

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

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historic name Grady County Courthouse

other names/site number _____

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2. Location

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street & number 326 West Choctaw Avenue not for publication N/A

city or town Chickasha vicinity N/A

state Oklahoma code OK county Grady code 051

zip code 73018

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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> 0 </u> structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 1 </u> objects
<u> 1 </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.) County Courthouses of Oklahoma (Thematic)

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>GOVERNMENT</u>	Sub: <u>courthouse</u>
<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	<u>correctional facility</u>
<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	<u>government office</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>GOVERNMENT</u>	Sub: <u>courthouse</u>
<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	<u>correctional facility</u>
<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	<u>government office</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Art Deco

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE:Shellstone

roof ASPHALT

walls STONE:Shellstone

other STONE:Shellstone

METAL:Aluminum

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)

Politics/Government

Architecture

Economics

Period of Significance 1935-1955

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8. Statement of Significance (Continued)

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Significant Dates 1935

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

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Layton, Smith and Forsyth, architects
Harmon Construction Company, general contractors

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 1 acre

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>14</u>	<u>59710</u>	<u>3879190</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
2	<u>N/A</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

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 Cynthia Savage, Architectural Historian

organization ARCH Consulting date October 2004

street & number 364 County Road 1230 telephone 405/459-6200

city or town Pocasset state OK zip code 73079

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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 Grady County Commissioners, Jack Porter Chairman

street & number 326 West Choctaw Avenue telephone _____

city or town Chickasha state OK zip code 73018

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SUMMARY

The Grady County Courthouse, located in Chickasha, Oklahoma, is a three-story building with a partial above-grade basement and a flat roof. Designed by the prominent Oklahoma architectural firm of Layton, Hicks and Forsyth, the building was constructed between 1934-1935 of Texas shellstone. The building is classified as Art Deco with a Classical Revival influence. The primary doors are original, double, aluminum, glazed slab with a transom and elaborate aluminum ornamentation. The only other secondary door in the historic courthouse is located on the west side and is a plain, aluminum, glazed slab. The historic, white, metal, awning windows were replaced in the late 1990s with dark, metal, three-pane, hung windows of the same overall dimensions. The windows have a narrow stone sill. There is a wide shellstone chimney with a metal vent located on the west side of the north elevation. The roof also has several antennae, towers and other vent fixtures. The building is embellished with fluted pilasters, a highly ornamented cornice and elaborate, abstract, low relief, sculpture panels above the doors and windows. Although of note within the local community, the ornamentation and other features of the building were typical of county courthouses constructed in Oklahoma in the 1930s.

In addition to the window alterations, the building has been modified by the construction of a rear addition on the back of the building and construction of a four-story jail which connects to the rear addition via an enclosed walkway. The rear addition, added in approximately the 1980s to provide limited additional space and an elevator, obscures only the center portion of the north side of the building, which historically was not ornamentally treated. The two- and three-story addition is constructed of concrete block, has a flat roof and a single, aluminum, glazed slab door on the north side. There are two metal, two-over-two, hung windows west of the entry with no other openings in the addition. The new concrete Grady County Jail and Sheriffs Office, constructed since 2000, is connected to the historic courthouse by an enclosed second floor walkway to the rear addition. The jail is located across the alley which historically separated the courthouse from properties on the north side of the block. Although considered one building for National Register purposes, the two are easily distinguished with the new jail impacting only the courthouses integrity of setting. The jail is currently four stories in height; however, there are plans to construct the fifth floor as originally designed. The main entry includes two aluminum, glazed slab doors with equal size sidelights and large transoms. Other entries include multiple metal slab doors and metal overhead doors. The windows in the new jail are narrow, fixed, one-over-one, metal with some openings completely filled with metal louvers. Although the modern four-story jail now overshadows the three-story courthouse, it is unable to match the architectural quality and opulence of the historic building.

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There is one noncontributing object located on the courthouse grounds. Directly west of the front stairs, there is a black marble stone which reads "One Hundredth Anniversary/Chickasha, Oklahoma/1992" and a metal flagpole, all of which rests on a large concrete foundation. There is a metal light fixture on the south side which lights up the marble stone and the flag pole at night. Constructed in the early 1990s, this object is noncontributing due to insufficient age. There are some non-permanent signs to the west of the flagpole and other parking signs around the north and west sides of the building. These are not included in the resource count due to their insignificant scale and nature. Around the northwest side of the original building, there are several small equipment structures and large heating and cooling units. Because all of these items are related to operations within the building and the majority of them are attached to the courthouse, they are not counted as separate resources within this nomination. Due to their much smaller scale, none of these items impact the integrity of the courthouse.

Unlike many courthouses in Oklahoma which occupied a central position on an entire city block in the central business district, the Grady County Courthouse has always occupied only the southwest quarter of Block 30 of the Original Townsite. Due to its size and elegance, the Grady County Courthouse has long been one of the dominant buildings on Choctaw Avenue. Although located off the downtowns main thoroughfare, the courthouse is located on the intersection of the three federal and state highways that have directed Chickashas transportation system since the late 1920s. The courthouse is situated on the front of its site, towards Choctaw Avenue. Consequently, the courthouse has limited grounds space. The placement of the county courthouse is similar to that of the United States Post Office and Federal Courthouse (NR 1994) in Chickasha, which is located directly southwest of the county courthouse. Unlike the courthouse which fronts onto Choctaw Avenue, the Federal Building faces onto North Fourth Street. Therefore, although on adjacent corners, the two buildings do not have much interplay.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The Grady County Courthouse is a three-story, shellstone building with a partial above grade basement. The use of Texas shellstone for construction material is notable. Although not immediately discernible, the shellstone adds to the visual diversity of the courthouse, particularly upon close inspection. Texas shellstone is ...a layer of sediment material created thousands of years ago as ancient sea bed, this fossilized stone is a precursor of limestone.¹

¹Shellstone Walls. Featured Exhibits: Detroit Zoological Society. <<http://www.detroitzoo.org/pages.asp?ID=72>>. Accessed

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Containing fossilized marine life, the building material is an interesting study in itself. Texas shellstone was widely used as a building material for years, and continues to be so. However, it is not the typical building material for courthouse construction in Oklahoma. While there are many limestone examples, the majority of Oklahoma courthouses are of brick.

Stylistically, the building is characterized as Art Deco, although the form of the building adheres closely to the Classical Revival style. The combination of the Classical Revival form with dominating Art Deco ornamentation was popular for public construction projects in the 1930s and early 1940s, particularly for projects funded by the Public Works Administration and courthouses. The Grady County Courthouse was designed by the Oklahoma City architectural firm of Layton, Hicks and Forsyth. Individually and collectively, the partners of the firm designed approximately twenty-five courthouses in Oklahoma, in addition to a multitude of other buildings. The Harmon Construction Company, also of Oklahoma City, was the general contractor for construction of the building, under the supervision of the Public Works Administration.

The Grady County Courthouse has a flat roof. The building features metal doors and windows. Historically, the courthouse windows were white, metal, three- and four-pane, awning. In the late 1990s, the windows were replaced with dark, metal, three-pane, hung windows of the same overall dimensions. The foundation of the building is Texas shellstone, matching the upper walls. On the southeast corner of the facade is the double, black, marble cornerstone. The cornerstones were laid in place in mid-December 1934 when the buildings concrete and steel framework was nearing completion. The south cornerstone reads GRADY COUNTY COURT HOUSE/BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS/ROY B. BOZARTH CHAIRMAN/HARDY GREEN MEMBER/SHERMAN CROUCH MEMBER DECEASED/EDWIN F. CAMPBELL ACTING MEMBER/GEORGE E. HURST COUNTY CLERK/ERECTED 1934 IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE/FEDERAL EMERGENCY ADMINISTRATION/OF PUBLIC WORKS/COL. PHILIP A. DONNELL STATE ENGINEER/LAYTON, HICKS & FORSYTH ARCHITECTS/HARMON CONSTRUCTION CO, BUILDERS. Below this is the three interlocked circle symbol of the IOOF. The east cornerstone reads LAID BY/THE MOST WORSHIPFUL/GRAND LODGE/A. F. & A. M./JOHN J. ALLAN/GRANDMASTER/A.D. 1934 A.L. 5934. Centrally located between the fourth and fifth line, is the Masonic Blue lodge emblem.

