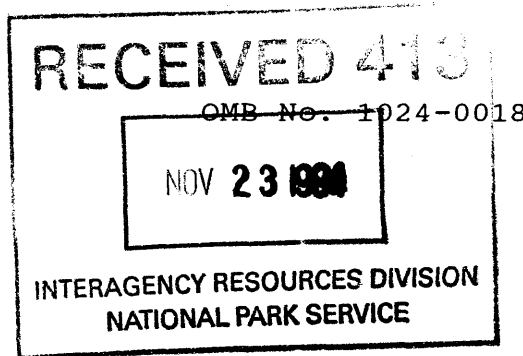


NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name U. S. Post Office and Courthouse

other names/site number N/A

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number southwest corner of Fourth and Choctaw not for publication N/A
city or town Chickasha vicinity N/A
state Oklahoma code OK county Grady code 051
zip code 73018

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
U. S. Post Office & Courthouse
Grady County, Oklahoma

RECEIVED 413

NOV 23 1994

Page 2

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this XX 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 XX meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Blake Wade
Signature of certifying official

November 14, 1994
Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, S.H.P.O.
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):

Edson H. Beall 12-29-94

Entered in the
National Register

for Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

=====

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>GOVERNMENT</u>	Sub: <u>post office</u>
<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	<u>courthouse</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>WORK IN PROGRESS</u>	Sub: _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Italian Renaissance

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

roof CERAMIC TILE

walls STONE:Limestone

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)

Politics/Government

Architecture

Period of Significance 1914-1944

=====
8. Statement of Significance (Continued)
=====

Significant Dates 1914

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Wenderoth, Oscar, Supervising Architect

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 0.57 acres

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>14</u>	<u>596970</u>	<u>3879130</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
2	<u>N/A</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

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 Larry Ummel, Assistant City Manager; Cynthia Smelker, ed.

organization City of Chickasha; OK SHPO date September 7, 1994

street & number 101 N. Sixth telephone 405/222-6013

city or town Chickasha state OK zip code 73018

=====
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)

=====
Property Owner
=====

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

name City of Chickasha

street & number 101 N. Sixth telephone 405/222-6013

city or town Chickasha state OK zip code 73018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 9

U. S. Post Office & Courthouse
name of property
Grady County, Oklahoma
county and State

Narrative Description

Summary

The Chickasha U. S. Post Office and Courthouse, built in 1914-1915, is a three-story, rectangular building. The building is a significant example of early twentieth century federal architecture. The style of the U. S. Post Office and Courthouse is Italian Renaissance Revival. The style is exhibited through monumental two-story columns flanked by Tuscan pilasters on the front facade, arched windows, a Mediterranean style clay tile roof, and a decorative cornice with an ornamental bracket. The total composition has a strong, restrained elegance which is accented by wrought iron balconets, entrance lanterns, and carved limestone detailing. The building is located on the southwest corner of the traditionally busiest intersection in Chickasha. Diagonally across from the U. S. Post Office and Courthouse to the northeast is the Grady County Courthouse, a well-known and impressive Art Deco style building constructed in the 1930s. In the area immediately around the building are one- and two-story office buildings built between 1940-1960. One block east of the U. S. Post Office are several buildings of varying architectural styles. The majority of these structures were built between 1930-1960 with 1950s to mid-1970s alterations.

Exterior Description

The U. S. Post Office and Courthouse is constructed of grey limestone with a concrete foundation. The limestone is cut into regular-sized horizontal blocks of approximately 1'6" X 3' to 1'6" X 5'. The stone pattern is typical of the building techniques of stone cladding; horizontal courses are laid in running bond and window arches are keyed radially from the rounded window tops. The hipped red clay tile roof adds color as well as an element of Mediterranean influence while the supporting entablature continues the classical quality of the building. The majority of roof tiles are original, as is the brick chimney located on the north end. The large size of the chimney was dictated by the original use of coal as fuel.

The courthouse contains a symmetrical raised first floor over a modified daylight basement, plus second, third and attic floors. The first floor's raised platform provides the base for the two-story columns and pilasters and, as commonly used

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 10

U. S. Post Office & Courthouse
name of property
Grady County, Oklahoma
county and State

Narrative Description (Continued)

in American Renaissance architecture, it visually separates the building from its surrounding landscape in order to give the building more importance. This architectural feature is particularly significant in the Chickasha post office because it visually separates a very formal building from the surrounding street-front buildings constructed in the typical Plains Commercial style. The platform is composed of stairs, light wells and a grade level that is raised above sidewalk level. Surrounding the building on three sides is a grassy tract contained by a brick retaining wall. To the rear of the building is a black-top asphalt parking lot. The four brick planters along the east elevation and the two brick planters on the south and west sides add a degree of landscaping to the building. These planters are situated where basement light wells were originally.

