

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

10-900  
NATIONAL  
REGISTER

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Thompson, Joseph M., House

other names/site number Cherokee County Civic Cultural Center

=====

2. Location

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street & number 300 South College Avenue not for publication N/A  
city or town Tahlequah vicinity N/A  
state Oklahoma code OK county Cherokee code 021 zip code 74464

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination      request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets      does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant      nationally      statewide X locally. ( N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Blake Wads February 8, 1993  
Signature of certifying official Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property      meets      does not meet the National Register criteria. (      See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register      See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register      See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Arlous Byers 3/11/93  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

for Signature of Keeper Date of Action

=====  
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>1</u>        | structures |
| <u>0</u>     | <u>0</u>        | objects    |
| <u>1</u>     | <u>1</u>        | Total      |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

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6. Function or Use  
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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: SOCIAL Sub: Civic

=====  
7. Description  
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)  
Queen Anne

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)  
foundation Sandstone  
roof Asphalt  
walls Weatherboard  
other N/A

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.

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8. Statement of Significance (Continued)  
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Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
Ethnic Heritage--Native American  
Social History

Period of Significance ca. 1889

Significant Dates \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

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: \_\_\_\_\_

=====  
10. Geographical Data  
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Acreege of Property Less than 1

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

|   | Zone        | Easting       | Northing       | Zone | Easting     | Northing    |
|---|-------------|---------------|----------------|------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | <u>15</u>   | <u>321710</u> | <u>3975930</u> | 3    | <u>    </u> | <u>    </u> |
| 2 | <u>    </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 Evelyn Gravitt and Mary Ann Head; revised by Marsha Weisiger,  
Architectural Historian

organization Cherokee County Civic Cultural Center date October 1992

street & number 320 Goingsnake telephone (918)458-9393

city or town Tahlequah state OK zip code 74464

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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)

=====  
Property Owner  
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_  
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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 8

Joseph M. Thompson House  
name of property  
Cherokee County, Oklahoma  
county and State

Summary

The Joseph M. Thompson House, built ca. 1889, is a two-story, Queen Anne style house with Eastlake details. The asymmetrical house is constructed of clapboards and has a cross-gabled roof. It is located on a spacious lot at the southwest intersection of S.H. 51 and South College Avenue, near Tahlequah's downtown and civic buildings. Other residences built in the 1880s, the Cherokee National Capitol (NHL, 1966), the Cherokee National Jail (NR, 1974), and the Cherokee Supreme Court Building (NR, 1974), are located in the vicinity. The Thompson House, now used as the Cherokee County Civic Cultural Center, retains a high degree of historical integrity.

Exterior Description

The Joseph M. Thompson House, a two-story residence designed in the Queen Anne style, is asymmetrical in massing. The clapboard walls rise up from a gray, quarry-faced sandstone foundation, and the house is sheltered by a steeply-pitched, cross-gabled roof. Brick slope, ridge, and end chimneys rise above the roof. Porches at the northeast and northwest elevations, a bay window at the east elevation, and an oriel window at the north elevation provide visual variety. At the southwest corner is an overhang that served as a firewood storage niche. When the house was originally built, a stoop with a hipped roof was constructed at the center of the south wall; in the mid-1920s, the stoop was replaced by a larger, screened porch with a native stone foundation.

The roof gables help to provide visual variety and texture. At the front and rear elevations, jerkinhead gables feature wide eaves supported by scroll brackets. At the side elevations, the gables are highly ornamented, in addition to the scroll brackets supporting the wide eaves. The gable apexes are decorated with an ornamental king's post, and the gable ends are embellished with rows of diamond and fish-scale shingles, flanked by clapboards set in a rayed pattern. One-of-a-kind wooden ornaments also adorn the gable ends: the north gable features a mortar and pestle, and the south gable is graced by a Cherokee star set within a Masonic triangle.

The one-story, Eastlake entry porch at the east elevation has a hipped roof and features a knob and spindle frieze, turned columns, and a cutout railing. A scalloped arch graced by cutout garlands and a knob-and-circle pendant spans the porch entryway.

The bay window at the east elevation and the oriel window at the north elevation have hipped roofs, supported by scroll brackets with cutout bulls-eyes and knob pendants. The upper sashes of the windows feature small squares of art glass in a rectilinear pattern. Wooden panels define the area above and below the window sashes.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   7   Page   9  

Joseph M. Thompson House  
name of property  
Cherokee County, Oklahoma  
county and State

The lower panels of the front doors and back door are elaborately carved with a unifying daisy motif, which also appears inside the house. Door glazing features iridescent art glass in a pattern like that at the bay and oriel windows. The front screen doors and their hardware appear to be original.

The fenestration consists of narrow, wooden, double-hung windows, arranged singly and in pairs. The architrave molding incorporates a guilloche motif, as does the molding at the front doors.

Approximately 40 feet southwest of the screened porch is the remnant of a well, originally covered by a small well house. Now sealed off, the well is still outlined by large sandstone boulders. However, the superstructure is no longer extant.

Interior Description

The interior of the house is remarkably intact. The original plan remains in place, and all of the significant interior features are still present. Yellow pine floors are found throughout the house, and paneled and wainscotted walls enrich the formal rooms downstairs. Among the notable features are paneled bay windows in the entry parlor and main parlor, paneled pocket doors in the parlor, a dining room fireplace with a walnut mantel embellished with bulls eyes and spindlework, a master-bedroom fireplace with an ornate walnut and ash mantle, and an ornate staircase with turned balusters and a newel post decorated with bulls eyes, floral carvings, and a turned-spindle motif.

Alterations

Physical evidence in the attic indicates that the wing at the west (rear) elevation was originally one story, but shortly thereafter a second-story room was added. The second-story room was present by the time the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company first recorded the house in 1901; construction details indicate that it was probably added within two years of the original construction. In the mid-1920s, a stoop was replaced by a larger, screened porch with a native stone foundation. Moreover, according to the Sanborn maps, a porch was originally located at the rear entry, along the north wall of the northwest elevation. Ca. 1921, a room addition replaced the porch. In 1987, the room addition was removed and a new porch was constructed, replicating the front porch in mirror image. The design of the original porch is unknown. On the interior, a bathroom was added at an unknown date, taking up part of the original kitchen. Aside from these alterations, the house is virtually unchanged from its original appearance. It continues to possess integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and it retains all of its essential stylistic features.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 10

Joseph M. Thompson House  
name of property  
Cherokee County, Oklahoma  
county and State

Summary

The Joseph M. Thompson House, built ca. 1889, is significant under Criterion C as an outstanding example of Queen Anne architecture in Tahlequah. In design, appearance, and feeling the house embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Queen Anne style with Eastlake details, a style popular both nationally and locally from about 1880 until about 1910. It is also significant under Criterion A, as it exemplifies the endeavors of the Cherokees to adopt Euro-American cultural practices as a strategy for retaining control of the Cherokee Nation. The Thompson House retains all elements of integrity necessary to convey its architectural and historical significance.

Historical Background

The Thompson House was the home of Dr. Joseph M. Thompson, a leading health practitioner in the Cherokee Nation. The house was built by Tahlequah merchant Johnson Thompson, reportedly as a gift to his son upon graduation from medical school. The elder Thompson, a mixed-blood Cherokee, came to Indian Territory in 1835 with the Cherokee treaty party. He operated one of the leading mercantile establishments in Tahlequah and raised stock cattle on two hundred acres in the Cherokee Nation. He was also one of the first Cherokee Masons.

His son Joseph was born February 8, 1865, to Eliza C. Taylor Thompson, also a Cherokee, while the family was residing in the Chickasaw Nation, where they had taken refuge from Civil War raiders. He graduated from the Cherokee Male Seminary at Park Hill about 1883 and the Indian University in Tahlequah soon thereafter, then began reading medicine with Dr. Allen (first name unknown).<sup>1</sup> In 1888 he began attending Missouri Medical College (now Washington University at St. Louis), where he received his degree in medicine in 1889.<sup>2</sup> In 1897 he pursued post-graduate studies at the New York Polyclinic.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Tahlequah Citizen, 3 Jan. 1935; O'Beirne, H. F. and E. S., The Indian Territory: Its Chiefs, Legislators, and Leading Men (St. Louis: C. B. Woodward Co., 1892).