All four elevations of the building are divided vertically and horizontally in a form which is indicative of the Classical Revival style. All elevations are also symmetrical, another feature of classicism. The vertical divisions of the building basically consist of the components of the classical order. This

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includes the base which is composed of the partial above grade basement. The first through third floors of the building serve as the column. This is capped by the buildings large cornice which forms the entablature. The entablature is slightly stepped inwards, creating three steps above the main portion of the building. This pattern is repeated over the secondary entrance on the west side. In addition to the basic vertical division of the building into the components of the classical order, all elevations are divided horizontally into three bays. This consists of a larger central bay which is flanked by narrow side bays.

The ornamental detail on the south, east and west elevations is basically identical. Much of the decorative detail is carried around the edges of the north elevation but does not extend the entire rear elevation. The cornice of the building is ornamented with a low relief undulating pattern underneath a plain narrow band. The ripple pattern consists of a narrow recessed rectangle alternated by a wider rectangular projection. Below this is a wider plain band with a sharp-edged wave pattern under this. The frieze area of the upper wall is slightly different on each side of the building. However, over the narrow outside bays on each elevation is the same large floral and geometric design. The center element of this design, three long bands, extends upward to the bottom of the cornices uppermost undulating band. It is flanked by a floral ornamentation that reaches to the sharp-edged band on the bottom of the cornice. On either side of this is a smaller floral ornament which decorates the inside edges of the middle projected pilaster defining the side bays. The element starts immediately above the recessed third floor window header. Centrally located over the center bay in the frieze area on each elevation are inscriptions that reflect the purpose of the building. The facade simply proclaims GRADY COUNTY with three vertical bands to the outside and low-relief floral ornaments on either side of that. On the east side, over the multi-story courtroom windows, it reads THE FOUNDATION OF JUSTICE IS THAT/NO MAN SHALL SUFFER WRONG. The west side states THE SAFETY OF THE STATE/IS THE HIGHEST LAW. Both the east and west side inscription are flanked by square, recessed ornaments.

The center, or column area, of each elevation also shares similar decorative detail. Above the third floors in the center bay of each elevation is a low relief pattern consisting of two leaf-like designs facing each other to form a repetitive arch pattern. In the narrow side bays of the facade, this pattern is barely visible above the double third floor windows. The flanking bays on the side elevations do not contain this ornamentation as the windows below are only singles. Fluted pilasters vertically divide each of the center bays. The pilasters on the outside edges are narrower than the inside pilasters. The south elevation has six pilasters and the side elevations have four. The capitals of the pilasters are marked with an incised horizontal line and the

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bases of the pilasters are not fluted. The side bays are marked by slightly projected pilasters which are not fluted. Below the third floor windows in the middle bays on the south and west sides are highly ornamental, low-relief, floral and geometric, three-part panels. (See photograph 6). The windows in the center bay of the east elevation are continuous between the second and third floors. Between the second and first floor windows of the center bays are more elaborate low-relief panels. These panels are larger, spanning two windows each with matching designs above each window. The triangular panel contains mirror images of a large bundle of wheat flanked by two pumpkins. Five corn stalks rise up behind each of the bundles of wheat with seven half-shucked ears of corn along the lower forefront. The vertical shellstone dividers separating the double windows have three recessed rectangular notches starting at the top of the windows. The center element has notches on both sides. The dividers are slightly projected and visually distinct from the flanking pilasters. (See photograph 5). Under the third and second floor windows of the outside bays on each elevation are low-relief panels ornamented with three stepped triangles under a repetitive sharpened-edged oval pattern. Unlike the east and west elevations, there are separate panels under each of the double windows of the outside bays on the south wall. As stated above, the side windows on the east and west elevations are single. The basement windows are unadorned.

The main entry on the south elevation is elaborately ornamented. The double, aluminum, glazed slab doors themselves feature notable decorative detail with a geometric aluminum design covering the doors and an elaborate metal design ornamenting the transom area. Above this, a striking, low-relief, stone panel which features two central figures, one Puritan-influenced female figure holding a broad sword in one hand and the ear of a crouching, male, nude figure. The male figure is turned away from the female figure with scales above his head. Around the two central figures is an elaborate floral and geometric surround composed of elements from other panels on the building. On the east edge of the panel is a figure of a Colonial-style man with a long rifle. On the opposite side is a male Native American figure with an upraised, clenched fist, wearing a draped garment. Flanking the door are large shellstone side walls topped by ornate, aluminum light fixtures. The top flight of stairs is divided by a center, aluminum, decorative rail. Below the top flight of stairs is a large landing with green metal benches on the east and west sides. The benches are ornamented with a circular emblem with a seal and reading Grady County of Oklahoma 1907. The landing gives way to a shorter flight of stairs which has a matching center, aluminum, decorative rail and smaller shellstone sidewalls topped by urns.

The overall fenestration pattern of the facade is symmetrical. The center bay contains five openings per floor with the side bays only one. The second and

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third floor openings in the center bay are triple windows, separated by narrow shellstone bands. The second and third floor windows, however, are differentiated in that the third floor windows are one-over-one and the taller second floor windows are two-over-one. The first floor windows in the center bay of the facade are also two-over-one but they are simply double windows divided by wide shellstone dividers. In the narrow side bays, all of the windows are double with wide shellstone dividers. However, the third floor windows are one-over-one and the first and second floor windows are two-over-one. The basement windows are identical along the south elevation, being double, two-over-one, metal, hung windows. (See photograph 1).

The west side of the building fronts onto North Fourth Street, the primary north-south thoroughfare in Chickasha. Overall, the fenestration pattern is similar to the south elevation but on a smaller scale. The center bay contains only three sets of windows per floor. The third floor openings consist of three, shorter, one-over-one windows separated with a narrow shellstone divider. The second floor features three, taller, two-over-one windows, also separated with a narrow shellstone divider. The first floor of the west elevations center bay has three sets of double, two-over-one, hung windows separated by a wide shellstone divider. The side bays of the west elevation have only one window per floor. The third floor windows are one-over-one hung and the second and first floor windows are two-over-one hung. (See photograph 2)

The historic secondary entrance, allowing separate access for the Sheriffs Office, is located in the south bay of the west elevation. The entry consists of a single, aluminum, glazed slab entry with a large, square, aluminum, fixed transom. Since construction of the new jail and Sheriffs office, the door was painted with new signage which reads Phyllis Ray/Grady County/ASSESSOR/Please use front entrance. The shellstone door surround, covering the entire first floor of the southernmost bay, is projected and consists of three stepped pilasters. Immediately above the door are three vertical bands. On either side of the surround are elaborate, aluminum, attached light fixtures. A smaller, modern light fixture is affixed slightly below the historic north side light fixture and a ringer is located adjacent to the door on the north side. Set above grade at the first floor, the stairs to the entry narrow about a quarter of the way up. Beginning at the sidewalk, the shorter, wider set of bottom stairs have small, square, corner markers ornamented with three vertical bands. A wide landing, which connects to the sidewalk immediately around the building, gives way to a short flight of wide stairs with low wing walls. From a smaller, one-step landing extends the narrower main flight of stairs to the secondary entrance. These stairs have wide wing walls decorated with multiple horizontal incised bands. (See photograph 7).

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The east elevation is similar to the west elevation with differences only in the center bay second and third floor windows and there being no entry on the first floor. The second and third floor windows in the center bay are continuous, to light the interior main courtroom. The triple windows are three-over-one hung with narrow shellstone dividers. The remaining windows are identical to the west side windows. (See photograph 4).

