

10-24-73

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

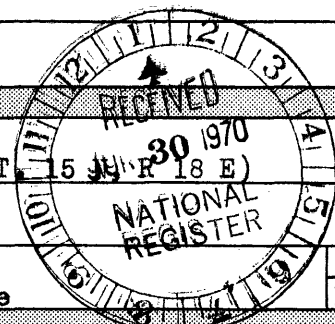
STATE: Oklahoma	
COUNTY: Muskogee	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70.10.35.0013	DATE 10/6/70

1. NAME

COMMON:
Union Agency
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Agency Hill in Honor Heights Park (NE/4 Sec. 20, T. 15 N. R. 18 E)
CITY OR TOWN:
Muskogee
STATE: Oklahoma CODE: 35 COUNTY: Muskogee CODE: 101



3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" 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"/> Comments <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Art Gallery</u>

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
City of Muskogee
STREET AND NUMBER:
City Hall
CITY OR TOWN: Muskogee STATE: Oklahoma CODE: 35

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Office of the County Clerk
STREET AND NUMBER:
Muskogee Court House
CITY OR TOWN: Muskogee STATE: Oklahoma CODE: 35

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Oklahoma Historic Sites Survey
DATE OF SURVEY: 1958 Federal State County Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Oklahoma Historical Society
STREET AND NUMBER:
Historical Building
CITY OR TOWN: Oklahoma City STATE: Oklahoma CODE: 35

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Oklahoma
COUNTY: Muskogee
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE
FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent
 Good
 Fair
 Deteriorated
 Ruins
 Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered
 Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved
 Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

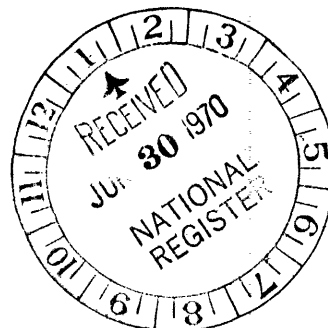
Union Agency was constructed in 1875 of light gray limestone quarried less than a hundred yards away - from the same impressive Agency Hill on which the building itself stands. While authorized to serve as a consolidated seat of government for the Five Civilized Tribes, the massive eight-room, two-story structure -- essentially a rectangle with one-story porches on the east (main entrance) and south -- was designed to serve also as a fort, if necessary.

Windows are beveled on the inside to accommodate riflemen. At one time a telescope is said to have been placed just outside the cupola (since removed) on the flat roof. The lookout must have been well nigh perfect, as Agency Hill (used by Indians for signal fires long before the white man arrived) towers better than a hundred feet over the relatively flat Arkansas River valley. A watchman atop the Agency building itself (first covered with native boards and later shingled) could, with a glass, easily have kept under surveillance much of the Three Forks country within a 25-mile radius.

When the Five Civilized Tribes Museum took over supervision of Union Agency in 1955, a preservation and restoration program was begun. Various minor alterations and embellishments were removed so that the building now is once again much as it was when accepted by the government about January 1, 1876.

First floor of the museum contains special historical displays for each of the five tribes. On the second floor are a library, the art gallery, and a photo room. Well known Indian artists represented at the museum include Willard Stone and the late Jerome Tiger, whose nearly life-size clay sculpture of an Indian stick ball player (unfinished when he died) is featured in a circular setting in the center of the gallery.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



SIGNIFICANCE

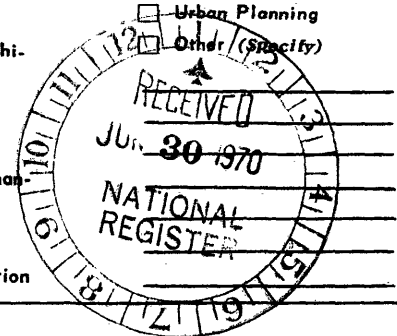
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1875 to present

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Had it not been for a barrel of salt - this according to the late Oklahoma historian Grant Foreman - Union Agency might well have been located some 25 miles southwest of its present location atop Agency Hill on the west edge of Muskogee.

