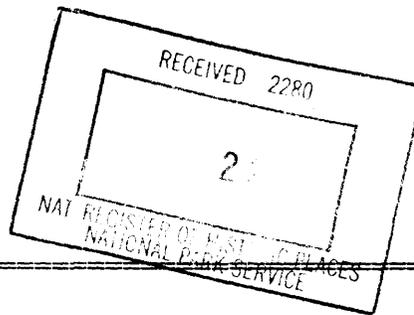


880

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



1. Name of Property

historic name Strother Memorial Chapel

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 1201 Van Drive not for publication N/A  
city or town Seminole vicinity N/A  
state Oklahoma code OK county Seminole code 133 zip code 74868



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

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

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: RELIGION Sub: religious facility  
FUNERARY cemetery  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION Sub: religious facility  
FUNERARY cemetery  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE NINETEENTH AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS:  
Gothic Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/Sandstone  
roof ASPHALT  
walls STONE/Sandstone  
\_\_\_\_\_  
other BRICK  
\_\_\_\_\_

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)

ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance 1928

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8. Statement of Significance (Continued)

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Significant Dates 1928

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

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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Acreege of Property Less than one acre

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>14</u>	<u>710640</u>	<u>3901250</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

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name/title James H. Fowler, II, Ph.D. Emeritus Chair, Social Science Division, Seminole State College

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

street & number 2319 Grisso Drive telephone 405-382-5906

city or town Seminole state OK zip code 74868-2628

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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 The City of Seminole

street & number 401 N. Main telephone 405-382-4330

city or town Seminole state OK zip code 74868

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 9

Strother Memorial Chapel  
Name of Property  
Seminole County, Oklahoma  
County and State

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SUMMARY

The Strother Memorial Chapel was constructed in 1928. It was funded by the daughter of O. D. Strother who was one of the fathers of the oil industry in Seminole. Before his death, he had expressed an interest in beautifying the Maple Grove Cemetery. The Chapel is an excellent example of Gothic Revival architecture. Its sandstone structure, four prominent turrets, and large chimney make it the centerpiece in Seminole's Maple Grove Cemetery. The cemetery itself is located at the corner of Strother Avenue and Boren Boulevard in Seminole, Oklahoma. The exterior of the building is in excellent condition and there has been very little alteration to it since it was built.

DESCRIPTION

The chapel is rectangular in shape with its long axis oriented north and south. It is situated in the center of Maple Grove Cemetery and is surrounded by a paved driveway, Blackburn Circle. The Strother family plot is located to the south of the chapel and is flanked by juniper bushes.

The Strother Memorial Chapel is an interesting version of a Gothic Revival style building. Unlike typical religious buildings designed in the Gothic Revival, the chapel does not follow the "pointed" subtype of the style, instead following a more literal interpretation of the Gothic style. The chapel resembles more a fortress, with crenellated round towers at each corner. It is constructed of buff-colored sandstone, rough cut and laid up in a random ashlar. Mortar joints are extruded and fenestration is highlighted with brick sills and lintels. The building has parapet walls that obscure the low, hipped roof. A prominent chimney dominates the south façade.

The south façade of the chapel faces the entry to the cemetery. It is highlighted by a large, shouldered chimney centered between the two towers. The chimney is approximately seven feet wide and projects out from the wall about eighteen inches, rising to a point about a foot above the parapet where it narrows to about four feet square. It is capped by a soldier course of red brick and features two smooth clay chimney pots. A wrought iron "S" is centered above the parapet and a plaque is centered in the body of the chimney. The plaque reads "Dedicated by Susan A. Simpson in Memory of Her Beloved Father O.D. Strother 1928." Flanking the chimney are sets of paired steel casement windows, each with ten panes. Between the paired sets and each corner tower are single steel framed casements. Both the paired and single windows feature red brick, soldier course lintels and header sills. Above the windows, set into the stone walls at regular intervals (disguising the roof support system) are sets of three bricks. These decorative inlays alternate between soldier course and stack course. The wall is capped with concrete and a continuous sill of red brick surrounds the building.

The towers are located at each corner and are identical. They are round, tapering slightly from a heavy base to the crenellated cap. Each tower features three narrow windows. Each window is at a different level, following a helical

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Strother Memorial Chapel  
Name of Property  
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pattern from top to bottom. They are narrow, with lintels and sills consisting of only five bricks. The crenellated cap on each turret rises about five feet above the parapet wall, but all are overshadowed by the chimney.

The west façade features a central entry consisting of paired doors. The doors are steel slab doors, replacing the original wood doors. Above the doors, the parapet steps up. Centered in the raised parapet is a coat-of-arms created using brick headers to outline a shield and a crest. A brick header course also forms an ogee arch over the entry. Flanking the entry are triple steel casement windows. To the outside of these windows are round arch niches. The niches have header lintels with a soldier brick serving as keystone in the arch. The sills project and are supported by brick corbels. The niches contain statues of angels. Between the southern-most niche and the corner tower is a single casement window. Between the northern-most niche and the corner tower is a new steel door.

