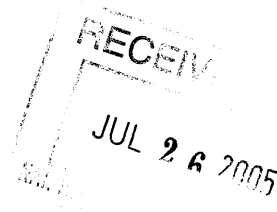


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



1. Name of Property

historic name Alston-Bedwell House

other names/site number McSpadden-Bedwell House

2. Location

street & number 315 N. State not for publication N/A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 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide locally. (N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)



Signature of certifying official

7-25-05

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.

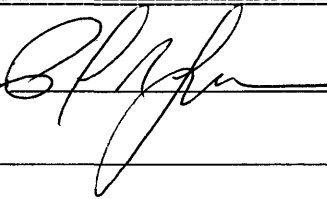
___ determined eligible for the
National Register

___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined not eligible for the


National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain): _____

 9/2/05

Date

 _____
Signature of Keeper of Action Date

5. Classification

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> 2 </u>	<u> 0 </u> buildings
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> sites
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> objects
<u> 3 </u>	<u> 0 </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: Single Dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Queen Anne: Free Classic

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE, STUCCO

roof ASPHALT

walls WOOD: Weatherboard

other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

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.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance 1906

8. Statement of Significance (Continued)

Significant Dates 1906

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder Alston, William, Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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

Acreage of Property

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	321850	3976300	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

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.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jennifer Jones, Owner

organization Jones' Historic Preservation date: February 2004

street & number PO Box 5156 telephone: 580-231-0577

city or town Enid state OK zip code 73702-5156

Additional Documentation

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)

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
Alston-Bedwell House
Cherokee County, Oklahoma

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Property Owner

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

name Mrs. William Lyle Bowman

street & number Grace Living Center, 614 Cherrie telephone

city or town Tahlequah state OK zip code 74465

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Alston-Bedwell House
name of property
Cherokee County, OK
county and State

Summary

The Alston-Bedwell House, built in 1906 by local contractor Mr. William Alston and later occupied by prominent local educator D. R. Bedwell, is a two-story, wood frame building of the Free Classic subset of the Queen Anne school of residential architecture. Locally known as the Bedwell House, it is located in a residential district marked by ample tree coverage, the home is clad in yellow wooden clapboard siding with sawtooth detailing under the windows, dentils along the roof-wall junction, pendants at the gable peaks, and brackets which simulate false overhangs. Standing on the west side of State Street at the corner of State and Downing Street, the house and its lot feature the original landscape laid out by Bedwell. The property is in excellent condition and remains largely, if not completely, unchanged from the Bedwells' time.

Description

The roof of this 1 ½ story house consists of a large side gable with lower cross gables. The cross gables are not symmetrical; the front gable is offset while the rear gable is centered. Adjacent to the front gable is a hipped dormer. Interior end chimneys are located on the ridge line at each main gable; the chimneys have corbelled tops. The gables all project slightly over the first floor walls, with complete cornice returns that create pent roofs.

The house has a raised concrete foundation that has been pargeted in order to give a smoother, more finished look. The gray of the parget echoes the gray of the composite shingles and offsets the yellow of the siding and details. The basement is accessed by a door on the south side and features several divided light, awning type windows evenly spaced along its expanse.

The front façade faces east. It is characterized by an offset, front facing gable that projects slightly over an inset porch. To the north of the gable is a hipped dormer. The walls of the house are sheathed in lap siding with a 3" reveal. There is a wide frieze board capped with dentils, a plain, raking frieze in the gable, and 4" corner boards. There is a water table encircling the house. The porch is inset and is marked by four thin Tuscan columns set on square piers. Non-original horizontal railing have been installed between the piers. The deck of the porch is wood and there is a set of seven concrete steps with pipe rails leading up to the porch. The steps are centered in the entire façade, but are not symmetrical to either the door, the porch itself, nor the projecting gable.

The entry is simple – a single, wood panel door with a wooden screen door, flat 4" surrounds and a simple crown mold. There is a wide Queen Anne type window offset to the south. It consists of a large lower, single pane sash and a smaller upper sash with smaller quarrel type panes. The surrounds match the door with the addition of a saw-tooth mold under the sills. To the north of the door, the body of the house projects out from the inset porch. On a side wall, overlooking the porch, is a single, wood frame, 1/1 window. On the façade wall, centered in the wall is a Queen Anne window matching the porch window.

