

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <u>Oklahoma</u>	
COUNTY: <u>Cherokee</u>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	<u>JUN 28 1974</u>

1. NAME

COMMON:
Cherokee Supreme Court Building

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Cherokee County School Superintendent's Office

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
East Keetoowah Street and Water Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Tahlequah No. 2 Honorable Clem McSpadden

STATE <u>Oklahoma</u>	CODE <u>40</u>	COUNTY: <u>Cherokee</u>	CODE <u>021</u>
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3. CLASSIFICATION

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

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Cherokee County

STREET AND NUMBER:
Cherokee County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN:
Tahlequah

STATE: <u>Oklahoma</u>	CODE <u>40</u>
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

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

STREET AND NUMBER:
Cherokee County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN:
Tahlequah

STATE: <u>Oklahoma</u>	CODE <u>40</u>
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Oklahoma Historic Sites Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1958 Federal State County Local

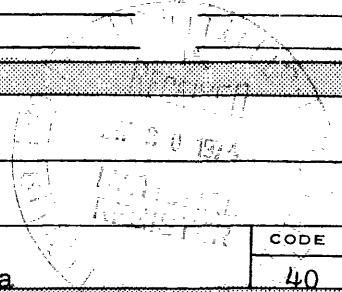
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Oklahoma Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:
Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN:
Oklahoma City

STATE: <u>Oklahoma</u>	CODE <u>40</u>
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS



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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Erected in 1844 of bricks made near the site, the Supreme Court Building is a plain two-story structure on a sandstone foundation. The roofline, which has been altered, is covered with composition shingles. Each brick wall contains four double-hung windows, two up and two down. All windows, frames, and sills are of wood.

The building is 34' east/west, 28' 8" north/south. It faces north and has a door at both the front and the back. Each floor contains approximately 979 square feet for a total of 1,958 square feet in all. The bone structure is wood, with plaster and lath interior walls. All floors are of wood and very badly worn. The second floor has been divided into four rooms.

Heat is provided by a steam boiler and radiators. Electrical wiring is primitive (not to say dangerous) ... knob-and-tube type with a single bulb hanging from the ceiling.

Obviously the building suffers from nearly all known forms of obsolescence and deterioration. Immediate attention is demanded if this extremely historic structure is to be preserved.



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 checked="" 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) 1844-1904

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Cherokee Nation was forcibly removed to Indian Territory from its ancient homeland in the Southeastern United States in the fall and winter of 1838-1839. This tragic trek to a then virtually unknown wilderness has since come to be known as the "Trail of Tears," justifiably so because roughly one-fourth of those making the journey failed to arrive. The various routes westward were marked by a steady procession of graves of the new-born, the aged, and the diseased.

The tragedy of this forced removal is made even more poignant by the fact that the Cherokee Nation of Indians had, in 1822 -- sixteen years before their Trail of Tears began -- adopted a republican form of government patterned on that of the then relatively new United States of America. Included was a national judicial system, at the head of which stood a National Supreme Court.

The word "civilized" in the so-called Five Civilized Tribes that eventually comprised Indian Territory was not an idle one. Thanks to the genius of Sequoyah, the Tribe by 1828 was publishing a newspaper in two languages - English and Cherokee. It was the only native American Indian tribe with a written language of its own - a language that stands as one of the great literary "inventions" of history.

The Cherokees, then, were not a band of savages being uprooted by a dominant society, but a nation largely of new Christians, ably led by visionary and dedicated leaders, being transplanted in a new and undeveloped homeland. And so it is that one of their first major accomplishments, after arrival in Indian Territory, was the reorganization of a tribal government torn apart by the stresses and strains of forcible removal from an ancient homeland.

Schools were started within a few months - the first publicly supported compulsory elementary school system in the Nation. And fully significant .. the first permanent structure built was that to house the Supreme Court. Unimposing by today's standards, it was hardly that at the time. Of brick manufactured by the Cherokees near the site, the small red structure was hailed by the Cherokee Advocate, the new tribal newspaper, as the "finest building west of Little Rock." And well it might have been.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Foreman, Grant, The Five Civilized Tribes, University of Oklahoma Press, 1934
 Starr, Emmett, History of the Cherokee Indians, Oklahoma City, 1921
 Woodward, Grace Steele, The Cherokees, University of Oklahoma Press, 1963
 Wright, Muriel H., A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 1951

"Constitution and Laws of the Cherokee Nation," Cherokee Nation, Tahlequah, Oklahoma

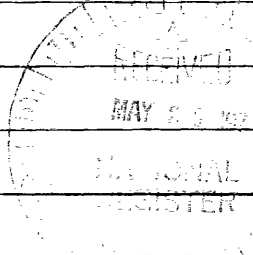
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0' 0" 0"	0' 0" 0"		35° 54' 46.6"	94° 58' 00"	
NE	0' 0" 0"	0' 0" 0"				
SE	0' 0" 0"	0' 0" 0"				
SW	0' 0" 0"	0' 0" 0"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than 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:
 Col. M. A. Hagerstrand, Exec. V-P Kent Ruth, Deputy
 ORGANIZATION: Cherokee Nat'l Historical Society Oklahoma Historical Society DATE: March 1974
 STREET AND NUMBER: P. O. Box 515, TSA-LA-GI Historical Building Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
 CITY OR TOWN: Tahlequah, OK 74464 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: SLO for OH
 Date: MAY 10 1974

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.
[Signature]
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 6/28/74
 ATTEST:
[Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register
 Date: 6-28-74

NO COPY HL

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Oklahoma	
COUNTY	
Cherokee	
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	JUN 28 1974

(Number all entries)

No. 8 Significance

Cherokee Supreme Court Building

More important than the building itself, however, was the mere fact of its erection. The fact that here in the wilds of a new country, far removed from their traditional home, an Indian tribe had erected a lasting symbol of its adherence to the rule of law as the will of the people and of its recognition of the pre-eminence of law in organizing and regulating social order. Thus the Supreme Court Building of the Cherokee Nation -- built over 130 years ago and the only government building to survive the ruinous Civil War when the Cherokee Nation itself was almost totally devastated -- stands today as mute evidence of a native people's attempt to govern itself by law rather than by tribal custom. That it is still in use (acquired by Cherokee County in 1904, it now serves as the county school superintendent's office) would also attest to the quality of Cherokee workmanship in the pre-Civil War period.

