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Form 10-300  
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Oklahoma
COUNTY:	Okfuskee
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	

#### 1. NAME

COMMON:  
Boley, Oklahoma Historic District

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Boley Historic District

#### 2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Boley

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Second

STATE: Oklahoma

CODE: 40

COUNTY: Okfuskee

CODE: 107

#### 3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	_____	_____

#### 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
Multiple Public and Private / Contact - Mr. L. G. Ashley, Superintendent

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Boley Public Schools

CITY OR TOWN: Boley

STATE: Oklahoma

CODE: 40

#### 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Okfuskee County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Okemah

STATE: Oklahoma

CODE: 40

#### 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
None known

DATE OF SURVEY:

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Oklahoma

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ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The historic structures of the Boley, Oklahoma, Historic District are as follows:

Antioch Baptist Church - Originally built in 1905 and then reconstructed on the same site in 1929 by W. L. Jones, this red bark-textured brick church has wood windows with colored glass. Its concrete basement walls are treated with stucco, and a bell tower sits atop the building.

Oliver Building - Built in 1910, this building was originally used as a grocery and feed store. It is now a Masonic Lodge. Built of native stone with a wood and glass front, it has plastered walls, a concrete floor, and a corrugated iron canopy.

Watson Building - The lower part of this building was built in 1915 and served as a grocery store. The upper part of the structure was built in 1920 and was a hotel managed by Tom Williamson. Presently the entire structure is used as an American Legion Hotel. It is two stories with reinforced concrete, a wood and glass front, and wood double-hung windows. The lower story is stone while the upper part is red brick.

Cozine Building - Built in 1910, this one story concrete block structure was originally a grocery store but is presently a pool hall. It has a wood and glass front with a concrete floor.

T. L. Wood Building - Originally a dry goods store and presently the town's City Hall, this one story red brick structure has a wood and glass front and concrete floor.

Masonic Hall - Built in 1915 as the Masonic Hall, this building is presently the town's Post Office. Originally three stories, it is now a one story structure whose old window openings are filled with concrete block. The north side is red brick while the south side is brick and concrete with metal windows.

Farmers and Merchants Bank Building - Built about 1920, this one story red brick structure with a wood and glass front has buff brick and limestone trim. It operated as the Farmers and Merchants Bank until 1932 when it was robbed by part of the Pretty Boy Floyd Gang. It was reorganized in 1932 as the Farmers State Bank and functioned as such until 1962. It is presently a warehouse.

Turner's Pharmacy Building - Built in 1910, this building was a pharmacy but is presently vacant. It is one story, ornamented with a front of steel beam over wood and glass. It is red brick with buttered mortar joints. The ceiling is stamped metal and the walls are plaster. The floor is wood as is the frame of the roof.

T. M. Haynes Building - Built in 1909, this building was originally a mercantile establishment on the lower floor and a telephone office and rooming house on the upper floor. It is presently occupied by the M. W. Lee Manufacturing Company. Originally having a wood and glass front, it is presently red brick with buff brick trim.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**3. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1903 to present**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	<u>Afro-Am. History</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Boley, Oklahoma, located in the central part of Okfuskee County, is an all black town founded in 1903. The town, named for a white official of the Fort Smith and Western Railway who had encouraged its development, began as a camp of black railroad construction hands. The townsite was a propitious one for starting an all black community because it was located on fertile farm land which had been allotted to the Creek-Freedmen. Many of these families, the Barnetts, Walkers, Graysons, and Johnsons to name a few, became the new town's leading citizens. Thomas M. Haynes was chosen as the townsite manager, and the town building began on 160 acres which belonged to Abigail Barnett McCormick who inherited the land from her father James Barnett, a Creek-Freedman. Additions were made to the original site until it comprised about three hundred acres.

