

PH0369772

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED OCT 24 1975  
DATE ENTERED SEP 29 1976

**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  
**Creek Council Tree Site** *END*  
AND/OR COMMON  
**Creek Council Oak**

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
**18th & Cheyenne** NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CITY, TOWN  
**Tulsa** CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
**Tulsa** No. 1  
STATE CODE VICINITY OF COUNTY CODE  
**Oklahoma** **40** **Tulsa** **143**

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
**City of Tulsa**  
STREET & NUMBER  
**City Hall**  
CITY, TOWN STATE  
**Tulsa** VICINITY OF **Oklahoma**

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. **Office of the County Clerk**  
STREET & NUMBER  
**Tulsa County Courthouse**  
CITY, TOWN STATE  
**Tulsa** VICINITY OF **Oklahoma**

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
**Special Council Oak Survey**  
DATE  
**1975** FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL  
 LOCAL  
DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS **City of Tulsa, City Hall**  
CITY, TOWN STATE  
**Tulsa** VICINITY OF **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

On the crest of a low, wooded hill overlooking the Arkansas River the Creeks ended their tortuous, voluntary migration from Alabama, this in 1836. According to their carefully preserved traditions, they chose a site between present 17th and 18th Streets and Cheyenne and Denver Avenues. A large oak towered over them as they deposited the ashes of their last fire in the old homeland and fanned to life a new fire ... with solemn words of dedication. A traditional "busking ground" was soon laid out and lined with four council sheds forming a "square." Here tribal business was conducted, usually in July. The site was used as late as 1896.

Statehood in 1907 marked the end of the Creek Nation, of course. The for-the-most-part shed-type buildings that accommodated the clan's various political, judicial, social and ceremonial needs were by this time gone and the cabins of the Indians were being replaced by the more substantial homes of a growing new city. So strong was the tradition of the area, however, that the Creek Council Oak was identified, largely through the efforts of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and carefully preserved. For more than a half-century a bronze tablet noted the site, in the south lawn of a private home at 1730 S. Cheyenne Avenue. In 1973, when a proposed housing development threatened the oak, four Tulsans paid \$114,000 to purchase the site, then transferred title to the City of Tulsa in exchange for another piece of city-owned property.

The handsome new development now rims Creek Nation Council Oak Park with single-family homes on the west, "Council Oak" town villas on the north. The council tree itself (a mature Burr Oak, Quercus macrocarpa) is the focus of a small park at the corner of Cheyenne and 18th Street. Its exact age undetermined, it stands approximately 75 feet in height, with a spread of some 53 feet. It is apparently in good health, insect and disease free. Extensive landscaping now under way will serve to both beautify the site and protect the tree itself. "The Council Oak," one Tulsan said recently, "is not the handsomest of Tulsa's trees, nor the tallest, and maybe not even the oldest, but it means the most to us." Its formal portrait now stands in City Hall proclaiming 1836 as Tulsa's birth year.

# 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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Indian History
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1836 to 1896

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Creek Council Tree - a mature Burr oak - marks the traditional "busking ground" chosen in 1836 by the Lochopoka clan of Creeks. In late December 1834 they had begun their voluntary migration from Alabama. With U. S. Militia escort they had moved westward through Mississippi and Tennessee to Memphis, thence by steamboat (down the Mississippi, up the Arkansas) to Little Rock. There low water forced them to disembark. With pack ponies for their meager possessions and supplies, they walked the final 300 miles to their new homeland. It was a slow and painful trek and of the original group of 630, 161 died en route. But the 1836 arrival was marked with a solemn and traditional ceremony.

A "busk" site was chosen on a low hill overlooking the Arkansas. Here, according to their traditions, they deposited ashes brought over the trail from their last fires in Alabama, kindled a new one with a dedicatory ceremony. Here the Tulsa-Lochopokas "town" was established, a political division of the Creek Nation and as late as 1896 the Creeks gathered here for clan ceremonies, feasts, and games. (The "busk," usually held in July, was for the purpose of conducting tribal business, for purification and recreation, and to give thanks for the new crop of green corn. All families were notified by the "Micco," or town chief, and expected to attend.)

Tradition dictated the composition of the busking ground. Around a large cleared space stood four council sheds that formed a "square." To the west was the "round house" containing the sacred fire. Here most of the business of the town was conducted. On the north was a building used by the war officials with the chief men of the war clans. War and law enforcement were both directed from here. On the east side of the square was a shed occupied by the younger, still untried young men. All structures were located and constructed according to ages-old plan. The Creek Council Oak was in the southeast part of the square.

The busks, of course, were far more than mere town meetings. Business was conducted and justice administered. But there was also a purification ceremony for the young men, a deeply religious ritual that preceded the feasts, dances, and games. (Among the latter was a form of stick ball, taken so seriously by the Creek -- and played so vigorously as to be potentially lethal -- that their tribal council passed stringest laws governing the game, and eventually prohibited all games between towns!)