The front gable has a pair of tall, 1/1 windows with the upper sash matching that of the Queen Anne windows on the first floor. The dormer, likewise, has similar paired windows. The dormer also has a cornice with dentils.

The north elevation is marked by the large gable of the main roof. The centered in the gable are two 1/1

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Alston – Bedwell House
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windows. At the rear, or west end of the gable is a smaller projecting gable that forms the roof of a bay window on the first floor. This bay window has a single Queen Anne window flanked by smaller 1/1 windows. Adjacent to the bay is another Queen Anne window on the main wall of the elevation. Offset, near the front of the house, is a single 1/1 window.

The west, or rear elevation is marked by the lower central cross gable. Centered in this gable is a single 1/1 window. There is, tucked into the ell formed by the rear wing and the main body of the house, a shed roof porch with a single chamfered post and an entry door that leads into the main body of the house. The rear wall of the rear wing has a single 1/1 window offset to the north and paired 1/1 windows offset to the south. The south ell also has a shed roof porch, but this one was enclosed at an unknown time, but probably before World War II.

The south elevation is the simplest. Like the north elevation, there are two 1/1 windows in the side gable, but unlike the north gable, this one retains some of its decorative gable bargeboard. This consists of an inverted starburst emanating from the gable peak. On the first floor, there are three windows – a single, small 1/1 offset to the west and two 1/1 windows evenly spaced along the elevation.

Grounds/Landscape

The rear porches lead to a small concrete patio. This patio, which is enclosed by a small wire fence and several plantings, was used by the Bedwells for bird watching, one of their favorite hobbies and one of Professor Bedwell's professional specialties.

On the north side of this patio stands a detached, single car, gabled garage. A typical small outbuilding, this wooden garage is painted in the same white as the house's trim. According to an interview with Beth Herrington, a longtime resident, this garage was built by the Bedwell's early in their residence.

The landscape is also largely original to the Bedwell's time of residence. The design for the landscape was planned by Professor Bedwell, who also designed much of the landscape of the nearby Northeastern Oklahoma University campus. The lot which slopes gently toward State Avenue on the east has been terraced by way of a small stone wall. This terracing allows for the additional dirt needed to make the lot level. This wall extends along the entire eastern boundary of the lot and part of the northern side. At the corner of the northeast corner of the wall is a wide, square, stone pier.

The front of the home has large beds of various plantings on each side of the porch steps. A large tree stands just to the right of the sidewalk which continues down into a series of three concrete steps that lead from the terraced yard to street level. To the right of the tree are two wooden signs which were added by the Tahlequah Historic Advisory Council to denote the property's historical significance. Another large tree stands at the northeastern corner of the home. Along the northern boundary of the property, a line of large shrubs creates a privacy break that shields the north side of the home from the view of the street. The back, or west, side of the home features the previously mentioned patio. The patio leads to the large open space on the south side of the house. This space is dominated by a huge magnolia tree planted in the center of the space by Bedwell. The yard terracing continues from the patio across the area to the southern boundary of the property. A series of three tiny rock steps leads from this level to the lower yard level. Along the stone wall are various plantings. There are three more trees in addition to the previously

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mentioned magnolia. One on the upper terrace, one at the southeast corner of the home, and one along the eastern boundary.

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Alston – Bedwell House
name of property
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Summary:

The Alston-Bedwell House is an excellent local example of Queen Anne Free Classic architecture. It was built in 1906 by prominent local builder Mr. William Alston, who had constructed a similar, but smaller and less detailed, house at 530 Summit Avenue. Alston had also designed and built the St. James Episcopal Church in nearby Wagoner, OK, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. He and his family lived in the home for the first two years. In 1908, they sold the home to the widow of J. W. McSpadden, Sr. whose husband had been a prominent member of Tahlequah politics. She sold the home to the Bedwells in 1928 beginning their time of residency. Its classic architecture remains largely unchanged from its period of significance. There have been no additions to the home and very few visible changes. The landscape surrounding the home, planned and executed by Bedwell, himself, also remains largely unchanged from its original state.