The majority of windows in the Chickasha post office were replaced with natural aluminum sash casement windows with full glass lights in 1964 and 1970. The building, however, retains the typical Renaissance style window arrangement of arched windows on the first floor and square windows above, except on the rear of the building. All of the first floor arched openings, including those over doors, have a flat keystone, voisoirs and a fanlight. The arched windows are approximately nine feet seven inches high and have nonoriginal stone sills with stone inserts in the fanlights installed in the 1964 renovation. The rectangular second story windows, identical in size to the first floor windows, have wrought iron balconets for decorative detail. Windows on the third story are smaller in size with recessed bas-relief stone panels flanking the windows to mimic shutters. Most of the basement windows have been replaced by stone inserts, some of which have been additionally obscured by brick planters.

The entablature encircling the building is composed of standard trim shapes, a frieze with stacked volutes, and a protruding cornice held up with modillions composed of volutes. The wide cornice stops the building's dominant vertical elements by providing a strong horizontal line at the top. The cornice is constructed of standard turn-of-the-century manufactured lightweight carved wood sections pieced together on a wood substrate, according to the architect's pattern. The wood is light and, since the cornice is directly under the roof, is protected from the elements. The modillions of the cornice extend into the frieze. The modillions have stacked volutes one cantilevered from the other to reach out to the full extent of the roof eave. The soffit of the cornice is decorated with rectangular panels composed of a large square which is a grid of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 11

U. S. Post Office & Courthouse
name of property
Grady County, Oklahoma
county and State

Narrative Description (Continued)

four by twelve small squares between the modillions at various panels for the venting of the attic. The cantilevered corner soffit has simple triangular panels between modillions, the corner modillion at 45 degrees to the two sides. Modillions extend almost four feet from the building face to the edge of the roof.

The east elevation, the front of the building, possesses the recessed two-story portico supported by six monumental, free-standing Ionic columns. The limestone clad steel columns give the building a sense of stability while also highlighting the main elevation. The portico is enclosed on three sides by flat walls decorated with Tuscan pilasters at the building corners. The two-story columns and pilasters rise from the building's elevated platform and terminate at the bottom of the third floor where the carved limestone architrave forms the platform for third floor windows and squat Tuscan pilasters, and a cap for the two-story columns. The architrave's protruding trim also provides a strong horizontal line characteristic of Italian Renaissance architecture. At the center of the first floor is a double glazed slab door with a rectangular transom. Flanking the doorway on the first floor are six casement windows with fanlights. The upper two floors both contain seven windows parallel in placement. The third story additionally includes two narrow windows to balance the irregular space dictated by the end of the portico and first Tuscan pilaster below. The portico floor, once sheathed in grey granite stone, is concrete. The floor retains the original prismatic vault light designed to provide light into a basement toilet room. Suspended in the portico are three lanterns with electric lights. The lanterns are cast iron suspended by a steel pipe with wiring inside. Their shape is square with four frosted glass faces. The top is sculptured with volutes and the base has an acorn ornament. The lanterns were installed during the building's original construction. The pipe handrailing on the stairs to the main entrance was added in 1945 and 1954. Located on both inner pilasters are two plaques. In the base of the southeast pilaster is the cornerstone identifying supervising architect Oscar Wenderoth and Secretary of the Treasury William G. McAdoo and the date of 1913.

The north elevation contains three parallel windows on the first and second stories, and four windows on the third floor. The inner two windows on the third story are paired and centered over the middle lower windows. The basement windows, situated probably similar to the upper floors, have been obscured. This elevation is decorated with four two-story Tuscan pilasters on the lower stories

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 12

U. S. Post Office & Courthouse
name of property
Grady County, Oklahoma
county and State

Narrative Description (Continued).

and four one-story Tuscan pilasters on the third floor. A blind niche in the third pilaster from the east was included to add detail to the otherwise uniform elevation. The chimney is most easily seen from this elevation being located immediately above.

