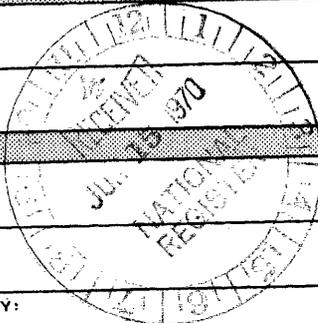


**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Oklahoma	
COUNTY: Pushmataha	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70-735-0007	DATE 7/24/70



1. NAME

COMMON:
Tuskehoma - Choctaw Council House
AND/OR HISTORIC:
Tushka Homma - Choctaw Capitol

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Sec. 14, T 2 N, R 19 E
CITY OR TOWN:
Tuskehoma (2 m. N)
STATE: Oklahoma CODE: 35 COUNTY: Pushmataha CODE: 127

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input 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 type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____
			<input type="checkbox"/> Comments <u>Now used but rarely</u>

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Choctaw Indian Nation
STREET AND NUMBER:
302 West Willow (Home of Principal Chief)
CITY OR TOWN:
Durant
STATE: Oklahoma CODE: 35

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Office of the County Clerk
STREET AND NUMBER:
Pushmataha County Courthouse
CITY OR TOWN:
Antlers
STATE: Oklahoma CODE: 35

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Oklahoma Historical Sites
DATE OF SURVEY: 1958
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Oklahoma Historical Society
STREET AND NUMBER:
Historical Building
CITY OR TOWN:
Oklahoma City
STATE: Oklahoma CODE: 35

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Oklahoma	FOR NPS USE ONLY
COUNTY: Pushmataha	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

 Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Ruins Unexposed

(Check One)

 Altered Essentially Unaltered

(Check One)

 Moved Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The last Capitol of the Choctaw Nation, serving as such from 1884 to the present, is an impressive red brick affair, approximately 70 x 70 feet square and 50 feet high, set on a native stone foundation. It has two full stories and a large mansarded attic.

Construction of a new capitol was authorized by the tribe's General Council in 1883. An amendment to the constitution read in part: "The seat of government shall be fixed at or about two and one-half miles east of old 'Nanih Waya,' and the first and all future sessions of the General Council shall commence on the first Monday of October, 1884, and each and every years thereafter and shall be held at 'Tushka Homma' aforesaid."

In the fall of 1884, editor R. M. Roberts of the Indian Journal at Muskogee, wrote: "The capitol building is the finest structure in the Territory and reflects great credit on the building committee and Mr. H. T. Jackman, the contractor. It is of brick, three stories with mansard roof, with ample room for the two branches of the Council, executive offices, supreme court room, offices of the different officials of the government and a committee, all furnished and curtained in an elegant manner, at a cost of over \$25,000.00, and the work all finished since last council which passed the bill moving it from old Armstrong Academy."

The first meeting of the General Council was held at the new capitol in 1884. It was used as the seat of tribal government until shortly after Oklahoma became a state in 1907. Today it is used officially but once a year, on Labor Day, when as many as 600 to 700 Choctaws gather on the landscaped grounds for a day-long picnic - to visit, to examine arts and crafts displays in the old council house, and to conduct tribal business affairs.

Basically the Capitol has not been altered. Years ago the bricks were painted. Some vinyl asbestos shingles have been added to the mansarded section. Half the roof has been covered with galvanized sheet iron. Recently, the Choctaw Nation Historical Society has been organized to develop significant Choctaw historical sites. The council house has been selected as its first project. The plan is to renovate and restore it to serve as a museum of Choctaw history and artifacts. An inspection by the Bureau of Indian Affairs determined that the building, despite the need for extensive repairs inside and out, was structurally sound and that its restoration, though costly (the upper floor is "in poor condition"), was feasible, especially in view of "the historical significance of the site and the building." Curiously, the preliminary estimate of the cost of restoring only the first floor of the council house -- which cost \$25,000.00 to build in 1883-1884 -- was given as something over \$32,500.00!