Historical Background

The settlement of Tahlequah began in the 1830's with removal of the Cherokee from their traditional homelands in the southeastern United States. The largest portion of Tahlequah's settlers came on the now infamous Trail of Tears. Many stories abound concerning the reasons for Tahlequah's name and why its particular site was chosen, but a quote from Dr. T. L. Ballenger, a historian at Northeastern State College best encompasses all of those stories. Ballenger once said, "Tahlequah is not simply a town, a place to buy and sell goods, a municipality; Tahlequah has a spirit, an individuality, a distinctive personality, a social and cultural uniqueness all her own."¹ The town was officially designated as the capital of the Cherokee Nation in 1839. While prosperous at first, Tahlequah suffered greatly through the Civil War years. Though there were participants on the side of the Union, many Cherokees either fought with or sympathized with the Confederacy bringing punishment from the Union. However, the town recovered quickly following the war's end becoming once again quite prosperous.

Education was of prime importance to the Cherokee. As one of the most assimilated tribes, they felt that a full education was the best way for their children to succeed in the new national society. Therefore, the nation formed a network of schools which included the two jewels of the Cherokee educational system: the Cherokee National Male Seminary and the Cherokee National Female Seminary. These schools, which correspond to today's high schools, were very advanced and taught not only traditional school subjects but technical skills useful in life as well. Construction of the seminaries began in 1847 at Park Hill, a small community south of Tahlequah. On April 10, 1887, the female seminary was completely destroyed by fire necessitating the construction of a new building. As Tahlequah had become far more prosperous than Park Hill, due to its being the Nation's capital, the Cherokee governing council decided the new female seminary building would be located in Tahlequah. On April 18, 1889, the new female seminary, a state-of-the-art, three-story building with a steam heating system and hot and cold running water, opened its doors to students.

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The Cherokee Nation and its educational system became part of the new state system following Oklahoma's statehood in 1907. Not wishing to be left behind on the national educational scene, Oklahoma looked to quickly build a higher education system of agricultural and mechanical schools as well as schools where teachers could be trained in order to improve the Oklahoma public education system. Tahlequah's role began on January 11, 1909, when Gov. Charles N. Haskell informed the Oklahoma State Legislature that the Department of the Interior had valued the Cherokee National Female Seminary building at \$40,000, and its 40-acre tract of land at an additional \$5,000. The governor felt the building would be the ideal location for the newly formed Northeastern Normal School and recommended that the building be purchased from the Cherokee Nation. Haskell felt it would be an excellent way to "recognize and commemorate the history of such commendable educational effort as was put forth by the Cherokee Nation when they were such an important part of the small lamp of enlightenment surrounded by a wilderness of darkness."² On March 6, 1909, the legislature responded to Haskell's request by appropriating not only the requested funds for the purchase but also an additional \$70,000 for the school's first two years of operation. Northeastern Normal School welcomed its first students on September 14, 1909. Of the many students to enroll at Northeastern were a man and woman who would have a profound effect on both the school and the town of Tahlequah.

William Alston had moved from Georgia into Indian Territory in 1888, settling first near Wagoner. A carpenter by trade and a devout Episcopalian by faith, Wagoner almost single-handedly constructed the St. James Episcopal Church in Wagoner in 1894.³ Here moved for a brief time to Tahlequah, where he continued as a carpenter and builder, constructing his own house and another similar house, the Bagette House, in 1905 and 1906.

Denver Rufus (D. R.) Bedwell was born on September 11, 1889, in Shannon County, Missouri, to Thomas and Ditha Summers Bedwell. He attended Northeastern from 1914 until he graduated with a Bachelor of Science in biology in 1917. After graduation, Bedwell traveled to Muskogee, Oklahoma to enlist in the U. S. Army on September 14, 1917. He served as a member of the European Expeditionary Force in France and was discharged at Camp Pike, Arkansas, on July 19, 1919. He then went on to earn both a Master of Arts and a Ph. D. from George Peabody College. In 1928, he began his tenure at Northeastern State College as an Associate Professor of Biology at an extension campus. By 1931, he had advanced to the status of Full Professor of Biology at the main campus in Tahlequah.