The west elevation, the rear of the building, was designed with a central extended element that is slightly wider than the east elevation's portico. This area expanded the post office work room on the first floor and provided additional basement space for the fuel room, boiler room and post office Railway Express service. This central extended area, only one-story high with a basement, has been remodeled three times: in 1926 and 1951 with sympathetic additions, and later in 1964 with a modern addition. At the base of the exterior basement stairway is the only enduring original wood door and wood window. The remaining doors located on the west elevation are all located in the 1964 addition. Situated on the south side of the addition is the metal overhead door used for freight purposes. On the opposite side is a single flush door and a double flush door. The single entry is used for handicap accessibility as the handicap ramp encircling the modern addition leads directly towards it and the double doors are used for service functions. The central portion of this elevation contains five arched casement windows on the second floor which extend into the third story. Thus, there are no third floor windows in the middle section of this elevation. A small rectangular window is located towards the north of the elevation's central area. The large rectangular first floor windows have been infilled with stone except for narrow rectangular openings. The two rectangular windows situated on either side of the extension have also been infilled with stone, leaving only narrow rectangular openings. Both the north and south ends of the west elevation feature first floor arched windows and rectangular upper story windows. The third floor windows are paired and centered over the lower windows. Third story decorative detail does not include the recessed bas-relief stone panels flanking the windows which mimicked shutters on the other three elevations. Two-story Tuscan pilasters and third floor one-story Tuscan pilasters persist as ornamental component. The fire escape located on the north portion of the second floor and centrally on the first story was added in 1954 to allow the internal open stairway to remain without an added fire wall.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 13

U. S. Post Office & Courthouse
name of property
Grady County, Oklahoma
county and State

Narrative Description (Continued)

The south elevation is similar in appearance to the north elevation. Four two-story Tuscan pilasters ornament the first two floors, while short Tuscan pilasters adorn the third story. The window placement and first story blind niche are identical to those on the north elevation. Unlike the north elevation, a long, narrow third story blind niche is situated in the third pilaster from the east. The basement windows have again been infilled.

Interior Description

The Chickasha U. S. Post Office and Courthouse was composed of three major interior spaces: the post office lobby, courtroom and post office work room. Presently the building is unoccupied. Alterations have occurred which have changed the appearance of the building's interior but original materials frequently remain in good condition under the new.

The overall layout of the interior has also been modified. The courtroom was changed to function as office space, necessitating installation of fluorescent lights and other modifications. The lookout gallery over the post office work space has been removed. The removal of the postal screens and built-in postal desks severely impacted the first floors' integrity. Over the past few years, the lack of electricity, heating and cooling in the building has contributed to the building's interior deterioration by causing delaminations of wall fabrics, paint and paneling as well as finish discolorations.

Currently, all original flooring, except for the marble baseboards, is covered with carpet or with asphalt and vinyl asbestos tile. Underneath these nonhistoric materials are marble floors on the first, second, and third floor public areas; maple strip wood flooring on sleepers set in concrete in the work and office areas; smooth concrete floors in the basement, vault and prisoner rooms; and, white terrazzo floors in the toilet rooms. All original floors are in good condition.

The majority of the panel doors and hardware were removed during remodeling, however, some original hallway doors remain, particularly along the third floor corridor. Most basement doors are also original, as are the courtroom doors.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 14

U. S. Post Office & Courthouse
name of property
Grady County, Oklahoma
county and State

Narrative Description (Continued)

Additionally, the door hardware on the courtroom doors, vault doors and other assorted interior doors remains extant. This original hardware is standard coated brass with a stamped curvilinear decoration.

Original ornamental plaster occurs on ceilings on the first and second floor lobbies and on the ceiling of the courtroom. Ornamental plaster work defines ceiling beams, bays between the beams and also pilasters up to where ceiling beams intersect the wall. Dropped acoustical tile ceiling covers the preserved ornamental plaster ceiling on the first and second floors. During renovations, pilasters were removed below the added suspended ceiling, but left intact above. Although some water and recent wire installation damage has occurred, it appears that all the ornamental plaster ceilings are intact.

None of the building's early heating and electrical systems survive. The historic elevator has been replaced since the 1964 renovation; however, the present elevator utilizes the same equipment arrangement as the original elevator. This elevator is unique because its underslung traction mechanism eliminates an overhead penthouse and there is no elevator equipment on the roof. The equipment is visible instead in the basement.

The Chickasha U. S. Post Office and Courthouse has one principal interior open stairway. This interior stairway, located on the southeast, has a square configuration with a center open well. Stair risers occur on three sides of the square with the landing on the fourth side. The stair has wall enclosures on three sides. The stairs are constructed of steel with Tennessee Gray marble treads, risers and landings. The inside stringers is polished Georgia Light Verde Antique marble. The stairway balustrade, exterior stringers and newel posts were constructed of pre-made components of wrought iron and assembled on the job. The top rails are wood above the cast iron baluster. The marble floor shows wear but is in acceptable condition.

