

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED OCT 8 1980 MAY 24 19  
DATE ENTERED

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC

Soldani Mansion

AND/OR COMMON

Ponca City Art Centers

## LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

819 East Central St.

CITY, TOWN

Ponca City

NA VICINITY OF

NA -- NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Oklahoma

CODE

40

COUNTY

Kay

CODE

## CLASSIFICATION

### CATEGORY

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

### OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

### PUBLIC ACQUISITION

NA  IN PROCESS

NA  BEING CONSIDERED

### STATUS

OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

### ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

### PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

COMMERCIAL

PARK

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

MILITARY

OTHER:

## OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Ponca City Art Association

STREET & NUMBER

819 East Central

CITY, TOWN

Ponca City

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Oklahoma

## LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the County Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

Kay County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Newkirk

STATE

Oklahoma

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Oklahoma Comprehensive Survey

DATE

1980

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Oklahoma Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Oklahoma City

STATE

Oklahoma

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Soldani house was built in 1925 at a cost of \$92,000. G. J. Cannon was the architect. Several other of his buildings still stand in Ponca City. The builder was O. F. Keck, who also enjoyed a good reputation in the city. Most of the fine houses of this period were built by him, including the first Marland mansion (cf. No. 8). The Soldani house was his last and one of his finest.

Godance Soldani was on the site every day during construction of the house to insure the quality of workmanship - literally from the ground up. This is apparent in the large foundation stones that were used and in the storm cellar with its domed ceiling. Tornadoes had hit Ponca City before the house was built and he wanted to make sure his family was protected. The walls of the house<sup>were</sup> of brick construction with buttered joints, which required the weighing of each brick. (A scale weighed the bricks in the yard. Those failing to weigh out properly were discarded for use elsewhere.) A glue type of cement was used in construction rather than ordinary mortar. Windows are of beveled plate glass. The roof with its wide eaves is of green glazed tile from France. There are 8,000 square feet of floor space in the house (two full floors, basement and attic).

From the large entrance hall wide double doors open into the drawing room with its tiled fireplace and wide, stately stairs. Tucked behind the stairs is what was sometimes called "the courting room." The long bench built into the wall faces a mirror which reflects people coming toward the room. There is stained glass over the east windows of the music room. Between it and the dining hall is the cloak room.

There is also a spaciousness in the arrangement of rooms upstairs - the hall, a sitting room with windows to three directions and French doors from the hall itself. All but one bedroom has its own fireplace, bath, and large closet. Carved wood and sculptured tile are interesting details of two of the fireplaces. Gold leaf has been used in the bedrooms, and one has double doors opening out over the roof of the porte-cochere, with delicate iron railing.

Other additional downstairs features include a handsome dining room cornice of gold leaf and a rich red, imported tile fireplaces in each of the main rooms, double swinging doors leading into the butler's pantry. There are back stairs which go from the basement to the attic. The attic accommodates a game room with terrazzo floors and copper chandelier. White ceramic tile covers the kitchen walls and counter tops. Off the kitchen is another adjunct of fine homes of fifty years ago - the service porch. Woodwork throughout the house is of walnut - from trees cut on Soldani ranch land in the Osage and shipped to Kansas City for milling.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED **OCT 8 1980**

DATE ENTERED

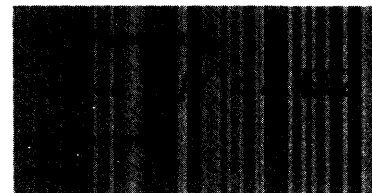
CONTINUATION SHEET Soldani Mansion ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

---

The Soldani house was planned for gracious living and built to last. It has, and with no exterior alterations. Interior changes have been limited to those required in converting it from a private residence to use as an art center. These were made following purchase of the house in 1966 by the Ponca City Art Association.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Soldani Mansion

Item number 7

Page addendum

Architecturally, the house follows no explicit style, although the porches, chimneys, broad eaves, and green glazed roof tiles suggest the Mediterranean influence that was popular in Oklahoma in the 1920s. One architect has noted, not disapprovingly, that it might be described as "Early Oil" - a house well designed by an architect to suit nouveau riche tastes, noting the beveled window panes and the Italian terrazzo in the basement. A fine exterior feature of the east elevation are the tall paladian windows (Photo No. 4) above the stair landing between the first and second floors. (Below the landing is the cozy retreat popularly referred to in its day as the courting room.)

Interior integrity of the house is almost total, despite its conversion to an art museum. Track and fluorescent lights have been added to better display the art work. However, the light fixtures in place when the art club took over were not the original ones. Aside from the lights there have been no interior changes; even the panels covering the windows were installed without nail so as not to damage the fine walnut woodwork.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1925 to present

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Architect: G. J. Cannon  
Builder: O. F. Keck

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Godance Soldani house, now the Ponca City Art Center, was built in 1925 at a cost of \$92,000, the last of the important "mansions" erected in this part of Ponca City. Built on an entire city block, it stood a block west of the first Marland mansion, now the Ponca City Cultural Center. (E. W. Marland, Oklahoma's 10th governor, later built an even more elaborate mansion, the villa. Both houses are on the National Register.) Near by are houses formerly occupied by Marland Oil Company (now Continental) executives. After the two Marland houses the Soldani house is perhaps the most impressive built in Ponca City during the height of the oil boom. and today it stands as a memorial, both to an accomplished Osage Indian and to an era when the Osage Indians as a tribe, their reservation awash in oil wells, were reputed to have the highest per capita income of any people on earth.

