

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Oklahoma	
COUNTY: Pittsburg	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER <b>MAY 5 1972</b>	DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Perryville

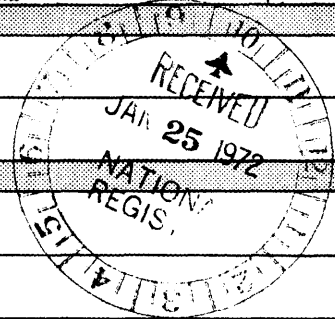
AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
c. 4 m. S of

CITY OR TOWN:  
McAlester (NE/4 NE/4 Sec. 34, T 5 N, R 14 E)

STATE Oklahoma	CODE 40	COUNTY: Pittsburg	CODE 121
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**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
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 type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
William H. Johnson

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Rural Route #3

CITY OR TOWN:  
McAlester

STATE:  
Oklahoma

CODE:  
40

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
Office of the County Clerk

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Pittsburg County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN:  
McAlester

STATE:  
Oklahoma

CODE:  
40

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Civil War Sites in Oklahoma

DATE OF SURVEY: 1967  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Oklahoma Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN:  
Oklahoma City

STATE:  
Oklahoma

CODE:  
40

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**7. DESCRIPTION**

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent     Good     Fair     Deteriorated     Ruins     Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered     Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved     Original Site

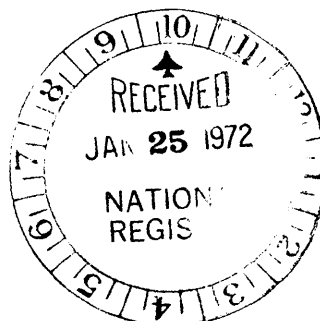
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

At its prosperous best, in the 1850s, Perryville boasted a stage stand, blacksmith shop, post office, the Tobaksi County Courthouse, a small log school house, half a dozen business firms, and the scattering of homes needed to maintain them. Generally the town sprawled around the junction of the trails that sustained it (cf. enclosed copy of early day plat).

Today Perryville has been pretty well reduced to a single stone chimney, exact age unknown. But the persistent historian can, by following what sketchy records that exist (most are latter-day recollections, so necessarily imprecise), locate to his satisfaction some of the town's now vanished buildings, determine the course of the trails, and recreate in his mind's eye the battle fought on the east edge of the town. The old cemetery remains, of course, as do some filled-in wells and cisterns.

Only a few private homes, all of recent vintage now dot the lightly developed area. Most of the land is cultivated in small patches. The railroad and highway cut across the battlefield area.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**SIGNIFICANCE**

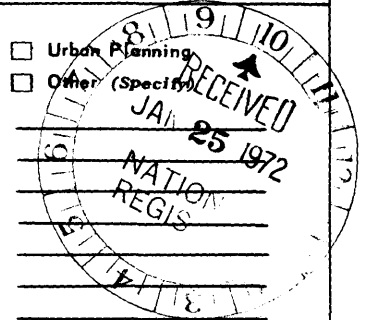
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <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) c. 1840-1875

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal          | <input type="checkbox"/> Education           | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric         | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering         | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy       |
| <input 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           | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture        | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation        | <input type="checkbox"/> Music               |  |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Perryville is one of countless settlements on the frontier brought into being by wagon roads, allowed to flourish for a time, then administered the coup de grace by the railroads. Unlike many of them, however, its relatively brief role in history was significant enough to rate something more than footnote status in an obscure reference book. A Civil War battle that threatened to wipe it off the map of Indian Territory was fought on its doorstep. But previous to that conflict it had parlayed its strategic position at the junction of two well-traveled trails to become one of the most important commercial centers in the Choctaw Nation.

The Perry family was prominent <sup>in</sup> Choctaw-Chickasaw ~~family~~ history. Perryville the town (about four miles south of present McAlester) was probably named for James Perry, who arrived in Indian Territory, from Mississippi, in 1838. His wife was of Chickasaw descent and he more or less identified himself with the interests of that tribe. He was one of the four delegates who signed the Treaty of Doaksville in 1837 on behalf of the Chickasaws.

James Perry opened a trading post here on the Texas Road (from Fort Gibson southwesterly into Texas Road) around 1838 or 1839. By Febr. 24, 1841, the settlement had a post office, with one John F. Houston as postmaster ... though all evidence tends to show that the office itself was in the Perry store and remained there until it was eventually closed. Perry was relatively well to do by the time he died, shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War. He is buried in the old Perryville cemetery, but his grave is unmarked today.