By means of a massive advertising campaign, T. M. Haynes publicly announced the purposes of the town and invited blacks to come and settle there. Boley was portrayed as a haven from oppression and a place where blacks could govern themselves. Black people from Georgia, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida began moving to Boley and on September 22, 1904, a formal opening of the town was held. On March 30, 1905, T. M. Haynes, H. C. Caviel, and Hilliard Taylor presented a petition for incorporation signed by 200 of Boley's citizens to the Western District of the Federal Court at Salpulpa. The petition was heard and granted on May 10th and immediately thereafter the first election of town officials was held. Mr. T. B. Armstrong was elected mayor; Mr. James Watkins, clerk; and Mr. T. R. Ringo, city justice. The election was enthusiastically supported by the town's inhabitants, many of whom had never been able to participate in a political process before. Booker T. Washington, after a visit to Boley in 1905, declared that it was, "the most enterprising, and in many ways the most interesting of the Negro towns in the United States." The Boley Progress, the town's first newspaper, did much to sustain interest in the city's growth and prosperity. New residents continued to arrive and settle in Boley until the Commercial Club of Boley in its booklet, Facts About Boley, Oklahoma, was able to boast of a town population of 4,000 in 1911. Boley's commercial district in 1911 included one bank (the number later grew to three); five grocery stores; five hotels; seven restaurants; four cotton gins; three drug stores; one jewelry store; four department stores; two livery stables; two insurance agencies; an undertaking establishment; one lumber yard; two photographers; and an ice plant, to name only some of the town's businesses. The sidewalks throughout the city

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Commercial Club of Boley. Facts About Boley, Oklahoma. 1911.  
 Hill, Mozell. "The All-Negro Communities of Oklahoma." Journal of Negro History,  
 Volume 31, July, 1946.  
 Iles, R. Edgar. "Boley." Opportunity, Volume 3, pp. 231-235, 1925.  
 Katz, Loren William. The Black West. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Com-  
 pany, Inc., 1971.  
 Teall, Kaye M. Black History in Oklahoma. 1971.

(PARTIAL LISTING)

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES					
CORNER					LATITUDE			LONGITUDE		
				Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	
NE:	14.7284	30.3930	800	is						
NW	SE:	14.7284	30.3930	"	0		0			
NE	NW:	14.7281	30.3930	"						
SE	SW:	14.7282	30.3930	"						
SW				"						

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **34.5**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
 Marcia M. Greenlee, Historical Projects Director

ORGANIZATION: Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation

DATE: 27 Sept. 1974

STREET AND NUMBER:  
 1420 N Street, N. W., Suite 101

CITY OR TOWN: Washington, D. C. 20005

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ CODE: 11

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE Oklahoma	
COUNTY Okfuskee	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

7. DESCRIPTION - page 2

Boley Bank and Trust Company Building - Constructed between 1906 and 1907, this building was originally a bank and is presently a cafe on the lower level with living quarters on the upper. It is two stories constructed with rock on the lower portion and red brick on the upper. There is a porch on the second story that stretches out over the sidewalk and the windows and door of the second floor are arched.

Frame Church Building - Built in 1904, this building was originally the site of the first school and community church in Boley being operated alternately by the Methodist and the Baptist denominations. It is presently the town's Christian Church. Wood framed with dropped siding, it has a pitched roof with roll roofing over wood shingles. The windows are point-topped and although most of the bell tower is gone, the lower portion remains with stone and concrete steps at the base of the tower.

Tieul Clothing Store Building - Built in 1921 as a clothing store, the building retains that function to the present. It is red brick with a stucco front. Its metal cornice and modern canopy were added later.

Site of Old Utility Plant - Although no longer extant, the power plant for the town was housed on this site and was a coal burning boiler whose steam provided electricity for lights and water pump. The destroyed building also housed the jail and the garage for the fire truck. While the site is vacant now plans are under way to construct a new jail and fire truck garage there.

Water Tower - Built in 1921 and no longer in use, this 80 foot high tower with a tank is supported by four trussed steel legs braced with sway bars. The tank is cone shaped on top and round on the bottom. The supply line from the bottom of the tank is exposed as are the bell and spigot pipe. The entire structure is painted silver.

The proposed boundaries for the 34.5 acre Boley, Oklahoma Historic District are as follows:

- Northern Boundary - Seward Avenue
- Eastern Boundary - Cedar Street
- Southern Boundary - Original southern boundary of city limits
- Western Boundary - Walnut Street

These fourteen structures, constructed between 1903 and 1921 are all that remain of the original business district of old Boley. The recent growth of the town has had little, if any, effect upon the character of the old business district. It is still considered by many of the town's senior residents to be as much the same as before.