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

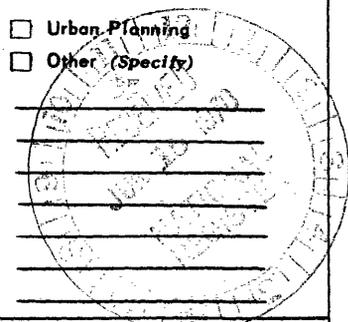
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1883 to present

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input 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 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

The Choctaw Council House is significant for several reasons. It served as the seat of government for the Choctaw Nation from 1884 to 1907, at which time the nation became a part of Oklahoma, the Union's 46th state. Since then it has served as a social and cultural center, a kind of physical rallying point for a proud people largely absorbed into an alien - and dominant - majority culture. Though it is one of four surviving capitols of the Five Civilized Tribes, it is the only one still owned by the tribe and used exclusively for tribal purposes. Finally, it was "the finest structure in the Territory" when it was built, according to a visiting newsman (Cf. No. 7) and it remains today an impressive structure, physically and - insofar as it represents tribal determination to maintain its identity as a people - geopolitically.

The Choctaws' first capital in Indian Territory was established about 1834 at Nanih Waya, about two and one half miles west of the present Capitol. A spacious log structure, completed in 1838, served as Capitol. The last meeting of the Council met there in 1849. From 1850 to 1883 the nation had no established capital. Then the present Tuskahoma building was authorized. (Nanih Waya means "mountain that produces" - from nunih meaning hill or mountain, and waya meaning to produce - according to Historian Muriel H. Wright. The name Tushkahoma, original form of Tuskahoma, means "red warrior" - from tushka meaning warrior and homma meaning red.)

Tuskahoma - the capital and capitol - witnessed much important Choctaw history. The throng that gathered there in October 1884 for opening of the new capitol was said to be the largest crowd ever to attend a meeting of the General Council. At that time Edmund McCurtain was inaugurated as new principal chief. Jack McCurtain, his brother who had served as chief since 1880, had died the year after this first meeting of the Council here and was buried in the cemetery in front of the new Council House. (Green, another brother, was the last elected chief of the Choctaws - they are now appointed by the President -

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ferguson, Kenneth J., President, Choctaw National Historical Society, Personal Letter & Other Material, dated May 21, 1970.
 Lewis, Dr. Anna, "Jane McCurtain," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. XI (1933) pp. 1025-1033.
 Wright, Muriel H., A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press) 1951, p. 105.
 ----, "Doctor Eliphalet Nott Wright," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. x (1932), pp. 267-286.
 ----, "Historic Spots in the Vicinity of Tuskahoma," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. IX (1931), pp. 27-42.

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		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 0 0	0 0 0		34° 38' 29"	95° 16' 51"	
NE	0 0 0	0 0 0				
SE	0 0 0	0 0 0				
SW	0 0 0	0 0 0				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: LESS THAN TEN

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Kent Ruth

ORGANIZATION: Oklahoma Historical Society DATE: May 1970

STREET AND NUMBER: Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN: Oklahoma City STATE: Oklahoma CODE: 35

12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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: [Signature]

Title: Region officer for archae

Date: 10-VI-70

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

[Signature]
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: JUL 28 1970

ATTEST:

[Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: JUL 8 1970

*No
UTM
HF*

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Oklahoma	
COUNTY Pushmataha	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 10-7-35-0007	DATE 7/28/70

(Number all entries)

No. 8. Significance

Tuskahoma - Choctaw Council House

serving from 1896 to 1900 and 1902 until his death in 1910. In all, four McCurtains were elected Choctaw chiefs. The father, Cornelius, served from 1850 to 1854.)

The capital (town) of Tuskahoma was hurt in 1887 when the St. Louis and San Francisco railroad built through the nation two miles to the south, where the town is today. But the Capitol remained. In 1892, the Tushkahoma Female Institute was opened. It operated there until destroyed by fire in 1925. Today only the three-story Capitol (and nearby cemetery) remains of historic significance. But announced plans for restoring the structure and establishing it as something of an official repository of Choctaw artifacts is encouraging. As such it will stand, if no longer as the political heart of an independent nation, then as a museum/memorial to a proud and talented people.