Elizabeth Francis Rook Bedwell was born on August 18, 1889, in Bates, Arkansas, to C. W. and Hattie Gamble Rook. She also attended Northeastern earning a Bachelor of Science degree in both Art and English. She married Bedwell and moved to Tahlequah with him in 1928. They purchased a house at 315 N. State Street where they lived for the remainder of her life.

The Bedwells quickly became prominent members of Tahlequah society themselves. D. R. became a much beloved member of the Northeastern staff, popular with both students and the administration. Upon their possession of the house, he began to plan a landscape design for the lot surrounding the home. He also designed much of the landscape

² Faulk, Odie B. and Billy M. Jones. Tahlequah, NSU, and the Cherokees. Tahlequah, OK: Northeastern State University Educational Foundation, 1984.

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of the Northeastern campus as he was a superb botanist. Devout Methodists, D. R. and Elizabeth became prestigious members of the First Methodist Church in Tahlequah. D. R. was involved in many of the governing boards of the church. Elizabeth was a teacher and youth leader in the church until her death. D. R. was a charter member of American Legion Post #50. Elizabeth was a member of the Friends in Council Study Club, the Nasturtium Unit of the Tahlequah Garden Club, Kappa Kappa Iota sorority, and the Northeastern College Faculty Wives Auxiliary. She was also a well-loved schoolteacher for many years.

The Bedwells lived a very happy life together at their home for many years. In 1955, D. R. retired from Northeastern with the title of Emeritus Associate Professor. Unfortunately, he and Elizabeth had little time left together as she died just three years later on June 10, 1958, at the age of sixty-eight. D. R. continued to live in the home alone until 1964. He then moved to the Kate Frank Manor, a teacher's retirement center, in nearby Muskogee where he lived until his death on December 2, 1969, at the age of eighty.

The Bedwells' stamp remains on the property as little to nothing has been changed since D. R. left in 1964. The Bedwells' influence is still felt in Tahlequah society today. D. R. still remains one of the most respected faculty to ever teach at Northeastern. He and his wife are still revered by the First Methodist Church for the many contributions they made to its long history. The Bedwells represent many of the collective experiences of their generation. Both were educated in the Oklahoma public education system, and both made significant contributions to its continuation. D. R. was a veteran of World War I, and both he and his wife were members of many of the social and professional organizations that defined life in the early 1900s.

Architectural Significance

In his new book, *American Homes: A Field Guide to the Architecture of the Home*, Gerald Foster points out several characteristics of the Queen Anne style. These homes are usually multi-storied with intersecting roofs. The windows of these structures are usually large one-over-one panes with small leaded panes above them. Finally, these homes use wooden siding with strong horizontals to enhance their decorative look. Later examples, though, influenced by new trends in design, mark a transition between the busy, polychromatic and multi-textural High Victorian Queen Annes and the newer, more restrained designs that mark the Edwardian period. The Free Classic style, complementing the growing popularity of the Colonial Revival, is such a transitional style and the Alston – Bedwell House is an excellent local example of this transition.

The Queen Anne design originated in England with the work of architect Richard Norman Shaw. Imported to the United States by architect H. H. Richardson, the style was first broadly introduced at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876. This exposure sparked a nationwide excitement for the style. Soon, many architecture plan books offered versions of Queen Anne design. With a number of architects working with the style, several subsets developed, including a less ornate version known as Free Classic. The introduction of Classical symmetry into what had been by definition an asymmetrical style came about as the result of the influence of the 1893 Worlds Columbian Exposition in Chicago. In the "White City," the centerpiece of this world's fair, the dominant theme architecturally was Classical. This initiated a wave of interest in returning to the simplicity, formality, and dignity of the Classical

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orders. Pure Classical Revivalism took root in numerous large public buildings, and in domestic architecture, Classicism married itself to existing house forms. The epitome of the Late Victorian era of over-the-top opulence was the Queen Anne style house, with multiple layers of material and decoration thrown about on an asymmetrical frame. The introduction of Classical order somewhat tamed the Victorian beast – the result is a somewhat unhappy marriage of order and disorder that marked a transition from Victorian lavishness to Edwardian academia.