Government affairs for the Five Civilized Tribes in 1874 were scattered between Tahlequah (for the Cherokees), Boggy Depot (for the Choctaws and Chickasaws), Wewoka (for the Seminoles), and a site northwest of Agency Hill (for the Creeks). Consolidation in a single location offered obvious advantages and it was so authorized, to become effective July 1, 1874. Shortly thereafter Agency Hill was included in a 640-acre tract transferred by the Creek Nation to the U. S. Government as site for the new agency building.

Before actual construction began, however, a campaign was mounted by Eufaula interests to locate the agency on the recently constructed Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad. A site was proposed (near present-day Checotah) and, according to Foreman, it might well have been selected had not certain resourceful Muskogee partisans secretly dumped a barrel of salt in the well that would have served the new location. A final inspection discovered the unacceptable "salt water" well and retention the Agency Hill location was assured. It was made by G. W. Ingalls, the first agent in charge of the combined office.

The solid two-story building, of native stone quarried near by, was accepted from the contractor, Proctor & Maxwell of Kansas City, about Jan. 1, 1876. Although its location atop a hill over 100 feet above the flat Arkansas River valley gave the structure obvious strategic advantages (it was constructed to serve as a fort, if necessary), it was too far from Muskogee itself (established on the MK&T when it built through the Three Forks country in 1872) to be completely convenient. Several of the agents who succeeded Ingalls therefore maintained offices in town and the building was finally abandoned by the agency in the early 1880s. Used for a time as a Baptist mission, it stood empty from 1889 to 1891.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Foreman, Frant, "U. S. Veteran Hospital No. 90," an article in a newspaper published by the patients and personnel of the hospital, at Muskogee in 1923.
 Gilmore, Joan, "Indian Heritage," The Sunday Oklahoman, May 24, 1970.
 -----, "The Old Agency," Muskogee Phoenix, undated, but circa 1900.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES			
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE			
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	
NW	0	'	"	0	'	"	35° 46' 00"	95° 25' 00"
NE	0	'	"	0	'	"		
SE	0	'	"	0	'	"		
SW	0	'	"	0	'	"		

*W
UTM
HF*

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 5 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Kent Ruth

ORGANIZATION: Oklahoma Historical Society DATE: June 1970

STREET AND NUMBER: Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN: Oklahoma City STATE: Oklahoma CODE: 35

12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: *Joan W. Gilmore*

Title: *Liaison officer for Okla*

Date: *10/11/70*

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

Timothy Allen Connolly
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

OCT 6 1970

Date: _____

ATTEST:

William J. Sturtevant
 Keeper of The National Register

AUG 8 1970

Date: _____

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Oklahoma	
COUNTY Muskogee	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 701085.0013	DATE 10/6/70

(Number all entries)

No. 8. Significance

Union Agency

Ownership reverted to the Creek Nation in 1891 and for a time the building housed an orphan school. On Nov. 6, 1909, the Union Agency building, with 40 acres, was conveyed by the Creeks to the City of Muskogee for park purposes. Honor Heights Park today (azaleas, dogwoods, redbuds, roses, many other plantings) is widely recognized as one of the nation's most beautiful. In 1944, however, the building itself was turned over to the Veterans Administration which maintains a large hospital immediately to the south.

Yet another change in ownership took place in 1954. The Da-Co-Tah Indian Club, with a membership of women who trace their Indian ancestry through official tribal rolls, helped to secure return of the historic building to the City of Muskogee and, in 1955, to effect incorporation of the Five Civilized Tribes Museum. Certain structural changes and additions made in the early part of the century have since been eliminated and the building restored to its original appearance. On April 16, 1966, the museum first opened its doors. Its purpose: "to perpetuate early Oklahoma history and maintain for posterity the heritage of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and Seminole Indians."

Receiving no municipal, state or federal funds for operating expenses, the museum is supported entirely by membership fees and a modest (50 cents and 25 cents) admission fee. The 1969 budget was \$22,500. Total paid attendance in 1969 was 20,357. Over 300 women contributed volunteer service to the museum program. Since its opening the museum has marketed some \$28,500 worth of paintings and sculpture by artists of the five tribes. More than 800 persons now hold membership in the museum.