STATE Oklahoma	
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(Number all entries)

8. SIGNIFICANCE - page 2

were constructed with cement and the streets were well lighted by the town's electric light plant. Outside the commercial area of Boley, the town's citizens were chiefly engaged in farming and stock raising for domestic use. Cotton was the greatest money product although corn, sweet and Irish potatoes were also grown in abundance. Horses, mules, hogs, and cattle were raised principally for home use.

Boley's social institutions and public buildings included numerous churches, schools, including a training school for black boys, and a Masonic Temple to which all black Masons in the state made a yearly pilgrimage. The assessed value of personal property, real estate, and corporations for the year 1911 was as follows: Personal property, \$84,170; Real Estate, \$232,254; Corporations, \$37,700.

Even though Boley was an all black town and devoted to the betterment of the race, at no time was it isolated from the larger community of Oklahoma or the nation. As the voting strength of Boleyites grew, they began to have a marked effect on the outcome of elections in their immediate area and the state at large. In many elections they held the balance of power. Most Boley residents were Republicans in a Democratic territory and, when their power became greater than whites wished it to be, they were disenfranchised by the institution of the notorious "grandfather clause" which Oklahoma added as an amendment to its State Constitution in 1910. This constitutional provision exempted from literacy tests all persons and lineal descendants of all persons who had the right of franchise as of January 1, 1866. Since almost all blacks were nonvoters on that date, literacy tests would in effect only be applicable to them. Political strife, in fact near riots, occurred as Boleyites sought to defend their right to vote and their right to self-government. The question as to whether or not this state provision met the federal test of constitutionality under the Fifteenth Amendment was decided by the Supreme Court in 1915. The Court, in Guinn and Beal v. United States, ruled Oklahoma's law unconstitutional. The state, bloody but unbowed, countered by a 1916 statute requiring that all persons who had been previously denied the franchise register within a twelve-day period. This law again, obviously applied only to blacks and because it was clearly designed to keep blacks from the polls, it too was declared unconstitutional in a Supreme Court decision, Lane v. Wilson, in 1939.

The failure of the cotton crops in the 1920s caused great economic difficulties for Boley in the 1920s. Many residents moved away and the migration of new residents came to a standstill. The crop failure, coupled with the Depression of the 1930s, dealt Boley a blow from which it never recovered. During the 1930s, times were so bleak for Boleyites that the population dwindled to about a thousand inhabitants as many of its townspeople moved to seek work in the nearby cities.