Other interior stairways have been severely altered or no longer function as intended. The service stairway at the north end of the east wall of the building serving only the basement and first floors and providing access to the Post Office's Employee Swing Room and toilet rooms was enclosed into a long, narrow

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 15

U. S. Post Office & Courthouse
name of property
Grady County, Oklahoma
county and State

Narrative Description (Continued)

storage room when the west addition was built in 1964. The stairs to the lookout gallery from the basement remain, however, the ladder and lookout gallery above have been removed.

The courtroom on the second floor retains a large degree of integrity. The courtroom has all of its original corridor doors. The most unique doors are the two pairs of double interior and double exterior entrance doors. The courtroom's leather-covered inner doors have brass upholstery nails which secure the leather. A diamond shaped vision glass insert is placed at eye level. The courtroom's outer doors are two sets of opposing pocket doors made of wood panels. All of these doors have original hardware and are in working order, except where surface wiring has limited the use of the pocket doors. Four paneled doors that lead to the judge's chambers also exist.

Although obscured by the added dropped lay-in ceiling sitting on top and the row of pendant fluorescent lights hung in front, an impressive wooden pediment remains above the courtroom doors. The courtroom pediment is composed of a flat triangular panel with dentils on the upper two sloped inner sides of the triangle. The panel sits on a trim base which has another dentil course below. The cap projects over the pediment panel by the use of a series of plain trim moldings. The pediment sits on a transom area panel formed by trim in an upside down U-shape similar to a classical console. Trim caps the door frame. The panel is wood with a cherry finish which matches the paneling and doors.

All of the paneling in the courtroom also remains intact. The paneling includes flat wood panels composed of quarter-sawn oak with trim that breaks the paneled walls into a series of rectilinear shapes. The paneling, used in a wainscot fashion, rises 8' on the walls. The paneling has a cherry stain with a varnish top coat. The paneling has been damaged by surface wiring and the finish varnish is cracking and discoloring.

Located in the basement, three of the building's original five record vaults, their doors and locking mechanisms are intact. The vaults display unusual steel hinges and original U. S. decals. The steel hinges are surface mounted with pin caps designed as a finial ball. The decals display an American Eagle. The vault doors are trimmed in a gold painted border on a dark green field. A prisoner

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 16

U. S. Post Office & Courthouse
name of property
Grady County, Oklahoma
county and State

Narrative Description (Continued)

holding area remains with a steel mesh door on the third floor, in the former U. S. Marshal's Office. Existing hooks, a brass S-shaped hood with a circular extrusion, adjacent to the vault doors may have been for keys.

Overall, the interior of the building retains its integrity. All existing wall and ornamental plaster is in excellent condition. All original floors are in good condition as well. Some original hallway doors remain, particularly along the third floor hallway. The original courtroom doors remain and most basement doors are original as well. All paneling in the courtroom is intact with only slight damage. The City of Chickasha is currently in the process of restoring the building, including refurbishing the marble floors and the ornamental ceilings.

Alterations

The Chickasha U. S. Post Office and Courthouse has undergone several modifications but it retains its overall integrity. The majority of changes have been made to the interior of the building, with only a few modifications occurring on the exterior. The majority of the alterations occurred during the 1964 remodeling of the post office.

Exterior alterations include the replacement of the original wood mullioned windows and fanlights in 1964 and 1970 with natural aluminum sash casement windows with full glass lights and flush stone panel inserts for the fanlights. Additionally, small, narrow paired casement windows on the west elevation were filled in with stone. Basement windows were also replaced by stone inserts and many were further obliterated by nonhistoric brick planters. The original wood window sills were removed with the windows and replaced by stone sills. The main entry door was replaced by aluminum style glass doors of a typical storefront variety. The other two flanking entries on the front facade of the building were converted to windows identical in appearance to the other first floor arched windows. The original rear entrance door was replaced.

The west elevation entrance/mailing vestibule/service entrance was remodeled in 1926 and 1951 with sympathetic additions and later in 1964 with a modern addition. The addition is attached to the west elevation in a limited area in the center of the first floor and basement. An exterior metal fire escape was added to the west

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 17

U. S. Post Office & Courthouse
name of property
Grady County, Oklahoma
county and State

Narrative Description (Continued)

elevation in 1954 to serve as an emergency exit from the third floor to the roof of the Post Office workroom and down from there to the ground.