Only the narrow side bays of the north (rear) elevation are decoratively treated to match the other elevations. The center bay is void of ornamental detail. The northwest corner is differentiated by the tall, shellstone chimney which projects notably above the flat roof. The chimney is ornamented with vertical bands that extend just over halfway up and a metal vent. The windows in the side bays match the double windows on the south elevations side bays. The center bay of the rear elevation is slightly obscured by the concrete block rear addition. The visible windows are paired, three-over-one, hung on the first and second floors and one-over-one hung on the third floor. On the west side of the addition only, two sets of paired, one-over-one, hung windows are visible in the cornice area. These windows historically lit the jury rooms on the third floor. The basement windows on the east side are one-over-one hung. West of the addition, the basement windows are hidden by various equipment sheds with one basement window containing only metal louvers. (See photograph 3).

Covering much of the rear elevation is the concrete block addition which was constructed in about the 1980s. The addition is three-stories on the east side and two-stories on the west. Both sides of the addition are flat-roofed. There are no window openings on the east and west sides of the addition. The north side of the addition has only a single, aluminum, glazed slab door with paired, one-over-one, aluminum, hung windows to the west. The entry is set within a one-story, shed-roofed section with the door inset to the west side. (See photograph 3).

Since 2000, a new Grady County Jail and Sheriffs Office has been constructed north of the original courthouse. The new jail is connected to the historic building via an enclosed, second floor walkway. The walkway allows easy, secure passage of prisoners between the courthouse and jail. The four-story jail is constructed of concrete panels with a flat roof. The building was designed to accommodate a fifth floor, which is under consideration for construction at this time. The jail is located across the original east-west alley dividing the block, on land that was not historically part of the courthouse grounds. The jail occupies the majority of the northwest quarter of the block and has multiple entrances. The main entry is located on the east side and consists of two recessed, aluminum, glazed slab doors separated and flanked by almost-equal size sidelights. The entry also has a large aluminum

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transom. The north elevation, fronting onto West Pennsylvania Avenue, is recessed and consists of a single, aluminum, glazed slab door with a large sidelight and transom. The north and east entries both are above-grade and have square, projected surrounds with concrete steps and black metal railings. The south elevation has a centrally-located, above-grade, flush, single, aluminum, glazed slab door with a large sidelight and transom. To the west of this entry is a second entry with a metal slab door. On the west, north and east elevations, there are also large, white, metal, overhead doors. On the west side, the door is located off-center, towards the north side. The overhead door on the north elevation is in the far-western corner and the east side door is in the northernmost corner. The majority of windows in the jail are narrow, fixed, one-over-one with some larger window openings filled with metal louvers. The windows filled with louvers are primarily located on the corners of the building. There is a chain link fence with razor wire around the mechanical units on the southwest side of the building. (See photograph 2, 3 and 4).

The grounds of the courthouse retain a high degree of integrity. Historically consisting of only the southwest quarter of the block, the grounds were confined to rectangular strips of grass along the east, south and west sides with small shrubs and plants planted in beds adjacent to the building. The grounds to the front and along the east side of the building maintain a high degree of integrity. In the early 1990s, a noncontributing object was located to the west of the front stairs. Consisting of a black marble stone and a metal flagpole resting on top of a tall, rectangular, concrete foundation, the stone commemorates the 100th anniversary of the community. The stone reads One Hundredth Anniversary/Chickasha, Oklahoma/1992. A metal floodlight is located to the south of the stone on the foundation in order to light both the stone and flagpole at night. The object is noncontributing due to insufficient age. The grounds on the west side of the building have been disrupted by placement of several large mechanical units and one small, free standing, wood equipment shed. Additional units and sheds are located on the north side of the building. None of the units or sheds extend above the above-grade basement level. Because all of the units and sheds are related to the mechanics of the building and the majority are attached to the courthouse, they are not counted separately for the purposes of this nomination. (See photograph 1, 2, 3 and 4).

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

Overall, the interior retains a high degree of integrity. The public spaces have maintained their historic features and finishes to a remarkable degree. There, of course, has been some change over the last seventy years, including the addition of a third courtroom and other modern amenities. The historic

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district courtroom remains nearly intact on the east side of the second floor. This includes the leather-covered doors, ornate aluminum grills and light fixtures, ornamental ceiling, plaster walls, marble wainscoting and wood furnishings. Importantly, the wooden wall sculpture carved by then-University of Oklahoma student Derald T. Swineford remains in place behind the judges bench. The Justice Tempered by Mercy carving, for which Swineford was paid sixty dollars, depicts an Ancient-dressed man and women. Both figures have one hand on a sword inscribed with the Ancient legal doctrine of An Eye for an Eye and a Tooth for a Tooth. Further ornamenting the courtroom are photographs of several judges and, hanging on the south wall, opposite of the Swineford sculpture, a painting of the famed Winnie Mae. Flown by Wiley Post on his famous Around the World Flights, the Winnie Mae was owned by Chickasha oilman F.C. Hall and named for his daughter. (See photographs 8 and 9) A second smaller, historic, county courtroom is located on the west end of the second floor. This courtroom has been modified with a dropped ceiling. A third courtroom has been added on the west side of the basement and has a dropped ceiling, modern furnishings and is awkwardly fashioned.

Another important area which has maintained an excellent degree of integrity is the mezzanine lobby. The lobby has an ornate plaster ceiling with stylized aluminum light fixtures; shellstone walls; marble wainscoting with elaborate aluminum grates; and, a marble floor. (See photograph 12) On either side of the lobby are the marble stairs which go down to the basement. The lobby has a second set of matching, double, aluminum, glazed slab doors with ornate metal work and transoms. These doors open onto the central marble stairs which lead to the first floor. Just inside the second set of doors, there is a black marble plaque inset on the west wall dedicated to County Commissioner Sherman Crouch, who was instrumental in construction of the new courthouse but passed away before the building was complete. The plaque reads SHERMAN CROUCH/WITH COURAGE, KINDLINESS AND/SIMPLICITY, HE SPENT HIS LIFE/IN LABOR ON THE LAND HE LOVED/AND IN UNSELFISH PUBLIC SERVICE/MEMBER OF/BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS/ 1933 GRADY COUNTY 1934. (See photograph 11) The marble central stairs has a decorative metal rail and a large landing. At the north end of the landing, an ornate metal grill serves as the entry to the County Clerk, Assessor and Treasurers offices which are aligned east to west with a common hallway. When these offices are closed, the grill fully covers the opening. The public spaces in these areas remain large open areas with dropped ceilings, modern office equipment and furnishings. (See photograph 10).

In addition to the newer courtroom and original vault and mechanical rooms, the basement contains a variety of small offices and restrooms, marked by historic, wood, glazed, paneled doors. Until recently, the third floor of the Grady County Courthouse was the county jail. The construction of the new Grady County Jail and Sheriffs Office has largely replaced the historic jail but the

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old jail has remained in use through 2004. The historic Sheriffs Office, located on the west side of the first floor and having its own secondary entrance, has been taken over by the Assessors Office.

ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS

Overall, the Grady County Courthouse retains a high degree of integrity. The building maintains its integrity of location, design, workmanship, feeling and association. The exterior of the building has been most notably altered by the modification to the windows in the late 1990s. The replacement of the historic, white, metal, awning windows with modern, dark, metal, hung windows is a visible change. However, as the size and pattern of the windows were not changed, this alteration does not destroy the ability of the building to convey its historic significance. Other alterations to the grounds of the courthouse, particularly the construction of the noncontributing object to the west of the stairs and addition of mechanical units on the west and north sides, does not significantly impact the courthouses integrity due to their negligible size.

The rear addition to the Grady County Courthouse also has little impact on the buildings integrity. Due to its location on the back of the building, which was not originally decoratively treated anyway, and its compatible size, the addition has no effect on the buildings conveyance of significance. The new, larger Grady County Jail and Sheriffs Office, which is connected to the historic courthouse via the rear addition, impacts the setting of the courthouse. Located across the historic alley which originally separated the courthouse from historic houses, the new, taller jail clearly overshadows the historic courthouse. However, due to the distance between the two, the different building materials and lack of architectural ornamentation on the jail, the jail does not impair the overall integrity of the courthouse.

