

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED **OCT 24 1975**
DATE ENTERED **JAN 1 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
Saline Courthouse
AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
c. 1 m. SE of Rose — NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CITY, TOWN CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Rose VICINITY OF **No. 2**
STATE CODE COUNTY CODE
Oklahoma **40** **Delaware** **041**

CLASSIFICATION

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

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Oklahoma Industrial Development and Parks Department
STREET & NUMBER
500 Will Rogers Building
CITY, TOWN STATE
Oklahoma VICINITY OF **Oklahoma**

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

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

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Oklahoma Historic Sites Survey
DATE
1958 — FEDERAL STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
Oklahoma Historical Society
CITY, TOWN STATE
Oklahoma City **Oklahoma**

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Specifications for Saline Courthouse -- and those for a similar structure in each of the eight districts into which the Cherokee Nation was divided -- were carefully set down in the 1883 law that authorized their construction:

Be it further enacted, That the court houses herein provided for shall be of the following specifications and dimensions, of wood or stone, and not to exceed in cost one thousand dollars, to wit: Twenty-one feet in width, by thirty-three feet in length, two-stories high, with walls sixteen feet - one room in the lower story and four rooms in the second-story, connected by a flight of stairs from the inside; to be furnished inside of the ceiling with raised platform, and jury-box, and bar, with two doors below and one door to each room above, with eight windows, eight lights, ten by sixteen each, above and below, and the whole painted inside and out with lead and oil, and covered with first-class shingles; and for the purpose of furnishing the same with all necessary stoves and furniture the sum of two hundred dollars for each court house, herein provided for, is hereby appropriated.

The courthouse, of wood, was constructed sometime between 1884 and 1889. It is the only one of the nine still standing today. Serving no official need after statehood in 1907, the old building deteriorated slowly over the years until 1953, when the Ransom family bought it, changed the interior sufficiently to make a comfortable country home. In 1970 the entire 14-acre property was sold to the State of Oklahoma.

Also on the grounds of special interest are: a 15 x 20 foot stone spring house (said to have doubled as an early-day jail), a nearby maple (believed by some to have been the tribal "execution tree"), a half-dozen ancient gravestones, and the now unmarked sites of the large store building and nearby blacksmith shop that figured in Saline Courthouse's most famous (and tragic) historic event. The spring -- described years ago by an oldtimer as "one of the finest cold springs in the Ozarks" -- joins Snake Creek some distance away. The state is preserving the property, plans to develop it eventually into a meaningful tribute to the Cherokee Nation's well organized and generally effective judicial system.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
—PREHISTORIC	—ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	—COMMUNITY PLANNING	—LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	—RELIGION
—1400-1499	—ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	—CONSERVATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LAW	—SCIENCE
—1500-1599	—AGRICULTURE	—ECONOMICS	—LITERATURE	—SCULPTURE
—1600-1699	—ARCHITECTURE	—EDUCATION	—MILITARY	—SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
—1700-1799	—ART	—ENGINEERING	—MUSIC	—THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	—COMMERCE	—EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	—PHILOSOPHY	—TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	—COMMUNICATIONS	—INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	—OTHER (SPECIFY)
		—INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1884 to 1907

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Saline Courthouse is a not unhandsome physical reminder of the well organized and quite effective judicial system brought by the Cherokees from their homeland in the Southeast and re-established here in Indian Territory.

During most of its existence the Cherokee Nation had nine districts. In 1883 each was voted \$1,200 to create a uniform set of new courthouses. All were built by 1889 and Saline is the only one to survive.

Court was held at Saline at stated intervals. A judge usually came up from Tahlequah, the nation's capital, to preside. It was only natural that a small settlement should grow up to serve it. Soon Saline had, in addition to the two-story courthouse with its broad gallery, a blacksmith shop, a church or two, a school, a doctor's office, and a large general store.

One Thomas Baggett, a white Alabaman and a lawyer, married to a Cherokee woman, owned the store "that tragic September 20, 1897, when three fine and upright men were brutally slain," to quote a latter-day (and part-Cherokee) chronicler. In short order Baggett was shot down from ambush, the man who probably witnessed it was bludgeoned to death with a gun or a bottle (presumably by the murderer), and the sheriff trying to investigate the affair was killed, how and by whom was never determined. The incident was as complicated and confused as it was tragic and the Cherokee courts never could figure it out to their complete satisfaction. But the fact that here "three fine and upright men were brutally slain" no one questioned.

Unrelated to these tragedies are those hinted at by inscriptions on the weathered stones a hundred yards or so in front of the courthouse. Consider the broken one belonging to A. J. Colvard. "Born - - - - 1858 Murdered - - - - 1892." And at the bottom the poignant cry: "Take care of my children."

Significance of Saline Courthouse, however, lies not so much in specific events taking place in the old building or on the grounds around it as in its symbolic representation of the Cherokee Nation's judicial system. In Tahlequah, capital of the Nation, still stands the Cherokee Supreme Court building, itself in the National Register. Saline, as sole survivor of the Nation's nine district courthouses, would seem no less deserving of preservation.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Morgan, Omer L., "The Saline Courthouse Massacre," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. 33 (19), pp. 87-95

Constitution and Laws of the Cherokee Nation, pp. 131-133

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 14 acres

UTM REFERENCES

CA	1,5	3,1,9	2,0,0	1,0,0,8	1,9,0	B	1,5	3,1,9	1,2,0	1,0,0,8	1,9,0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	
DA	1,5	3,1,9	2,0,0	4,0,0,8	7,9,0	AB	1,5	3,1,9	4,2,0	4,0,0,8	7,9,0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Kent Ruth, Deputy

ORGANIZATION

Oklahoma Historical Society

DATE

Sept. 1975

STREET & NUMBER

Historical Building

TELEPHONE

405/884-5456

CITY OR TOWN

Oklahoma City

STATE

Oklahoma

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

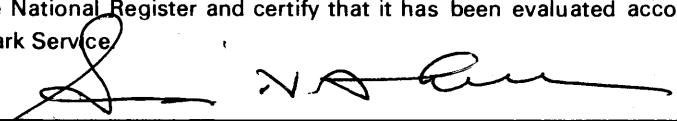
NATIONAL

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



TITLE

SPO

DATE

OCT 20 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

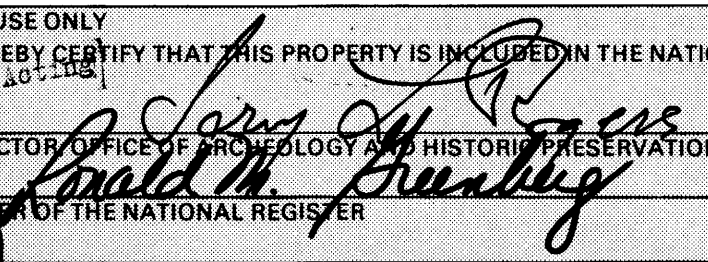
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

1/1/96

ATTEST:



DATE

12/31/75

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