The integrity of the building's interior has been compromised to a larger extent than the exterior. In the 1964 remodeling, areas were given dropped acoustical tile ceiling covers. Underneath the covers the original fabric is relatively intact. The flooring throughout the building has also been covered with nonhistoric fabric with the original enduring below. Two of the three interior stairways no longer exist in their original capacity and the historic elevator has been replaced with a modern elevator with similar equipment arrangement. The majority of fixtures throughout the building have been removed. These include all the original letter chutes and pen stands for the Post Office and most plumbing fittings have been removed. Decorative grilles have been removed with the exception of that in the courtroom. The removal of the postal screens and built-in postal desks on the first floor has adversely impacted a significant part of the interior.

The building is currently unoccupied but in excellent structural condition. On the exterior, and to a lesser extent on the interior, the building is in excellent condition with minor alterations. Overall, the Chickasha U. S. Post Office and Courthouse has been well maintained and retains its integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship and conveys the feeling of its past environment.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 18

U. S. Post Office & Courthouse
name of property
Grady County, Oklahoma
county and State

Description of Significance

Summary

The Chickasha U. S. Post Office and Courthouse is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the enforcement of federal policy in Oklahoma and Criterion C as a significant example of federal architecture from the early twentieth century. Constructed in 1914-1915, the Chickasha U. S. Post Office and Courthouse is the only federal building constructed in the Italian Renaissance Revival style from the early 1900s still extant in Oklahoma. This building is also rich in historical significance, as many land disputes between white settlers and Native Americans were settled in this second floor federal courtroom. The building also housed the area Marshal's office and a branch of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Historical Significance

In 1895, the Chickasha Chamber of Commerce hired two lawyers, Alger Melton and Frank Bailey, to lobby influential congressmen in Washington, D. C. in an effort to secure a federal court for Chickasha. Within three weeks, the two obtained authorization for Chickasha's federal court to be included in a bill. Chickasha, one of the largest Oklahoma cities in terms of population in the 1900s, was an ideal location for a combined post office/courthouse for several reasons. First, federal court work was extensive, due to numerous disputes between settlers and Native Americans. Second, the large Native American population made the city a natural for a small Bureau of Indian Affairs office. Third, the confluence of three railroads created a genuine need for a first class postal facility. Fourth, the future of Chickasha seemed bright due to its large agricultural area, numerous transportation means and a fairly large population. By an act of Congress in 1895, a federal court was established in Chickasha.

The original federal courthouse, commonly called the "Old Federal Courthouse," was built by a private company in 1896 and rented to the U. S. government. With statehood in 1907, the Grady County Fifteenth Judicial District came into being to handle state court business. Growth of federal court business led to the need for the new federal courthouse by 1909. In 1910, the Old Federal Courthouse was purchased by the county, and a new jail was added. However, the federal courts remained in the Old Federal Courthouse. Grady County allowed the federal

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 19

U. S. Post Office & Courthouse
name of property
Grady County, Oklahoma
county and State

Description of Significance (Continued)

government free use of the building in anticipation of impending construction of a new U. S. Post Office and Courthouse in Chickasha. This new building was not completed until 1915.

Many of the cases in the federal courts during this time involved complicated land disputes. Some land disputes involved breaking Native Americans' titles to land held in trust. This was done in two ways: (1) declaring ownership by an orphan, who could be given right to sell the land; and, (2) declaring Native Americans "incompetent," which invalidated a trust. Obviously, these abuses of the court system were among the numerous acts committed to deprive Native Americans of the land.

By World War I, the need for federal courts was reduced because settlement of the land was completed; jurisdictions were centralized; and, new reform laws governed the land of the Native Americans. Most federal functions gradually moved to the larger cities such as Oklahoma City and Tulsa. By the 1930s, the Grady County Courthouse had become the dominate court system in Chickasha. The federal courtrooms continued to be used intermittently until the 1950s.

The most substantial post office function involved money orders. Chickasha and Oklahoma were in many ways colonial economies, existing upon the rest of the United States for sophisticated manufactured items which usually were purchased by money order. Manufacturing within the state of Oklahoma in 1915 was mainly for essential goods. Most items were shipped through the post office or the Railway Express system. The post office functioned in the building until 1962, when a new post office building was erected and leased to the United States Postal Service.