The interior of the courthouse retains a notable degree of integrity, particularly for retention of historic materials in the public spaces. Changes have been made to the interior, most frequently to the ceilings of historic areas. Overall, the interior maintains its integrity of materials, workmanship, design, feeling and association to an excellent degree. The exterior, likewise, maintains its integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

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SUMMARY

The Grady County Courthouse is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. Completed in 1935, the building was designed by the architectural firm of Layton, Hicks and Forsyth and constructed using monies provided by the federal governments Public Works Administration (PWA). The period of significance extends from the buildings completion in 1935 through 1955, the current National Register fifty-year mark. The building remains in use as the county courthouse, although there is now a separate jail and Sheriffs office. As the county courthouse, the building is historically significant as the seat of county-level government and politics in Grady County. Additionally, under Criterion A, the courthouse is historically significant on the local level as a tangible example of the work projects financed by the PWA, a New Deal-era building program that helped revitalize the economy during the trying years of the Great Depression. Under Criterion C, the courthouse is architecturally significant as an excellent example of an Art Deco style, public building in Chickasha.

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Located in Indian Territory, the land on which Grady County and the community of Chickasha is situated was first part of the vast original Choctaw Nation, granted to the tribe in 1820 in the Treaty of Doaks Stand and covering much of what is now southern Oklahoma. Seventeen years later, the Chickasaws formed an alliance with the Choctaws and were largely removed to the Choctaw lands in Indian Territory by 1840. Quickly chafing at their incorporation into the Choctaw Nation, the Chickasaws began rallying for their own tribal domain. In 1855, the matter was resolved by the Choctaw-Chickasaw Treaty which divided the old Choctaw Nation into three areas. The Choctaw tribe retained the east one-third of their original lands in Indian Territory. The Chickasaw tribe gained their autonomy from the Choctaw tribe and the center one-third of the original Choctaw Nation in exchange for \$150,000 paid to the Choctaws. The final one-third of the old nation was perpetually leased to the United States government for \$800,000 with the Choctaws receiving three-fourths of the money and the Chickasaws the remaining \$200,000.²

²Tommy Wayne Stringer, *The Founding and Early Development of Chickasha, Oklahoma*, (MA Thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1971), 2-3. See also Arrell Morgan Gibson, *Oklahoma: A History of Five Centuries* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981), 48-49, 62, 75-76.

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The Chickasaws divided their lands into four counties, Tishomingo, Panola, Pontoc and Pickens. Pickens, the westernmost county, for the most part contained the area that now forms Grady County. In addition to historically significant Native American sites, Pickens County was also traversed by the Chisholm Trail. Beginning in the early 1870s, the Chisholm Trail brought people through Pickens County in greater number than ever before, the majority of which were heading cattle to markets in Abilene and Caldwell, Kansas from Texas. However, many others, intermarrying into the Chickasaw tribe, took up permanent residence in Pickens County, Indian Territory. With the number of ranches growing in Pickens County and more settlers arriving, the first communities in Pickens County were formed in the 1870s. This included the ghost communities of Silver City, Fred and Parr, among others.³

In 1890, the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific (Rock Island) Railway crossed the South Canadian River into Grady County, stopping at the point that became the town of Minco. Encountering difficulty spanning the Washita River to the south, road construction then halted for two years before completion of the north-south line across Indian Territory in 1892. Seeking a division point for the line between Caldwell, Kansas, and Fort Worth, Texas, the rail company unloaded a boxcar on land claimed by James L. Speed in April 1892. Thus, the community of Chickasha was off to a promising start with the critical support of the railroad.⁴

As part of the Chickasaw Nation, non-Native American settlement in Pickens County was restricted by the laws of Indian Territory. Speed, an intermarried citizen of the Chickasaw Nation, claimed the 160 acres that became the original Chickasha townsite under ...Indian laws that allowed an Indian to claim as his what did not infringe on the rights of others. Although of dubious legality, the Speeds sold the quarter section to the Chickasaw Townsite Company. The townsite was quickly platted by the company, which included James L. Speed and his wife Annie, as well as C.L. Campbell, C.B. Campbell, Joe Cordell, Edward Sehorn Burney and James Tuttle. Divided into ninety-four blocks, the company provided buyers with Quit Claim deeds. Many of the lots were actually given away as inducement to attract newcomers to Chickasha. Despite the uncertain legal title of the land, the community quickly flourished. By December 1892, the town population had reached 150 with several buildings, including a church,

³Ibid., 3, 6-7. See also Mary Hewett Bailey, *A History of Grady County*, (MA Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1937), 1-12.

⁴Ibid., 9. See also Irvin Munn, *Chickasha...A Journey Back in Time*, (Chickasha, Oklahoma: University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma Foundation, Inc, 1982), 16.

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a school, several grocery and drug stores and livery stables, as well as two newspapers.⁵

Development of the county and Chickasha community continued rapidly through the 1890s. By 1900, the county contained several permanent communities, the largest of which was Chickasha. At the time, Chickasha's population numbered 3,209. The legal questions surrounding land ownership in the county were relieved by the 1897 Atoka Agreement which provided for allotment of the Choctaw and Chickasaw lands. Under this agreement, land holders were given possessory rights to lots which allowed them to buy improved lots at half the appraised value and unimproved lots at 62.5 percent of the appraised value. In 1901, the Secretary of the Interior approved the townsite plat and, on 18 February 1902, Chickasha was declared a city of the first class by a federal judge.⁶

Previous to the Atoka Agreement, Chickasha was named an official federal court town for the Southern District of the Indian Territorial Court in 1895. With the advent of statehood in 1907, Chickasha was also named the county seat of the newly created Grady County. Both of these designations obviously enhanced the political and social position of the community which greatly aided economic development through the twentieth century.

In 1907, county population stood at 23,420. The three years following statehood swelled the county population to 30,309. In 1911, the county was enlarged by the addition of the townships of Dutton, Prairie Valley and Washington. Located west of the Ninety-Eighth Meridian, these communities were originally part of Caddo County. The voters in the townships, as well as both counties, approved the move at elections in April 1911. In June of that year, the county commissioners of both counties also sanctioned the change. Grady County paid

⁵Bessie Weedman, Chickasha, (N.P.: Available at the Oklahoma Historical Society Research Library, Chickasha Vertical File, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 14 May 1936), 2-4.

⁶Stringer, The Founding, 15. See also Weedman, Chickasha, 5; Gibson, Oklahoma, 194; and, Bessie Weedman, Chickasha History Continued, (N.P.: Available at the Oklahoma Historical Society Research Library, Chickasha Vertical File, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 2 June 1936), 1.

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\$463.31 to Caddo County ...in full settlement of any and all amounts due from the former to the latter by reason of the transfer.

Grady County continued to grow at a moderate rate through the 1910s. By 1920, county population stood at 33,943. The 1920s proved to be an explosive decade for Grady County as the number of county residents escalated to 47,638 in 1930, a jump of nearly 13,700 persons. Unfortunately, the 1930s were more difficult, due to the general economic distress wreaking havoc nationwide combined with the high tenancy rate on county farms, and the population dropped to 41,116 by 1940. The county continued to lose citizens through the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. County population dropped to 34,872 in 1950 and below the 1910 population by 1960 to 29,590. The 1960s were relatively stable with a marginal loss of 236 residents, bringing county population to 29,354. County growth accelerated in the 1970s, raising the 1980 population to 39,490. The upwards trend has continued for Grady County, as the 1990 population, coming in at 41,747, passed the 1940 population.

Throughout the twentieth century, Grady County relied heavily on its agriculture community for economic stability. In addition to cattle, major crops in Grady County included cotton, wheat, oats, broomcorn and forage crops of all kinds. Melons, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, vegetables and fruits began emerging as important crops in the 1930s. Dairying has also played an important role in Grady County throughout the decades. By the 1950s, the county led the state in dairy production income with a \$1.5 million annual revenue for Grade-A dairymen. Grady County continued to lead the dairy industry in Oklahoma through the twentieth century to the present day.

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Grady, Oklahoma Almanac,
<www.odl.state.ok.us/almanac/counties/grady.pdf> accessed 1
November 2004. See also Bailey, History of Grady County, 44.