Establishment of Fort Arbuckle in 1852 further emphasized Perryville's importance as a transportation center. A military road from Fort Smith to the new outpost crossed the already well traveled Texas Road at this point. Emigrants -- bound for Texas and/or California -- became familiar with the goods and services available at Perryville and a stage stand was maintained there until the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad (the first to cross Indian Territory) arrived in 1872. It wasn't until 1875 that William Chunn, latest successor to the Perry general merchandise business, finally closed his store and moved away. The town by then was well on its way to oblivion.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Bryce, J. Y., "Perryville at One Time Regular Military Post," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. IV (1926), pp. 184-191  
 Wright, Muriel H., "Additional Notes on Perryville, Choctaw Nation," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. VIII (1930), pp. 146-148  
 Wright, Muriel H. and Fischer, LeRoy H., Civil War Sites in Oklahoma, Oklahoma Historical Society, 1947, pp. 47-48

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	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	° ' "	° ' "		34° 52' 7.5"	95° 48' 54"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: One acre

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, Deputy

ORGANIZATION: Oklahoma Historical Society DATE: December 1971

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN: Oklahoma City STATE: Oklahoma CODE: 40

**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: Liaison officer for Oklahoma

Date: JAN 20 1972

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

[Signature]  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 5/5/72

ATTEST:

[Signature]  
Keeper of The National Register

Date: May 5, 1972

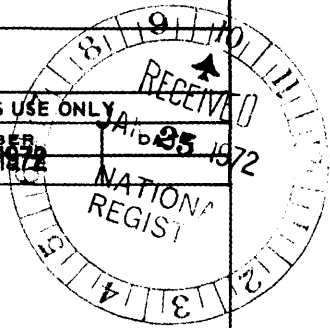
*Handwritten:* 700 UTM HF

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	Oklahoma
COUNTY	Pittsburg
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(Number all entries)

No. 8 Significance - 2

Perryville

During the 1850s, however, Perryville was playing an important political as well as commercial role in Indian Territory. (And an education role, too; Colbert Institute, a Methodist school for Chickasaws, was established here in 1854.) When the first counties in the Choctaw Nation were organized in 1850, this according to historian Muriel H. Wright, Perryville was included in Perry County, Chickasaw District. After the Chickasaws and Choctaws settled their long dispute of the eastern boundary of the Chickasaw District, in 1854, Perryville was east of the new line. The following year the cut off eastern part of Perry County became Tobaksi County in the Mosholatubbee District of the Choctaw Nation. Perryville was designated by the Choctaw Council as seat of Tobaksi County. James Perry's store, then owned by Osborne Fisher, became Tobaksi County Court-house. (About this time -- "facts" by now are more than a bit hazy -- there was a dispute over the election of a chief. It resulted, or so the story goes, in one faction's moving the Nation's official records briefly to Perryville. This would give the now vanished town the distinction of serving, for 60 to 90 days, as capital of the Choctaw Nation.)

Be that as it may, Perryville -- now reduced to a single stone chimney, a filled-in well, and an unkempt cemetery -- was for two decades and more one of the most important towns in Indian Territory. And as such it became strategically important to both sides during the Civil War, therefore adding its name to the tragically long list of battlefields spawned by that internecine conflict.

Following the climactic Battle of Honey Springs on July 17, 1863 (this important battleground is already included in the National Register), Brig. Gen. William E. Steele's Confederate forces took the field and penetrated north almost as far as Fort Gibson (some sixty miles north and east of Perryville). But Maj. Gen. James G. Blunt again left Fort Gibson in pursuit, recrossing the Arkansas River with some 4,500 men. Weakened by extensive desertions, Steele began to withdraw southward along the Texas Road. On August 25, 1863, his rear guard was overtaken here at Perryville, by then an important Confederate supply depot. Following a sharp skirmish, involving artillery and dismounted cavalry, the Confederates decided to evacuate the town. Gen. Blunt has recorded what happened then. "As nearly every building contained government stores, I directed the burning of the whole place." He also directed that the town's wells be ruined by dumping heavily salted bacon in them.

The town was crippled, though not killed. It came back after the war, lingered on until well after the railroads had brought coal-rich prosperity to McAlester, a few miles to the north. But now it has virtually disappeared. And the only readily apparent evidence of the old town is a

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(Number all entries)

No. 8 Significance - 3

Perryville

still-standing stone chimney, which may or may not date back to the settlement's heyday. Still -- and this strikes the preparer of this nomination form as an appropriately Phoenix-like note upon which to conclude this brief for National Register status -- present chimney-owner Bill Johnson is today (1971) using one of the dug wells Gen. Blunt thought he had destroyed! Perryville thus lives on, if only in a glass of cold water.