The Alston-Bedwell House belongs to the Queen Anne Free Classic style. A large 1 ½ story, wooden frame house, the roof belongs to the Cross Gabled division. According to McAlester and McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses*, the Free Classic division comprises thirty-five percent of all Queen Anne homes and are especially distinguished by the use of columns as porch supports. The Alston-Bedwell House uses thin Tuscan columns most often found in these types of homes. The first floor of the home also features the leaded windows typical of Late Victorian architecture. Likewise, the simple drop wooden siding emphasizes the horizontal as also described above.

As is also common to Free Classic homes, this house lacks the ornate ornamentation often used in Victorian era design. The porch columns are of the plainest order, Tuscan. There historically was not railing between them and no bargeboard or spindlework at their tops. There are dentils along the frieze, saw-tooth molding below the window sills, and a sunburst in the gable, but no other ornamentation. Instead, this house relies primarily on its horizontal siding and divided light windows for its ornamentation. The home was built by a prominent man and purchased by an upper middle class family. These are the very types of families who caused the great popularity of the style. Originally an English style that was inspired by the grandeur of the Elizabethan Age, homes of this style allowed semi-wealthy Americans to tie themselves to the two golden ages of British gentry.

A study of the other homes built during this era of Tahlequah's history shows that the Alston-Bedwell House follows the established form. The Tahlequah Chamber of Commerce has listed several homes on a historic driving tour. These homes seem to be one of two types. If the home or building was not constructed of native stone, it was done in a Victorian style, usually Queen Anne or something very similar. The majority of them could be described as Folk Victorian – simple houses ornamented by bargeboard or decorative porches. This style seems to have been the one that Tahlequah's upper middle class embraced with full force. Since the majority of the families that built these structures were either successful Cherokee or related to Northeastern in some way, this is hardly surprising. As stated before, the Queen Anne style provided a link to the gentrification of Europe. Many members of the Cherokee Nation became highly Anglicized in an attempt to better assimilate with the more powerful white society. Likewise, especially west of the Mississippi, those with education often gained a high, or higher, status in frontier society. As faculty members in one of the most prestigious colleges in the state, the professors of Tahlequah would also have reason to tie themselves to these aristocratic gentlemen.

The Alston-Bedwell House is an excellent example of the architecture of the early 1900s in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. Victorian styles were by far the most predominant choice of the period. The Alston-Bedwell House provides an excellent example of the simplicity and clean lines of the Free Classic subset. Comparisons to other houses of its style are limited due to the few extant examples. As noted earlier, the Alston-Bedwell House was constructed by William Alston, who also constructed a very similar house on Summit Avenue. That house, the Baggett house, is slightly smaller and lacks the level of detail that the Alston-Bedwell house exhibits. In addition,

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the Baggette house has had windows replaced and new porches/decks added on the rear. Another Free Classic style house in Tahlequah is the L. M Logan House, located also on Summit. This house is a full two stories in height, with a hipped roof and a full wrap around porch. On par with the Alston–Bedwell House as far as style and integrity, it does represent a more typical interpretation of the style and lacks the flair of the Alston–Bedwell House.

The Alston-Bedwell is a striking example of Free Classic style architecture. Its simplicity in ornamentation is countered by the complexity of form and footprint. It best represents the flowering of the style in Tahlequah in the first decade of the 20th Century and is significant at the local level under Criterion C. The house retains excellent integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Its landscape reflects the design intent of D. R. Bedwell, and the house's design is unchanged except for the screen enclosure on a small rear porch.

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List of Resources

Beth Herrington, interview by Jennifer Jones, March 8, 2004.

D. R. Bedwell files. Northeastern State University Archives. Tahlequah, OK.

Faulk, Odie B. and Billy M. Jones. Tahlequah, NSU, and the Cherokees. Tahlequah, OK: Northeastern State University. 1984.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1998.

Shannon, Daisy. "St. James of Wagoner." *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Winter 1934).

Tahlequah Chamber of Commerce. Tahlequah: Community, Cultural, Commerce. Spokane, WA: Lawton Press, Inc. 2002.

Verbal Boundary Description:

T 17 N, R 22 E, Sect. 28, Block 45, Lot 2, Original Townsite

Boundary Justification: The boundaries chosen for this property adhere to the boundaries of the legal description of the land on which the home and its garage sit. Since this is a single property nomination, these boundaries are highly appropriate.