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Grady, Oklahoma Almanac,
<<http://www.odl.state.ok.us/almanac/counties/grady.pdf>> accessed
1 November 2004.

⁹Chickasha, Oklahoma: Queen of the Washita Valley, (Chickasha, Oklahoma: Chickasha Chamber of Commerce, 1943), n.p. See also Chickasha, Available at the Oklahoma Historical Society Research Library, Chickasha Vertical File, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, n.d.), 3-4; Bailey, History of Grady County, 68; and, The Sunday Oklahoman, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 18 July 1954.

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With rail transportation readily available, several agriculture-related industries which operated for decades were quickly established in Chickasha, including the Chickasha Cotton Oil Company and Chickasha Milling Company. The designation of three federal highways through the town and county in the 1920s and 1930s further enhanced transportation facilities in the area, allowing greater industrial growth. By the 1930s, the town boasted two large cotton compresses, five cotton gins, six wholesale houses, a flour mill, several broom storage houses and broom factories, grain elevators and a cooperative milk plant, among other operations. All of these facilities reflect the continuing dominance of agriculture in Grady County through the twentieth century.¹⁰

From the 1920s onward, and particularly for the 1970s and 1980s, the oil and gas industry was another major economic factor in the county's development. Although not resulting in the overnight explosion experienced by other Oklahoma towns, Grady County benefitted for decades from nearby activity in the Cement Field, the Carter Knox Oil Field and Chickasha Gas Field.¹¹

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

As mentioned above, a federal court was established in Chickasha in 1895. By 1897, a private company, the Chickasha Improvement Company, completed construction of a two-story, red brick building for use as a federal courthouse. For the next fifteen years, the U.S. Government rented this facility on the northeast corner of Choctaw Avenue and North Fourth Street. Following statehood in 1907, the new Grady County offices temporarily located in the federal courthouse. The county subsequently moved to a building on North Third Street for a short period. Within a few years, officials in Washington, D.C., responded to the need for a new federal courthouse and post office in Chickasha. The Treasury Department began drawing plans for the proposed building in 1913 with construction being completed by 1915. Even before the new federal building was finished, county officials had arranged to purchase the old federal courthouse and had moved their offices back to this original location. In about 1914, the county also erected a separate red brick jail to the northwest of the courthouse. By 1918, the county had enlarged the federal building with a sizable, two-story, rear addition. The addition, unlike the

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

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original building, was fire-proof and provided office space for the district judge, county attorney, superintendent and treasurer.¹²

The old federal building continued in use as the county courthouse through the early 1930s. In 1930, voters failed to pass a bond issue to build a new courthouse ...by a close margin. Three years later, the county commissioners revived discussions for a new county building. Influencing the drive for a new building was the July 1933 report of the Assistant State Fire Marshall, Frank Davis. Due to the prevalent use of wood in the original building, Davis concluded this building (is) a very serious fire hazard.¹³

Although economic conditions within the county were significantly down from previous years due to falling property valuations and a constitutional amendment limiting the total levy for counties, cities and school districts, the county plans for a new courthouse were bolstered by the creation of the Public Works Administration (PWA) in June 1933. In an effort to assist citizens in distress and stimulate the national economy during the trying times of the 1930s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt legislated twenty-nine different acts between 1933 and 1939. Collectively, these bills formed President Roosevelt's New Deal for the American people as pledged in his 1932 campaign speeches. The programs were structured to sustain various parts of the economy with the majority seeking to provide some type of relief for the unemployed. Prominent among these programs was the PWA. Formally known as the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, the PWA was enacted to prepare a comprehensive program of public works. In doing this, the PWA was intended to create employment and aid industry by the construction of useful public works of enduring social value.¹⁴

Similar to other New Deal-era programs, the PWA relied on a partnership between the federal, state, county and city governments to stimulate employment. Local

¹²Irvin Munn, Chickasha: Another Journey Back in Time. (Chickasha, Oklahoma: University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma Foundation, Inc., 1992), 54. See also Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Chickasha, Oklahoma, 1904, 1908, 1911 and 1918 and The Chickasha (Oklahoma) Daily Express, 10 December 1933.

¹³The Chickasha Daily Express, 13 December 1933 and 10 December 1933.

¹⁴The Story of the PWA: Building for Recovery, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1939), 1. See also The Chickasha (Oklahoma) Daily Express, 1 November 1933.

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public bodies submitted applications to the PWA for the construction of desirable improvements. The PWA then reviewed the application to ensure that 1) the application was submitted by a public body which represented the people and that the project complied with applicable local, state and national laws; 2) the project was financially sound and the applicant was in a financial position to provide its share of construction costs; and, 3) the project was feasible from an engineering standpoint.¹⁵

Unlike other New Deal-era programs, most specifically the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the PWA was intended to stimulate private industry. By bolstering private industry, the PWA created an increase in private employment which helped relieve the widespread local, state and national unemployment problem without resorting to the dole. The WPA, in contrast, was aimed specifically at employing the jobless on worthwhile public work projects for which the workers received public relief money. The PWA made grants and loans to public bodies for the hiring of architects, contractors and laborers to construct useful public works. It did not provide direct relief to the unemployed in the sponsoring community.¹⁶

Once an application was approved and the applicant agreed to build the project according to the rules and regulations of the PWA, the PWA gifted a percentage of the project costs outright to the sponsoring body. If the applicant had the legal authority to borrow money, they could also borrow the balance of costs from the PWA at a nominal rate but this was considered a loan which had to be repaid. Once the money was in place, the community solicited contracts for project construction through open competitive bidding. The PWA remained a supervising participant in the project through construction. After the project was completed to PWA specifications, the PWA retained no control over the use or ownership of the resources.¹⁷

Moving quickly, by September 1933, a request for federal aid for a new Grady County Courthouse was submitted to the State Advisory Board of the Public Works Administration in Oklahoma City. At the same time on the local level, U.S. Senator Elmer Thomas of Oklahoma was encouraging the residents of Grady County to vote a bond issue to build a new courthouse and to take advantage of the federal aid in the offering. By early November 1933, a petition signed by

¹⁵Ibid., 1, 3, 6-7.

¹⁶Ibid., 4.

¹⁷Ibid., 3-4 and 8. See also Chickasha Daily Express, 5 September 1933.

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1,600 Grady County residents had been submitted to the Board of County Commissioners calling for a special election to vote on the proposed bond issue. The request for the election was

...made on the grounds that the county will be in position to take advantage of a federal grant for 30 per cent of the cost of construction of the courthouse and obtain a government loan at 4 per cent interest for the balance, secured by the countys bonds, thereby financing the construction of a building costing around \$185,000.¹⁸

The county commissioners approved the resolution only after receiving assurances that the cost of the election would be paid by public subscription. Related to the economic woes of the county government that year, the county budget did not include any appropriations for elections. Estimated cost of the election was between \$600 and \$700. The date of the election was set at December 12, 1933.¹⁹

Even as the county commissioners were approving the necessary election, rumors that the commissioners had retained an Oklahoma City architectural firm to design the building abounded. Although denied by the commissioners and George Hurst, County Clerk, a notice in the Mid-West Contractor indicated that the firm of Layton, Hicks and Forsyth had prepared plans and specifications for a \$200,000 courthouse in Grady County. This outraged many locals as they preferred a local architect be retained. The controversy was heightened when the local newspaper carried a statement of A.G. Huseman, local architect, who had spoken to the county commissioners about the matter at their November 6, 1933 meeting. Huseman stated that when he asked the county commissioners to publically commit to leaving the architectural work in Grady County, they emphatically said no. They then acknowledged to Huseman that they had visited several other courthouses in Kansas and northeastern Oklahoma with Solomon Layton, principal of Layton, Hicks and Forsyth, and had requested that his firm prepare plans and specifications for the building. Within a week and to assure voters that the money would stay in the community, the county commissioners had asked that local architects E.H. Eads and Paul Harris jointly

¹⁸Chickasha Daily Express, 6 November 1933. See also 5 September 1933, 8 September 1933, 10 September 1933, 5 November 1933 and 6 November 1933.