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

OCT 24 1975

DATE ENTERED

SEP 29 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

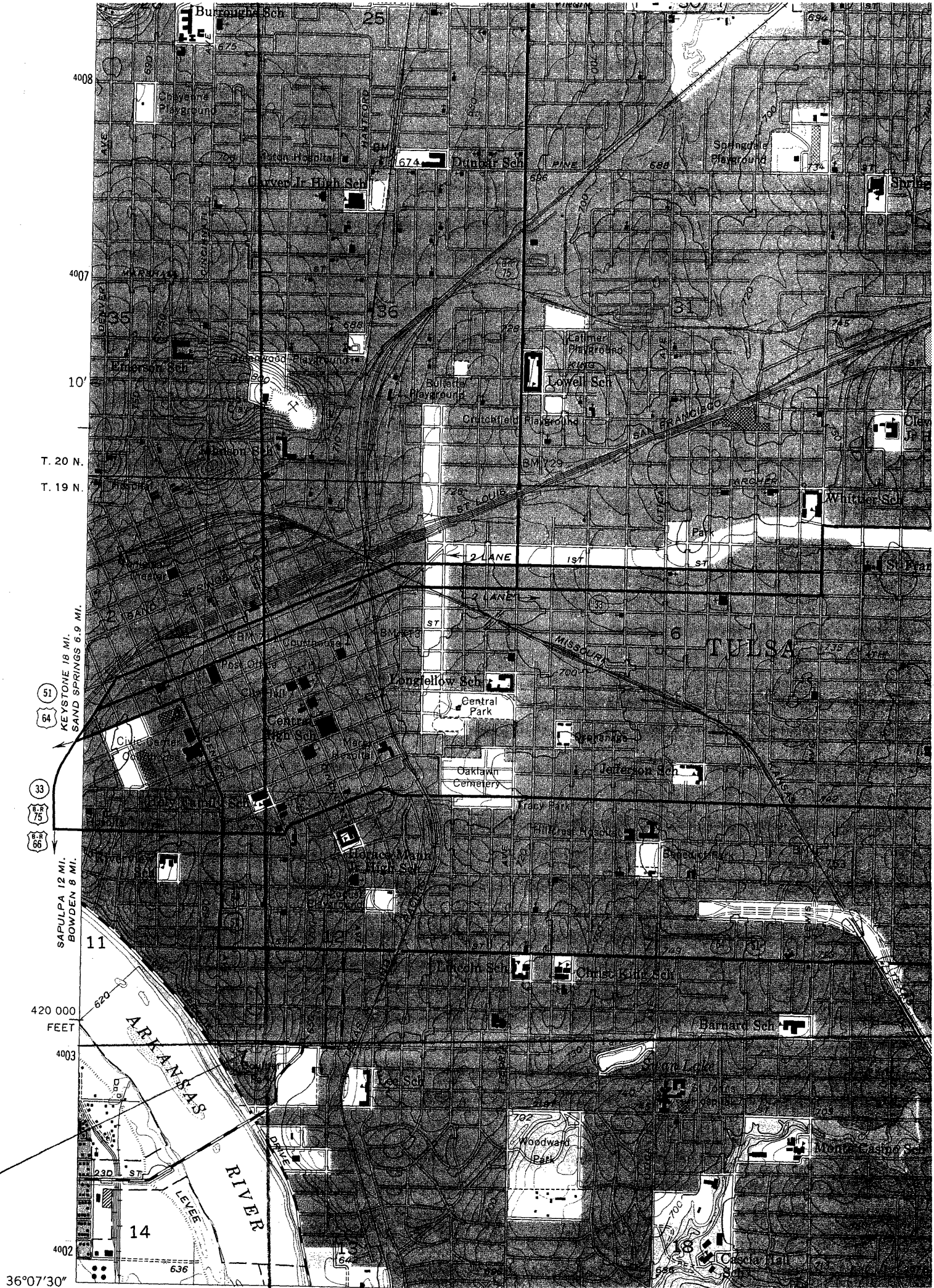
PAGE 1

Creek Council Tree

As noted (cf. No. 7), this area was probably not used by the Indians after the turn of the century. Gradually it became a solid, substantial residential area for a growing city. The Creek Council Tree itself, however, survived ... identified by the Daughters of the American Revolution, marked with a suitable bronze plaque noting its significance, and preserved by private owners. Now in 1975 the immediate site is being developed into a handsome new residential complex. And the oak, in its small, well landscaped park, stands as a meaningful memorial to the proud Indian tribe that brought law and order to a new, then near-wilderness homeland nearly 140 years ago.



0150070310



51  
64  
33  
75  
66

SAPULPA 12 MI.  
BOWDEN 8 MI.

420 000  
FEET

36°07'30"