<sup>2</sup>Cherokee Advocate, 14 March 1988; Graduation records, Special Collections, Washington University.

<sup>3</sup>Dewitz, Paul W. H., Notable Men of Indian Territory at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century, 1904-1905 (Muskogee: Southwestern Historical Co., n.d.); Gilmore, E. L., "Dr. Joe" (typescript, n.d.), Okla. Landmarks Inventory, SHPO.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 11

Joseph M. Thompson House  
name of property  
Cherokee County, Oklahoma  
county and State

Thompson became one of the foremost medical practitioners in the Cherokee Nation. In 1904, he was the only physician in the Cherokee capital of Tahlequah listed among the Notable Men of Indian Territory at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century. He began his practice in Tahlequah by 1887 and in November 1888, at the age of twenty-three, the Cherokee National Council appointed him Medical Superintendent for Public Institutions of the Cherokee Nation. In that capacity, he oversaw health services for the Cherokee Male and Female Seminaries, the Cherokee National Penitentiary (aka the Cherokee National Jail), and the Cherokee Nation Insane Asylum. He retained the position through 1892. In 1896 he was appointed for a two-year term as Medical Superintendent for the Colored High School, attended by the children of Cherokee freedmen (former slaves within the Cherokee Nation).<sup>4</sup> Thompson also maintained a large private practice, seeing patients in an office above the drug store he established with M. R. Brown in 1889.<sup>5</sup> He continued his practice until eighteen months before his death on January 2, 1935.<sup>6</sup>

Significance

The Thompson House is architecturally significant as a locally outstanding example of Queen Anne architecture with Eastlake influences and historically significant as a reflection of Cherokee acculturation at the end of the 19th century. The house is the best example of the ornate homes built by the leading citizens of Tahlequah in the 1880s and 1890s, reflecting the aspirations of their owners. In an effort to preserve the Cherokee Nation against the challenges of land-hungry Euro-Americans, mixed-blood Cherokees in particular had long embraced a Euro-American way of life while retaining tribal identity.<sup>7</sup> Acculturation became particularly important to the Cherokees during the 1880s. The General Allotment Act of 1887 specifically exempted the so-called Five Civilized Tribes, including the Cherokees; it was not until 1893

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<sup>4</sup>Tahlequah Telephone, 22 July 1887; Cherokee Advocate, 9 Jan. 1889; Oklahoma Historical Society, Indian Archives, Cherokee Records, Vols. 514, 538, 545, and 683.

<sup>5</sup>Cherokee Advocate, 19 Dec. 1888; *ibid.*, 13 Feb. 1889; *ibid.*, 5 April 1889.

<sup>6</sup>Tahlequah Citizen, 3 Jan. 1935.

<sup>7</sup>W. David Baird and David Gebhard, "Historic Context for the Native American Theme: Management Region #3, 1830-1941," 22, prepared for the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, 1991; Baird, W. David, "Are There 'Real' Indians in Oklahoma?: Historical Perceptions of the Five Civilized Tribes," The Chronicles of Oklahoma 68 (Spring 1990): 4-23.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 12

Joseph M. Thompson House  
name of property  
Cherokee County, Oklahoma  
county and State

that Congress directed the Dawes Commission to negotiate agreements to dissolve the governments of the Five Tribes and allot land to individual tribal members. In the interim, Cherokees continued to endeavor to demonstrate that their cultural attainments were equal to those of any people residing in the United States, as a strategy for maintaining control of their nation. The effort at assimilation was especially evident in the architecture of the Cherokee Nation. The Cherokee Female Seminary (NR, 1973), commissioned by the Cherokee Nation, for example, was designed in the Romanesque Revival style by C. E. Illsley. The Cherokee National Capitol (NHL, 1966) and the Cherokee Supreme Court Building (NR, 1974) were designed in the Italianate style. The residences of prominent citizens in Tahlequah were large, usually two-storied, and ornate, and they reflected the nationally dominant tastes of the period. These buildings were a source of local pride, as they bespoke of a progressive and prosperous Cherokee National Capital.