¹⁹Ibid., 8 November 1933.

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prepare plans for the new building. The two architects responded by submitting joint plans within a week.²⁰

In order to reassure voters that they would receive full value for their dollar and that local firms working on the project were ...from Grady County, as much as possible..., the county commissioners agreed to the formation of a citizens committee to ...confer with the board and federal engineer in all steps for the construction... of the courthouse. Representatives from all towns within Grady County were named to the committee, as well as two men to represent the Non-Partisan Tax Reform League and the Mayor of Chickasha, C.A. Dearmon, who was to represent the labor interests. This was shortly followed by a pledge of the county commissioners that the chosen contractor would use only men from Grady County on the job. According to a statement by Roy Bozarth, chairman of the Board of Commissioners, Before any contract is awarded it will be understood that outside labor will not be imported to do the work and we expect to see to it that this condition is met by the contractor.²¹

A light voter turnout also threatened the courthouse proposal. In order to prevent failure of the bond issue, voters who were property owners, as well as non-property owners who were properly registered, were encouraged to cast their ballot. In order to pass, it was required that a majority of property owners in the county approved the measure and that sixty percent of all votes cast were favorable.²² Appealing to both the Lions and Kiwanis clubs, supporters of the bond issue gave several reasons that passage of the bond issue was good for the community. These included:

because the present building was built before statehood and has been condemned by the fire officials; because of civic pride; because a new building is an actual necessary; because the old building contains all records and titles of property in Grady county and should the building burn, the property owners of the county will face a total loss and that it will cost a minimum sum of from \$100 to \$150 to prove a title to land; the proposal is for a \$140,000 4 per cent bond issue, which will cost the taxpayer of the county 50 cents a year on \$1,000 valuation and the government will give the county

²⁰Ibid., 12 November 1933, 15 November 1933, 19 November 1933, 26 November 1933.

²¹Ibid., 3 December 1933 and 8 December 1933.

²²Ibid., 8 December 1933, 11 December 1933 and 12 December 1933.

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\$60,000 on the proposition; the government is spending \$3,300,000,000 for public works and projects of this type and that in the long run the citizens of Grady county must pay their part of this fund so we should get as much good from the taxes as possible.²³

Additionally, in the days immediately preceding the election, advertisements appeared in the local newspapers advocating the new courthouse. These ads rested heavily on the available funds from the federal government and what these funds meant to the general public. A vote for the courthouse was ...an expression of confidence in and co-operation with the Recovery program of President Roosevelt, and our National Administration, while a vote against the bond issue showed ...disapproval and rejection of the things our Government is trying to do and help to do. With less than four thousand citizens casting a vote, the measure carried with two-to-one taxpayers voting in favor and 70.1 percent of the total votes approving.²⁴

Within a week following the election, the Board of County Commissioners and the citizens committee settled on the building plans submitted by the architectural firm of Layton, Hicks and Forsyth. The plans called for a four-story, limestone building with a full basement facing Choctaw Avenue. Concerned citizens, led by H.A. Stephenson, had also begun circulation of a petition to move the courthouse site from Choctaw Avenue to Chickasha Avenue, the main business thoroughfare in Chickasha. Further complications arose in early January when a petition by local architect E.A. Eads and signed by 1,579 residents requested that the commissioners rescind their contract with Layton, Hicks and Forsyth in order to employ Grady County architects, ...who are just as competent and capable.. This petition further requested that future labor and material contracts be given to local firms. The petition carefully noted that voters had been assured that local businesses were to receive the benefit of the project in order for the bond issue to pass.²⁵

While the second petition quickly faded from attention with Solomon Layton and George Forsyth, along with firm member R.E. Leech, making alterations to the original plans to accomodate concerns of citizens, attorneys and county officials, the site issue continued to plague county officials through February

²³Ibid., 30 November 1933 and 28 November 1933.

²⁴Ibid., 9 December 1933, 11 December 1933, 12 December 1933 and 13 December 1933.

²⁵Ibid., 17 December 1933, 18 December 1933, 19 December 1933, 28 December 1933, 1 January 1934 and 3 January 1934.

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as Stephenson pushed for an election to settle the matter. However, the real delay in putting the project out for bid was at the federal level. The national PWA office was swamped with applications for projects from all states and were processing them as quickly as possible. Once approved and submitted by the PWAs State Advisory Board, the projects were reviewed by the engineering, finance and legal divisions of the national PWA office before being submitted to the head of the program, Harold Ickes. Once Ickes approved the project, it was sent to President Roosevelt for final approval. At the end of February 1934, the Grady County Courthouse project finished the review process and was approved by President Roosevelt.²⁶

The formal contract between the PWA and county commissioners was signed in mid-March with work expected to begin in June. The bonds went on sale in May with the PWA purchasing them as expected. Allowing for the thirty day protest period for the sale of the bonds, the commissioners had to wait until the end of June to put the project out for bid. Bids were due at the end of July and the commissioners hoped work would start in early August. Changes in the costs of materials, however, caused the bids to be delayed a week. The additional time was given in anticipation that the contractors would apparently re-figure their estimates to allow ...more favorable bids....²⁷

Despite the hold up in getting the construction contract settled, the various county offices began preparation to move to the Oklahoma National Bank building, located on Third Street and Chickasha Avenue. The commissioners leased the entire seventh floor, parts of the fourth and fifth floors and, for the district courtroom, the full first floor of the building east of the bank. Beginning late Friday, July 27, 1934, the staff of the county clerks office started moving files with the other offices following on Saturday and Sunday nights. Due to their separate facility near the old courthouse, the Sheriffs office and jail were not to be disturbed during the construction phase. Although janitorial service was discontinued August 1, the district judge and

²⁶Ibid., 9 January 1934, 19 January 1934, 22 January 1934, 24 January 1934, 28 January 1934, 4 February 1934, 6 February 1934, 9 February 1934, 11 February 1934, 12 February 1934, 13 February 1934, 15 February 1934, 19 February 1934, 20 February 1934, 22 February 1934 and 25 February 1934.

²⁷Ibid., 16 March 1934, 19 March 1934, 20 March 1934, 22 March 1934, 3 May 1934, 21 May 1934, 17 June 1934, 21 June 1934, 28 June 1934, 16 July 1934, 19 July 1934 and 26 July 1934.

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the county attorneys offices remained in the old courthouse, pending signing of a contract.²⁸

The commissioners opened eight general proposals and two bids on jail equipment at their August 7, 1934, meeting. The general contractor bids ranged from a low of \$178,862 to a high of \$187,437. Allowing for some alterations in materials, all eight companies also submitted lower bids ranging from \$161,165 to \$168,987. Of the eight bidders, only one was from Chickasha, Chester Cowen, who placed bids of \$183,922 or \$166,575. Five of the other bidders were from Oklahoma City and one each from Enid, Oklahoma, and Dallas, Texas. The jail equipment bids, submitted from Stewart Iron Works Company of Ohio and the Southern Prison Company of San Antonio, were \$14,847 and \$12,689 respectively.²⁹

Setting a record for state PWA projects, the commissioners awarded the general contract to D.A. Harmon Construction Company of Oklahoma City and the jail equipment contract to the Southern Prison Company of San Antonio the same day bids were opened. At a total price of \$179,515, the Harmon Construction Company was to be paid \$166,826 and the Southern Prison Company \$12,689. In accepting the alternate bid, the commissioners accepted changes to several different specifications, such as the use of walnut furnishings in the district courtroom instead of metal. Although not specified in the newspaper, the most significant material change was likely the decision to use Texas shellstone instead of the Bedford limestone called for in the original plans. Additionally, the commissioners agreed that the construction of the concrete wall and sidewalk and grading of the courthouse grounds would be accomplished as a later, separate project.³⁰

Employees of the Harmon Construction Company arrived on-site within two days of signing the contract to begin measuring the old building and determining salvageable materials. Despite this, District Judge Will Linn remained officed in the old building, awaiting demolition preparations. With subcontractors ready to begin demolition on Thursday, August 23, Judge Linn designated the new district courtroom in the building next to the Oklahoma National Bank building on Wednesday, August 22, 1934 and all furnishings were moved that weekend. While trees were cleared from the site, actual demolition activities were

²⁸Ibid., 29 July 1934, 31 July 1934, 3 August 1934 and 6 August 1934.