Oklahoma

Okfuskee

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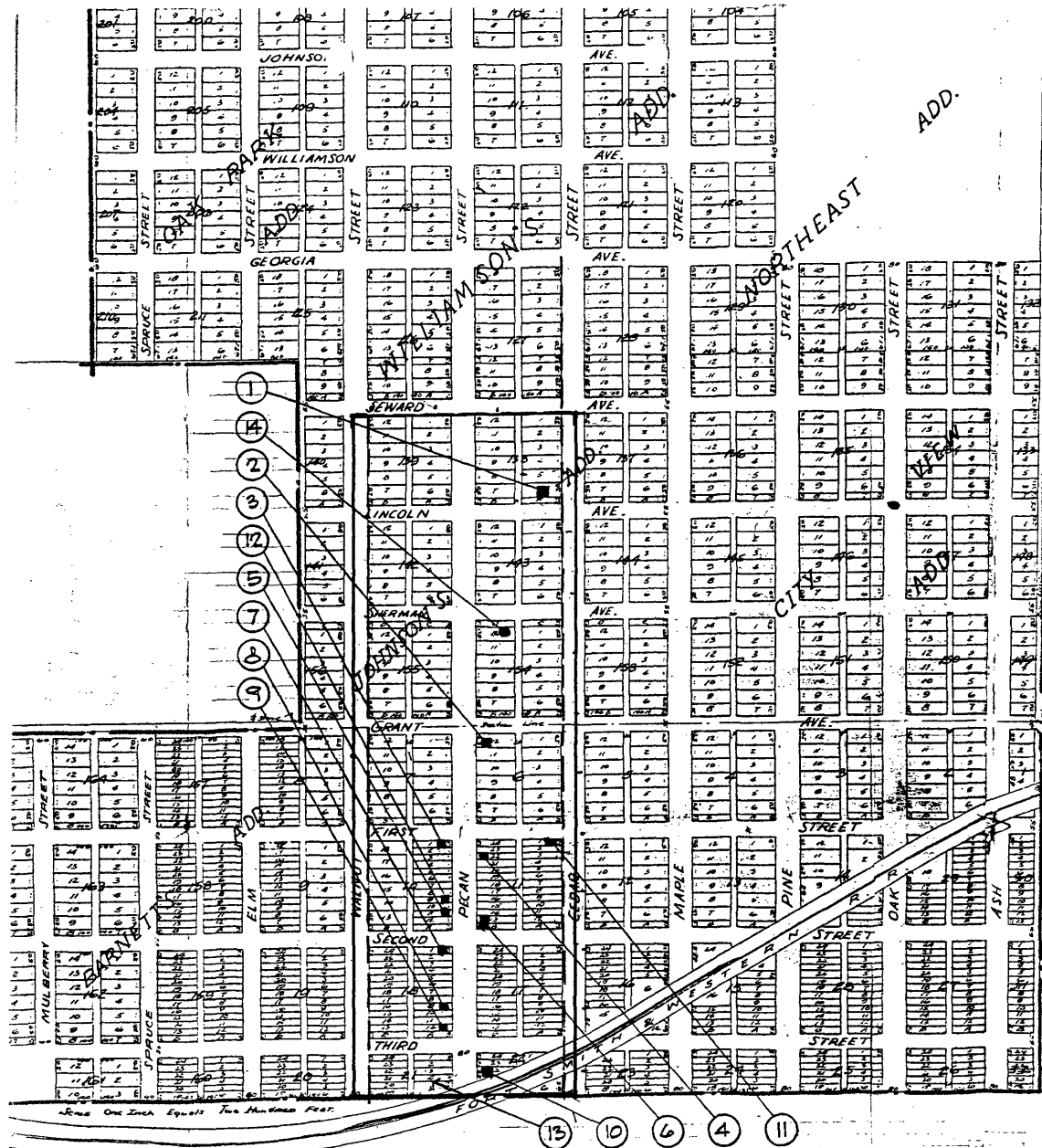
(Number all entries)

8. SIGNIFICANCE - page 3

On November 22, 1932, Boley was involved in an unsuccessful attempt by a contingent of Pretty Boy Floyd's gang to rob the Farmers and Merchants Bank. The robbers, two white and one black, killed the bank president, D. J. Turner. They were in turn killed by H. C. McCormick, the bank's Assistant Cashier, and by officers and vigilantes who had assembled outside the bank. H. C. McCormick, who is still living as of this writing, later became a mayor of Boley.

In recent years, major events in Boley have included the World Championship Rodeo which has been held each June since 1961, and an annual September celebration to commemorate the founding of Boley. Boley now has a population of between 500 and 600 residents but its Chamber of Commerce and town officials are optimistic for the future as they seek to rebuild and preserve Boley.

Boley is of national historical significance because it is representative of the many towns established by blacks who migrated from the South to northern and western communities in hopes of escaping oppression and making new lives for themselves. It was the largest of the exclusively black towns in Oklahoma and probably the largest all black town in the United States. Boley's political strength was a major factor in Oklahoma's adoption of an amendment to its constitution disenfranchising blacks. This law later led to the historic Supreme Court decision in 1915, Guinn and Beal v. United States, declaring acts to disenfranchise blacks unconstitutional under the provisions of the Fifteenth Amendment. Boley, begun in an era of black oppression and segregation, is a symbol of the sacrifices and efforts of its early pioneers who sought to demonstrate the ability of black men to govern themselves.



# LEGEND

- OLD BOLEY BOUNDARY
- ① ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH
- ② OLIVER BUILDING
- ③ WATSON BUILDING
- ④ COZINE BUILDING
- ⑤ TIL WOOD BUILDING
- ⑥ MASONIC HALL
- ⑦ PARTNER & MERCHANTS BANK
- ⑧ TURNERS PHARMACY
- ⑨ T.M. HAYES BUILDING
- ⑩ BOLEY BANK & TRUST CO.
- ⑪ PRIME CHURCH
- ⑫ TIEUL CLOTHING STORE
- ⑬ ORIGINAL UTILITY PLANT SITE
- ⑭ ORIGINAL WATER TOWER

CLOSE-UP OF BOLEY, OK. HISTORIC DISTRICT