaping the course of the Cherokee Nation, but no extant sites in Indian Territory can be attributed directly to them. This, along with its age, help the Park Hill Mission Cemetery meet Criteria Consideration D under the guidelines of the National Register. The cemetery meets Criteria A and B, for its association with Worcester and Boudinot, under the areas of significance mentioned above. While there have been some modern intrusions in the cemetery, notably historical

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markers telling the significance of the people interred within, the site retains excellent integrity and has not had a  
burial since the last Worcester daughter in 1905.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Located in the E ½, SW ¼, SW ¼, NW ¼, Section 22, Township 15 North, Range 22 E, consisting of approximately five acres. The property is bounded by a fence.

Justification

Contains the known burials of persons of importance. Other, unknown and unmarked burials may be beyond the marked boundary.



# Park Hill Mission Cemetery Cherokee County, Oklahoma