The Thompson House possesses all of the hallmarks of the Queen Anne style. The principal characteristics of the style include a steeply pitched roof, usually with a dominant front-facing gable; patterned shingles; an asymmetrical facade with a one-story porch; and cutaway bay windows. The Eastlake, or spindlework, subtype incorporates knob-and-spindle friezes, turned columns, cutout brackets, and the bulls eye motif. The Thompson House expresses all of these characteristics. Particularly notable are the patterned shinglework in the gable ends; the window glazing, with a large pane of glass bounded by small panes, also typical of the style; the bay and oriel windows; the scroll brackets with cutout bulls-eyes and knob pendants; and the front entry porch, with its knob-and-spindle frieze, turned columns, lacy cutout railing, and scalloped archway. Also noteworthy is the incorporation of gable details reflecting the personal interests of Dr. Thompson. The mortar and pestle in the north gable end represented Thompson's work as a physician and pharmacist, while the Cherokee star set within a Masonic triangle at the south gable end reflected his tribal heritage and his membership in the Cherokee Masonic Lodge.

The Thompson House is one of the few extant residences of its era in Tahlequah and retains the greatest degree of architectural integrity. This assessment is based on surveys of Tahlequah houses built in the 1880s, conducted in 1982 and 1992. Of the eleven remaining houses built in Tahlequah in the 1880s, only three, including the Thompson House, retain integrity. Neither of the other two examples were designed in the Queen Anne style. The John C. Dannenburg House is a National Folk house with Italianate influences, whereas the Jane Anna French House is an example of the Gothic Revival style. The James W. McSpadden House was built in the Queen Anne style, but in the 1920s a Bungalow porch was added. Likewise, the Johnson Thompson House, built in a vernacular Late Victorian idiom, now incorporates Bungalow porches. The Joseph M. Thompson House is not only the best and most intact example of Queen Anne architecture in Tahlequah, it embodies the spirit of the Cherokee leadership

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   8   Page  13 

Joseph M. Thompson House  
name of property  
Cherokee County, Oklahoma  
county and State

in the 1880s who believed assimilation was a means to retention of their Cherokee nationality.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   9   Page   14  

Joseph M. Thompson House  
name of property  
Cherokee County, Oklahoma  
county and State

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Baird, W. David, and Gebhard, David. "Historic Context for the Native American Theme, Management Region #3, 1830-1941." Prepared for the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, 1991.

Cherokee Advocate, various issues, 1888 and 1889.

Cherokee County Democrat, 8 January 1935.

Comstock, William T. Victorian Domestic Architectural Plans and Details. Reprint. New York: Dover, 1987.

Dewitz, Paul W. H., ed. Notable Men of Indian Territory at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century, 1904-1905. Muskogee, Ind. Terr.: Southwestern Historical Co., n.d.

[Gideon, D. C.] Indian Territory: Descriptive Biographical and Genealogical . . . with a General History of the Territory. New York: Lewis Publishing Co., 1901.

Gilmore, E. L. "Joseph M. Thompson, M.D., 1865-1935."

Homes Representative of Tahlequah, Oklahoma, in the 1880s file. Oklahoma Landmarks Inventory, Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office.

Indian Arrow, 21 February 1889.

O'Beirne, H. F. & E. S. The Indian Territory: Its Chiefs, Legislators and Leading Men. Saint Louis, Mo.: C. B. Woodward Company, 1892.

Oklahoma Historical Society. Indian Archives. Cherokee Records, Vols. 514, 538, 545, and 683.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Company. Maps for 1894, 1896, 1901, 1904, 1909, 1914, 1927, and 1934.

Tahlequah Arrow, 28 June 1902.

Tahlequah Citizen, 3 January 1935.

Tahlequah Telephone, various issues 1887, 1888, and 1889.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   9   Page   15  

Joseph M. Thompson House  
name of property  
Cherokee County, Oklahoma  
county and State

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   10   Page   16  

Joseph M. Thompson House  
name of property  
Cherokee County, Oklahoma  
county and State

Verbal Boundary Description

East 81.5 feet of Lot 3 and all of Lot 4, Block 97, Original Townsite of Tahlequah.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire grounds that have been associated historically with the property.