²⁹Ibid., 7 August 1934.

³⁰Ibid., 8 August 1934.

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subsequently delayed by the contractor until the first allotment of PWA funds had been definitely turned over to the County Treasurer. Finally, on September 4, 1934, the subcontracting firm of Dunn Fuel and Lumber Company began removing the roof and tearing down the back brick wall of the Ancient Courthouse Structure. It was anticipated that demolition would take only ten to fourteen days and that earthwork and the building of forms would be started around September 17, 1934.³¹

By September 20, 1934, all that remained of the old courthouse was a small section of a nonoriginal vault wall and work was underway on the excavation for the foundation and basement of the new building. By November, carpenters were at work building the forms for the jail section of the courthouses third floor. With contractors nearly completing the concrete and steel framework for the building, a double cornerstone ceremony was scheduled for Monday, December 17, 1934. Both local lodges of the International Order of Odd Fellows and the Masons were in charge of the ceremony. Declaring a half-holiday for the occasion, both city and county offices were closed and dignitaries from across the state were on-hand for the event. In addition to a parade, the band from the local Oklahoma College for Women and numerous speakers heralded completion of this public phase of construction.³²

The new year brought the setting of stone for the exterior walls. The stone, a Texas shellstone, was noted as a ...building material unusual to this section.. By late February, the exterior walls were nearing completion and progress was being made on the interior work. At the rate work was progressing, it was anticipated that the building would be ready in April. In early March, representatives of the jail equipment company was showing appropriate personnel how to work the new doors and locks. At the end of the month, marble work in the lobby and main stairwell was almost finished and electrical contractors were set to begin installation of fixtures on April 1, 1935. Because of problems with plastering, the completion date for the building was set for mid-May. Rushing work on the project, the metal front doors of the building were hung on April 2, 1935 and commissioner chair Roy Benton Bozarth expressed the belief work would be complete by May 1, 1935. By the end of April, the final third coat of paint had been applied to more than

³¹Ibid., 4 September 1934.

³²Ibid., 20 September 1934, 25 September 1934, 8 November 1934, 11 December 1934, 13 December 1934, 14 December 1934, 16 December 1934, 17 December 1934 and 18 December 1934.

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half of the building and steel counters and other furnishings for offices on the first floor had been received by the contractor and were being installed.³³

With work nearing completion, the PWA boosted the project with an additional \$8,000 grant to purchase more furniture for the building, including pews for the district and county courtrooms and metal file cabinets for the general county offices. This action increased the outright gift from the federal government to \$57,000, bringing the total project allotment to \$197,000. Both contracts went to the low bidders, both of whom were from Oklahoma City. The Bawco Office Supply Company of Chickasha bid on both projects but did not receive either contract.³⁴

On Friday, May 31, 1935, officials undertook a final inspection to determine if the building was ready for occupancy. This included commissioners Roy B. Bozarth, Hardy Green and Ed Campbell, as well as P.W. Rathburn, resident PWA engineer; Allen Harmon, general contractor; and, Sol Layton and Bob Leach, representing the architectural firm. Except for some floor coverings, the installation of window shades and the furniture on-order, the building was deemed complete. The commissioners also let a final contract for furnishings, seventy-eight new mattresses, to the Chickasha Mattress Company. Although a few offices started moving Friday evening, the majority waited until the weekend to occupy the new building. By mid-week, all but two county offices were in their new quarters: the Sheriffs office, who were waiting for the jails kitchen stove and mattresses, and the County Farm Agent, who was waiting on furniture. With a few days, the new building was fully occupied and county business was underway as usual.³⁵

As originally located, the basement of the building contained two large storage vaults, a janitors supply room, the County Farm Agents offices, the County School Superintendents offices, a farmers assembly room and County Election Board quarters. The main portion of the first floor was designed ...like a large bank building type office... for use by the County Assessor, Clerk and Treasurers offices. The commissioners offices and meeting room were located in the southeast corner of the first floor and the Sheriffs office was on the opposite side in the southwest corner. The second floor contained the District

³³Ibid., 1 January 1935, 24 February 1935, 6 March 1935, 27 March 1935, 2 April 1935 and 21 April 1935.

³⁴Ibid., 7 May 1935.

³⁵Ibid., 19 May 1935, 31 May 1935, 2 June 1935, 4 June 1935, 5 June 1935, 6 June 1935 and 7 June 1935.

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Courtroom and District Judges chamber along the east side. The County Judges office and courtroom were on the west side. In between the two on the second floor was the District Court Clerks office. While the jail occupied the majority of the third floor, the northeast section contained jury rooms.³⁶

The courthouse contained several interesting features. This included a black marble tablet on the lobby wall. The tablet was dedicated to Sherman Crouch, county commissioner from the northern district at the time the courthouse project got underway. Crouch passed away in September 1934. The newspaper also noted the modern water fountains found throughout the building. The fountains were fed from an electric unit capable of cooling nineteen gallons of water an hour. One of the more enduring features of interest was the ...huge walnut and holly panel behind the district court bench. Carved by University of Oklahoma Student, Derald T. Swineford, the panel was titled Justice Tempered by Mercy and contained two figures supporting a sword inscribed with the Biblical An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. The inscription caused a stir by the Grady County Bar Association. The association maintained the inscription ...did not interpret the spirit of modern law... and asked that it be removed. A further explanation of the panel by Swineford concluded that The inscription on the sword...has no dealing with the modern methods of administering justice but along with the figures is merely a symbol of a happy medium that should be strived for in our modern courts. Swineford further noted that if the inscription was removed, that left ...two figures holding hands and resting on a sword.³⁷ The matter rested there and the panel contains to hold its place of prominence to the current day.

Eleven months after construction was started and two months after the building was occupied, the courthouse was dedicated to public use. With music provided by a band from Shawnee, a reception and open house was planned for the evening of August 5, 1935. The principal addresses were given by Judge Samuel W. Hayes, early day Chickasha attorney, member of the constitutional convention and the first state supreme court, and Luther Harrison, The Daily Oklahoman editorial writer. While Hayes expounded on the naming of Grady County, for which he was responsible, Harrison urged the ...people of Grady county to rededicate themselves to the principal of government represented in the new building.³⁸

³⁶Ibid., 31 May 1935.

³⁷Ibid., 19 May 1935 and 6 June 1935.

³⁸Ibid., 31 July 1935, 4 August 1935, 5 August 1935 and 6 August 1935.

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As a tangible example of the work undertaken by the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works (aka PWA), the Grady County Courthouse represents a critical period and movement in local, state and national history. Between June 1933 and March 1939, the PWA funded projects in 3,069 of the nations 3,071 counties, including the Grady County Courthouse. These projects ranged from conservation projects, electric power plants, sewage disposal and waterworks projects, and construction of school buildings, hospitals and numerous public buildings. Total, the PWA was allotted over 2.4 billion dollars. This money was made available by appropriations or sales of securities by the National Industrial Recovery Act, Emergency Appropriation Act for Fiscal Year 1935, Emergency Relief Appropriations Act of 1935, Deficiency Revolving Fund, First Deficiency Appropriation Act of 1936 and Public Works Administration Appropriation Act of 1938. Of the 2.4 billion dollars allotted, the PWA expended nearly 1.7 billion dollars by February 1939 and had obligated all but 15 million of the remaining 751 million dollars on a variety of projects nationwide.³⁹

In terms of public buildings, 4,287 buildings nationwide were constructed using allotments from the PWA. Of this, 1,492 were buildings for administration, legislative, judicial and general governmental purposes built in partnership with cities, counties and states. This included 295 courthouses, 206 city and town halls, 101 fire stations, 12 combined fire and police stations, 15 police stations, 126 jails and prisons and 130 other city, county and state administrative and office buildings. In outright gifts, the PWA granted over a hundred million dollars for construction of city, county and state government buildings. It also loaned nearly 18 million dollars towards the total estimated cost of over 313 million dollars.⁴⁰

In Oklahoma, the PWA undertook 302 projects with non-federal partners. The total estimated costs of these projects was just under 52 million dollars. The PWA allotted nearly 39 million dollars of the total projected cost. The projects included the construction of hospitals, schools, waterworks, sewage disposals and electric power plants and government buildings. Some of the larger PWA projects in Oklahoma, besides the Grady County Courthouse in Chickasha, included the construction of the municipal complex in Oklahoma City, consisting of the Municipal Building, County Courthouse and Jail (NR 1992) and the Municipal Auditorium (now called the Civic Center); Ardmore Municipal Building; Garfield County Courthouse in Enid (NR 1994); Ponca City Library;

³⁹America Builds: The Record of PWA, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1939); 264 and 272.