The north façade features a six bay arrangement. Two doors, separated by about two feet, are centered under a stepped parapet. Flanking the doors are paired casements and between those and the corner towers are single casements. The treatment and materials of these match the rest of the building.

The east façade is identical to the west. The central doors on this side have also been replaced.

The roof is hipped. It has newer asphalt shingles. It is unclear what the original material was.

The interior of the chapel features a fireplace at the south end. Heavy stone makes up the surround and the firebox has a low, pointed arch. There are built-in seats flanking the fireplace. The north end of the room has a stepped-up podium. A single round arch niche is recessed into the center of the wall behind the podium while entries to the two north towers flank it. Entries to the south towers are behind interior walls that define the fireplace nook. The ceiling is vaulted and has been repaired recently. The original plaster had collapsed. The floor is tile.

To the south of the chapel is the burial plot for O.D. Strother. His white granite headstone features carved garlands and is flanked by stone flower urns. A smaller, almost flat stone marked "Father" lies at the foot of the plot. The entire plot is surrounded by a marble curb with two additional flower urns marking the "entrance." The family name is carved into the curb at the entrance.

Just east of the chapel stands a wooden information kiosk. Capped with gabled roof, this new kiosk contains plot maps of the cemetery, allowing those unfamiliar with the layout to find where burials are located. This structure is noncontributing.

The Strother Memorial Chapel retains a high degree of integrity. Years of neglect have necessitated the rehabilitation of the interior and the replacement of the main doors. The work was done sympathetically and does not detract from the historic integrity of the building.

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Strother Memorial Chapel  
Name of Property  
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Strother Memorial Chapel is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its architectural significance in the city of Seminole. Although designed for use as a religious facility, its primary significance is architectural, meeting the requirements of Criteria Consideration "a." It is an unusual example of a twentieth century Gothic Revival style building. In addition, from visual surveys of all communities in Seminole County, it is the only example of this kind of architecture in the County. There are three, simplistic examples, all churches. The Chapel is a rare, castellated subtype of Gothic Revival, unique to the area. Its exterior design, in particular, is an important asset to the community and to the county. It is a beautiful center point to Seminole's main cemetery and has come to symbolize the cemetery for the citizens of Seminole.

Historical Background

The town of Seminole was originally established in 1890 around the Mekusukey Indian mission in Seminole County. The contractor for the mission was Joe Tidmore; the community that grew up around the mission became known first as Tidmore's and eventually as Tidmore City. In 1906, because of the location of the Rock Island Railroad, the buildings of the town were loaded on sleds and moved one mile north and one mile east of the mission creating the nucleus for the modern day city of Seminole.

In 1907 the U.S. Postal Service renamed the post office to Seminole.

The town of Seminole remained a quiet agricultural town until 1926 when Fixico Number One discovery well came in producing more than 6,000 barrels of oil per day. This was the first well in the now famous "Greater Seminole Oil Field." The stage was set immediately for an oil boom that hit the area. According to the census the population of Seminole in 1907 was 207. By 1930 the number of people in Seminole had grown to 11,459. But if the number of people in oil camps around Seminole had been counted it is estimated that there were 150,000 people in the area. More than 100,000 of these received their mail through the Seminole Post Office. The Rock Island Railroad reported that for a six month period during 1926 it did more than a million dollars worth of business in Seminole.

Oil was the impetus for Seminole's growth and the man who first envisioned an oil boom in the area was O.D. Strother. A shoe salesman by trade, Strother was convinced that there was oil in the Seminole area after reading a report by the United States Geological Survey in 1892. After restrictions for purchasing Indian lands were lifted, Strother began to purchase allotments in areas he thought had potential. By 1917, he owned around 5,500 acres.

In 1917, Strother organized the Home Stake Oil and Gas Company and began to sell shares in order to finance drilling on his land. During the first half of the 1920s, a number of wells were sunk, but all turned out to be dry. As it turned out, oil was there, just deeper than Strother had anticipated. O.D. Strother died on March 17, 1926. Four months

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Strother Memorial Chapel  
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later, Fixico Number One came in. Strother's dream was fulfilled; one of his leases, Strother A, produced over 12 million barrels, the richest quarter section in the Seminole Field.(1)

Before his death, Strother had expressed an interest in beautifying the Maple Grove Cemetery. Maple Grove Cemetery began in 1908 with the burial of Glenn Billington. It was incorporated into the City of Seminole in 1926. Today it encompasses 24.06 acres between Van Drive on the North and Strother Ave. on the South and between Harding St. on the East and Harber St. on the West. In 1928, Strother's daughter, Susan A. Simpson carried out his wishes, building the Chapel for \$25,000. An excerpt from the speech Mrs. Simpson gave at the dedication of the building notes O.D. Strother's place in local history: "...I realize that my father was highly honored; that his place was in the center of the community; that his prominence was second to none; and that as his life was centered in the town of Seminole, so shall his grave be in the center of his last resting place; so shall this building, which has been erected to his memory, be used by you, his friends, as an assembly place where the last rites may be had and where the last tribute paid..." (2)

By the 1990's The Chapel had fallen into disrepair. The City of Seminole started using it to store lawn equipment, etc. The Preceptor chapter of Beta Sigma Phi attempted to renovate the Chapel but quickly discovered that it was not within their means. Most of the three hundred window panes needed to be replaced; the frames were retained. The walls and ceiling had major cracks. The floors were covered with oil and grease from the equipment stored and the stage was completely rotted out.