The Chickasha U. S. Post Office and Courthouse project was promoted by the city in a time of economic prosperity. However, when the building was built a few years later it was as a public works project during one of Oklahoma's depressions. Curiously, in later years the building became a symbol of better times. Containing all the qualities of a true public building, the Chickasha U. S. Post Office and Courthouse, even when vacant, is still referred to as "The Federal Building." The physical presence of the building represented law, civilization of the frontier, and civic pride. The gradual loss of function within the building due to space limitations and the lack of modern conveniences has not diminished its symbolic value.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 20

U. S. Post Office & Courthouse
name of property
Grady County, Oklahoma
county and State

Description of Significance (Continued)

Architectural Significance

The Department of the Treasury in Washington, D. C. started plans for the building in 1913. The architect was Oscar Wenderoth. As Supervising Architect of the U. S. Treasury Department, he headed a group of architects at the Treasury Department in charge of building design for federally funded buildings nationwide. The team of professionals under Wenderoth's supervision included: L. Trviar, Architect, Supervisor of Drafting Division; Ernest C. Ruebsam, Structural Engineer, Supervisor of Structural Division; and, N. S. Thompson, Mechanical Engineer, Supervisor of Mechanical Division.

Public and institutional American architecture of the early twentieth century, especially on the East coast, was influenced by the work of the New York firm of Charles F. McKim, William R. Mead and Stanford White, widely known for the Boston Public Library. Mediterranean sloped hipped roofs and arched windows set on a strong base, accompanied by accessories such as lanterns and wrought iron work were the stylistic characteristics of the Boston Public Library. The style captured the public's imagination. Thus, variations of the American idiom of Italian Renaissance Revival style became the preferred style of the federal government in the early twentieth century, especially in Washington, D. C. It was only natural that the Treasury Department, which then housed one of the largest architectural design offices in America, would emulate the style of the nation's capital and think nothing odd about transporting that style to the plains of Oklahoma.

Italian Renaissance Revival architecture is characterized by the reintroduction of motifs of rustication, pilaster and classical ornamental motifs especially at the cornice. The facades are characterized as having a base, sometimes encompassing the first floor, a center section with windows and a cap composed of a deep cornice with a Mediterranean hipped roof. Heavy rustication usually occurs in the base element with lighter rustication above. Pilasters rise from the base element in various configurations. The cornice typically forms an overhang for a barrel tile roof. The cornice is usually ornamented. The use of lanterns, balconets and porticos are generally considered elements of the Italian idiom.

The Chickasha U. S. Post Office and Courthouse is an excellent example of the Italian Renaissance Revival style of architecture. The building is a typical

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 21

U. S. Post Office & Courthouse
name of property
Grady County, Oklahoma
county and State

Description of Significance (Continued)

application of Beaux-Arts academician design which is characterized by the practice of "borrowing the best from the past." Consequently, strict application of the classic Italian Renaissance style is not always followed. The attributes of the Chickasha U. S. Post Office and Courthouse follow most of the stylistic features of the Italian Renaissance style as detailed above. For example, the Chickasha U. S. Post Office and Courthouse has a raised platform water table with mildly rusticated stonework. The raised platform elevates the main level to allow basement windows and to create a strong base for the building. The building also has a hipped roof with Mediterranean clay tile and a bracketed overhang. Furthermore, the building exhibits a decorative cornice with expressed and ornamented modillions. The main facades have classical columns and pilasters with an architrave. The principal entry employs Ionic columns, flanked by Tuscan pilasters. Most of the windows on the main level are arched. Simulated shuttered windows and balconets of wrought iron are another feature of the Italian Renaissance style that the building possesses. There are also strong horizontal lines clearly expressed at the base and in mid-level trim.

No other building in the city or county reflects similar influences. Very few examples of this style exist in the state of Oklahoma. There were at least five other federal buildings constructed in the state. U. S. Post Offices and federal courthouses were constructed in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Lawton, Ardmore, Muskogee and McAlester. Of these, none reflect the Italian Renaissance style of architecture, instead generally utilizing a combination of the Beaux Arts and Classical Revival styles. Thus, the Chickasha U. S. Post Office is the only extant example of the Italian Renaissance Revival style as applied to early twentieth century federal buildings in Oklahoma.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9, 10 Page 22

U. S. Post Office & Courthouse
name of property
Grady County, Oklahoma
county and State

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Bibliography

HTB, Inc. Architects. "Submittal U. S. Post Office and Court House, Chickasha, Oklahoma." HTB Project No. 210668. May 13, 1992.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 1-2-3-4-5-6, Block 40, Original Township, Chickasha, Grady County, Oklahoma.

Boundary Justification

This boundary is the original site for the building. All property lines are as they existed when the building was constructed.