⁴⁰Ibid., 283-291.

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Oklahoma Military academy Field House and Auditorium in Claremore; the Doctors and Nurses Quarters at the Indian Hospital in Talihina; and, the Cushing Municipal Light and Power Plant.⁴¹ Within Grady County, the PWA aided in the construction of the courthouse, three dormitories on the historic Oklahoma College for Women campus (NR 2000)[1934-1935], the Chickasha High School Building [1935] and the Chickasha City Hall [1938-1939], among other various projects.

Although not having the widespread economic impact of other New Deal-era programs, such as the Works Progress Administration, the PWA was an important component of the efforts to stimulate the economy during the Great Depression. Aimed specifically at aiding private enterprise, the PWA helped boost employment in the private sector with the employment of professionals, such as architects and engineers, to wage-earners, such as skilled and unskilled construction workers. This, in turn, helped to relieve the number of dependent persons on the dole. Between June 1933 and February 1939, the Department of Labor revealed that PWA projects provided nearly 2 billion hours of employment at construction sites and an additional 4 billion plus of indirect labor employment in private industry.⁴²

Beyond stimulating the area industry and economy, the construction of buildings like the Grady County Courthouse also facilitated the workings of numerous county governments across the state and nation. Similar to various other types of public buildings, such as schools, many Oklahoma government buildings had become obsolete or, in some instances, were nonexistent. Due to their inability to procure sufficient funds, especially during the trying economic times of the Great Depression, many counties and towns were not able to construct the necessary improved facilities. However, with the assistance of such New Deal programs as the PWA and WPA, several city halls, jails and county courthouses were constructed to improve the quality of local government in many Oklahoma towns.

The construction of new county courthouses allowed the respective community government to function with a new efficiency. The improved facilities centralized the seat of county government and also allowed for expansion of county records and services. Additionally, the new buildings enhanced the community identity. The county courthouse, often the identifying building of the county, was critical to the county and local towns self-image.

⁴¹Ibid., 285 and 269-271. See also Short, Public Buildings, 28, 30, 58-59, 104, 132, 232, 166, 390 and 505.

⁴²The Story of PWA, 5-6.

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In Oklahoma, the historic significance of county courthouses in local government was established in the thematic County Courthouses of Oklahoma nomination, listed in 1984. Although the Grady County Courthouse was not included in the thematic nomination for unknown reasons, the historic significance remains fully applicable. To quote the nomination,

Each county's courthouse serves as the seat and focus of local administration. The courthouse is the physical building that houses the established form for governing diverse groups of people throughout the state. The style of the building may vary from county to county, but the essence of its function does not. The courthouse provides the place in which the local judiciary system metes out justice to the citizens of the county. Other governmental offices, such as those of the sheriff, the county clerk, the tax assessor, and the treasurer, are also located in the courthouse. In some counties, the courthouse contains the offices of such other integral community services as motor vehicle licensing, veterans affairs, the local election board, and the county extension agency. The courthouse is invaluable as a political center and as a repository of a county's records.⁴³

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Grady County Courthouse is architecturally significant within Chickasha as an excellent example of an Art Deco style, public building. The courthouse is the only public building in downtown Chickasha designed in the Art Deco style. Other historic public buildings in downtown include the United States Courthouse and Post Office and the Chickasha City Hall. The historic federal building, now in use as the Chickasha City Hall, is an Italian Renaissance style building, while the original Chickasha City Hall is classified as Moderne style. A modern, Contemporary style Post Office has been constructed on the southwest edge of the central business district. The Grady County Courthouse is architecturally noteworthy as the only historic county courthouse in Chickasha. The original courthouse, built as a federal courthouse in 1897, was demolished in 1934 to allow for construction of the existing building.

Although the form of the Grady County Courthouse adheres very closely to the Classical Revival style, the building is classified as Art Deco due to the prominent Art Deco style ornamentation. This ornamentation is a defining

⁴³Suzanne Haynes, County Courthouses of Oklahoma Thematic National Register Nomination, (On-file in the Oklahoma Landmarks Inventory, Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: 1984), Section 8, page 0.

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feature of the building because it is the buildings dominant visual characteristic. The Classical Revival form of the building is not readily apparent unless the courthouse is studied in some detail.

The combination of Art Deco style ornamentation and a Classical Revival form was popular in the 1930s and early 1940s for public buildings, particularly those funded with PWA monies. In addition to Grady County, the PWA aided in the construction of courthouses in Cleveland, Comanche, Custer, Garfield, Oklahoma, Pawnee, Pottawatomie, Pushmataha and Woodward counties, as well as additions to several other courthouses. Of these, five courthouses were constructed in 1934-1935, including Grady, Custer, Garfield, Pottawatomie and Pushmataha counties. Employing various architects and construction companies, the buildings are generally similar in style and detail. Typical of 1930s courthouse construction in Oklahoma, the ornamental detailing included numerous bas-relief panels, frequently related to one of the primary functions of the building justice, and stylized floral and geometric decorative details in both metal and stone. Thus, while the combination of the artistic Art Deco style with the Classical Revival form is not unique to the Grady County Courthouse, it is noteworthy for its appeal and widespread popularity.⁴⁴

On the local level, there are two examples of Art Deco style commercial buildings in downtown Chickasha, the Oklahoma National Bank Building and the First National Bank and Trust. Both of these buildings are located at the intersection of Third Street and Chickasha Avenue and both are bank buildings. Constructed in 1930 and 1931 respectively, the buildings are richly ornamented in the typical Art Deco manner. However, only the two-story First National Bank and Trust retained sufficient historic integrity to be a contributing resource to the pending Chickasha Downtown Historic District nomination. The first two floors of the seven-story Oklahoma National Bank building, which served as the Grady County Courthouse in 1934-1935, have been covered with

⁴⁴Dr. Charles Grady, County Courthouses of Oklahoma, (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1985), 82. Nearly twenty years after publication, this book remains the accepted standard source of information on the seventy-seven county courthouses in Oklahoma. As happens in studies of this scope, there are some errors in the book. Notably for this project, Grady indicates the Grady County Courthouse was complete in 1934, when in fact the building was not finished until 1935. Nonetheless, the book is the best source of information available and is used to place the Grady County Courthouse within its proper architectural context. See also The Daily Oklahoman, (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma), 12 May 1935.

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modern concrete columns and full-height, multi-paned, metal, fixed windows. Although sharing stylistic features, the Grady County Courthouse is easily distinguished from the bank buildings, particularly in terms of setting, feeling and association. Because of the accepted importance of the functions of county government, all county courthouses are designed as monumental public buildings and are, therefore, distinctive resources within the central business district and community.

Overall, the Grady County Courthouse is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for its association with local politics and government as the seat of county government. Further, the building is representative of the efforts of the PWA to stimulate the local, state and national economies during the Great Depression. Architecturally, the building is an excellent example of an Art Deco style, public building built in Chickasha in the mid-1930s.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 8-22, Block 30, Original Townsite, Chickasha, Oklahoma.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries include the area historically associated with the Grady County Courthouse, Lots 15-21. The boundaries also include the lots to the north, Lots 8-14, which now contain the Grady County Sheriffs Office and Jail. Because the jail is physically connected to the historic courthouse via an enclosed rear walkway, the nonhistoric area was included in the boundaries.