To solve these problems concerned citizens created the Maple Grove Cemetery Association. Due to the efforts of this group, who raised \$20,000 for the project, the glazing in the windows has been replaced, the stage rebuilt, and the roof and walls repaired. In addition, the Association purchased some pews and had others donated in order to refurbish the Chapel. The interior has been painted white and a large wooden cross has been installed up front. While still owned by the City of Seminole, today it is fulfilling its original function: i.e., as beautiful place to have funeral and memorial services. Since its rededication in 1998, the Chapel also serves as the focal point for the City's Memorial Day services.

#### STROTHER MEMORIAL CHAPEL, ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Strother Memorial Chapel replaced an older chapel that had existed on the same site when the cemetery was opened in 1908. The Chapel is an excellent example of late nineteenth-early-twentieth century Gothic Revival architecture. Its sandstone structure, four prominent turrets, and large chimney make it the centerpiece in Seminole's Maple Grove Cemetery.

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1 Hettich, Judy, National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Home Stake Oil and Gas Company Building, February, 1985. On file at the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office.

2 "Daughter Presents memorial in Honor of her Father," *Seminole Morning News*, Vol. 1 No. 164, Thursday, May 32, 1928, p. 1

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Strother Memorial Chapel  
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Strother Memorial Chapel is unlike any other building in Seminole. For the most part, the churches of the town are versions of the Late Gothic Revival, simply executed in brick and featuring pointed arch or ogee arch windows. The Strother Memorial Chapel is more academic in its approach to the style. The prominent chimney and crenellated turrets reflect the medieval roots of the Gothic style. The castellated Gothic Revival was at the height of its popularity in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century. Primarily seen in domestic architecture, the style also showed its impact in commercial and religious buildings of the day. Twentieth century versions of this subtype of the Gothic Revival are rare, and the Strother Memorial Chapel is an excellent example.

As executed in the Strother Memorial Chapel, the Gothic Revival reflects medieval roots. The rough stonework and the four prominent turrets hearken to an age of fortresses and castles. The term "gothic," literally meaning "of the Goths," was coined during the Renaissance to refer to those activities and objects that reflected the less enlightened era of the pre-Renaissance period. It was a derogatory term, meaning backward or old-fashioned. As the Renaissance looked toward classicism in art and architecture, the pointed arches of cathedrals and especially the fortress-like qualities of many buildings fell out of disfavor. It was the Romantic period of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century that brought these old styles back into favor. The Gothic Revival was popularized in the United States by Andrew Jackson Downing and swept the country prior to the Civil War, especially in domestic architecture. Variations included frame and masonry versions, most often with pointed arches being the central decorative theme. A few featured towers or turrets. It is this subtype that the Strother Memorial Chapel follows.

After the Civil War, the Gothic Revival waned in popularity in domestic and commercial architecture, but remained the most popular style in ecclesiastical design for the next eighty years. Strother Memorial Chapel remains in that trend, while the designer elected to choose a more esoteric variation on the style.

The Strother Memorial Chapel is unique in terms of style in Seminole. It is the only example of a castellated gothic Revival style building in the city. It reflects a period in architecture in which European styles were being revived and were at the height of their popularity. The Chapel retains a high degree of historic integrity and reflects well the trends in architecture during the oil boom of the 1920s. It is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. It is a building utilized primarily for religious services, but is significant for its architectural design, meeting Criteria Consideration "a."

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Sections 9, 10 Page 14

Strother Memorial Chapel  
Name of Property  
Seminole County Oklahoma  
County and State

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Seminole County Assessors Office, Wewoka County Courthouse, Wewoka, OK

“Dr. Harber Accepts Gift of Simpsons,” *Seminole Morning News*, Vol. 1 No. 164, Thursday, May 32, 1928, p. 1

“Daughter Presents Memorial in Honor of Her Father,” *Seminole Morning News*, Vol. 1 No. 164, Thursday, May 32, 1928, p. 1

Hettich, Judy, National Register of Historic Places nomination form: Home Stake Oil and Gas Company Building, February, 1985 (listed in National Register, 5/14/86), on file at SHPO

McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses (New York: Alfred A. Knopf) 1994

R. S. Trippit Family (Strother Family)  
4623 S. Victor, Tulsa, OK 74105

Cheryl Phillips, “Strother Family Presides at Chapel Dedication,” *The Seminole Producer*, Vol 72 No. 62, Tuesday, May 26, 1998, pp. 1,8

Stu Phillips, “Strother Chapel,” <<http://www.seminoleoklahoma.com/museum/strotherchapel.htm>>

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Platted out of SW 1/4, SW ¼ Section 21-Township 9 North-Range 6 East, Harber Addition  
At the intersection of Center Lane and Blackburn Circle and completely encompassed by Blackburn Circle.

BOUNARY JUSTIFICATION

This is the section of the cemetery historically associated with the Strother Memorial Chapel.