\*

The Soldani brothers, Sylvester and Godance, were boys in 1872 when they moved with the Osages from Westport Landing (present Kansas City) to their new reservation in Indian Territory. What is now Osage County, the land had been purchased from the Cherokees and it lay in the extreme eastern portion of the old Cherokee Strip. The two boys were half-blood Osages, their father being a French trader. Their early education began at St. Paul's, the Osage Mission School in Kansas, and continued in government schools in on the Osage reservation.

The brothers married sisters, Josephine and Katherine Fronkier, full-blood members of the Kaw Indian tribe - and cousins of former vice President Charles Curtis. When the Osages received their land allotments, in 1907, Godance with his ten children controlled twelve headrights and Sylvester controlled seven. In time, Godance's land acquisitions totaled 8,700 acres and that of Sylvester 5,600. The two became farmers and ranchers in the western Osage, just east across the Arkansas River from Ponca City. Holding their land together in a single tract, they were able to operate on a large scale. They had extensive herds of cattle, hogs, and horses. They grew corn, wheat, oats, and other crops. To Godance Soldani belongs the distinction of planting the first alfalfa in Oklahoma.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Mathews, John Joseph, Life and Death of an Oilman, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1951
- The Osages, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1961
- "Open house Today at Soldani mansion," The Ponca City News, Ponca City Oklahoma, Dec. 4, 1966

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY C. one acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Ponca City

QUADRANGLE SCALE 7.5 minute

UTM REFERENCES

A 14 1672081 4063405

B         

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The South half of Block 16, Brodboll, and Addition to the City of Ponca City, Oklahoma. block 16 is a part of the SW/4 NE/4 Sec. 27, T 26 N, R 2 E, Indian Meridian.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
<u>NA</u>			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Kent Ruth, Deputy

ORGANIZATION

Oklahoma Historical Society

DATE

June 1980

STREET & NUMBER

Historical Building

TELEPHONE

405/884-5456

CITY OR TOWN

Oklahoma City

STATE

Oklahoma

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE   

LOCAL ✓

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*[Handwritten Signature]*

TITLE SHPO

Cemetery 4/23/82

DATE

9/23/80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*[Handwritten Signature]*

DATE

6/24/82

ATTEST:

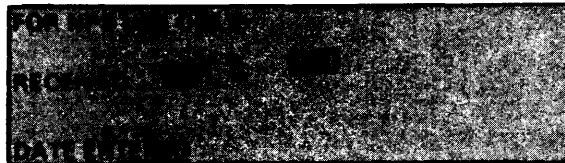
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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



CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

Soldani Mansion

From the early days they took prominent roles in the affairs of Ponca City. Both were Mansons. When the Masonic Home was built in Guthrie, Godance was the state's largest single contributor. Sylvester was a leader, not only among the Osages, but in old Oklahoma Territory as well. He was a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1907 and a member of the Oklahoma Senate 1908-1909. He was also first president of the Oklahoma Society of Indians. The Soldanis were among the organizers of the Cherokee Strip Cowpunchers Association.

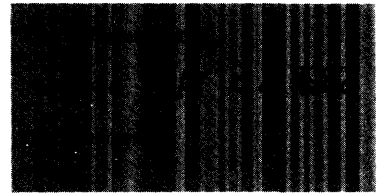
Godance was an officer of the Kay County Gas Company, organized in 1900 to bring gas to Ponca City. The company had leases in both Kay and Osage counties. It was on the lease in Osage County that the discovery well of the famed Burbank oil field was drilled.

Godance moved to Ponca City in 1898, the family living in a red brick house on the site of the "mansion" being nominated. The north half of the block was used as a playground and athletic field for the Ponca City Schools - at his invitation. He always enjoyed watching the activity. Every fall he had the grass mowed and ready for the new school year. In June 1944 he transferred the half block to the Board of Education for \$8,000.

Godance Soldani died in his home June 2, 1956. He was one of the oldest living members of the Osage tribe, and one of the most colorful residents of Ponca City.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Soldani Mansion Item number 8 Page addendum

Please note that we have checked Social/Humanitarian as an area of significance. Failing to do so was an oversight, as we do indeed mean to make a case under criterion B for its associations with Godance Soldani. True, the house was built after the period of his accomplishments. But it was built with the money made during that period - atop the basement of the more modest house he lived in while accumulating same.

No  
100  
100

As to how the house is "impressive" ... consider its square-block setting, size, gracious lines, fireplaces, solid workmanship ... and, I suppose, cost. In an area of nice residences in a small town just beginning to settle down and enjoy the finer things that oil money could buy, the Soldani House - with the first Marland house in the next block (and also on the National Register) - was, well, impressive. If, as admitted in No. 7, it has no over-riding architectural significance, so far as style is concerned, it is at least gracious of line and boasts almost total integrity.