

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

For NPS use only

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

received JUL 5 1985

date entered AUG 5 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic A. J. Mason Building

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Lincoln Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Tullahassee

N/A vicinity of

state Oklahoma

code 40

county Wagoner

code 145

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Marcellous Williams

street & number 2982 Virginia Park

city, town Detroit

N/A vicinity of

state Michigan 48206

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of County Clerk

street & number Wagoner County Court House

city, town Wagoner

state Oklahoma 74467

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Oklahoma Landmarks Inventory

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1983

federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office - Oklahoma Historical Society

city, town Oklahoma City

state Oklahoma 73015

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The A. J. Mason building is a detached, single story commercial building located in the northern part of the City of Tullahassee, Oklahoma. This rectangular building has a red brick facade and native stone rear and side walls. The flat roof has a parapet on the front of the building.

The front or east side of the building is constructed of red brick laid in the running bond. The parapet wall has two red brick pilasters on either side which have smooth ashlar bases and capitals. Smooth ashlar blocks run along the top of the parapet and along the top of a brick freize incorporated in the parapet. The freize has thirty-five columns of stepped brick dentils set in it. Below the freize is a smooth ashlar block with the inscription "A. J. MASON & BRO" on it. The front central entrance door has a wooden frame and has been covered by an iron grille. Either side of the door were two window lights and large display windows, but these have now been filled with concrete blocks. Above the main door and window frames are seven transom lights which have been covered. These lights originally had wooden frames.

The sides and rear of the building are constructed of coursed native stone. On both the north and south sides, two small wooden framed windows have been boarded up with wooden planks. At the rear of the building, the rear entrance door and two windows have also been covered with wooden boards. All three of these features still show the original stone lintels above them.

The original display windows were replaced with concrete blocks in the 1950s. Other than this change, the nominated property remains intact.

Though altered, the structure still conveys the overall sense of its historic appearance.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) (Ethnic)

Specific dates 1912-1935 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The A. J. Mason Building is historically significant because it is the only remaining commercial building in Tullahassee, one of the oldest all-black towns still in existence in Oklahoma, having been founded in 1899 in Indian Territory, eight years before statehood; and it is one of the oldest black-owned businesses of masonry construction in any of the twelve existing all-black towns of Oklahoma.

Tullahassee Mission was established in 1850 by the Reverend R. M. Loughridge and it was the most important educational institution in the Creek Nation, Indian Territory. Destroyed by fire in 1880, it was rebuilt by the Creek Nation and used to educate their one-time black slaves. According to Tolson, three blacks, Henry C. Reed, Snow Sells, and Sugar George, were appointed as trustees of the black school. Nine years later, the all-black town of Tullahassee was established around the all-black school. Tullahassee town was a result of the all-black town movement in Oklahoma and Indian Territories. From 1889 to 1907, more than twenty all-black towns were founded in the Twin Territories to attract blacks from the South and those freedmen living in the two areas.

Tullahassee served as a rural market center for black farmers living in the surrounding agricultural community. It soon developed a thriving business district and the number of residents reached approximately 200 prior to 1920.

During this period of growth for Tullahassee, the A. J. Mason Building was constructed in 1912. The property originally housed a grocery and retained that function until the 1950s. Since that time, it has housed a night club. As the population of Tullahassee dwindled to approximately 150, the town's business district declined and all of the commercial buildings once associated with the downtown area have either been destroyed or allowed to deteriorate and become vacant.

The A.J. Mason Building, therefore, represents the only remaining commercial structure in the all-black community of Tallahassee, a role it has maintained for the past 70 years.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Interview: Mrs. Eloise Miles, July, 1983

Tolson, Arthur L., The Black Oklahomans, A History: 1541-1972, New Orleans; Edwards Printing Co., 1972.

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Northwest Muskogee, OK

Quadrangle scale 7.5 minutes
(1:24,000)

UTM References

A

1	5	2	7	9	7	7	0	3	9	6	8	6	2	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning at a point 260' south of the southwest corner of the intersection of Lincoln Street and Highway 51B, proceed west 100', then south 80', then east 100' then north 80' to point of beginning. The nominated property stands within these boundaries.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bryan Brown Supervised by Dr. George O. Carney

organization Department of Geography

date February, 1984

street & number Oklahoma State University

telephone 405-624-6250

city or town Stillwater

state Oklahoma 74078

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

C. Engetal

6/21/85

title

date

For NPS use only

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

William B. Bushong
Keeper of the National Register

date

8/5/85

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration