

District No. 2 - Hon. Clem McSpadden

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: Cherokee	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
APR 30 1974	

1. NAME

COMMON:
First
Cherokee Female Seminary (1st site)

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
e. 3 m. SE of E of Tahlequah

CITY OR TOWN:
Tahlequah

STATE: **Oklahoma** CODE: **40** COUNTY: **Cherokee** CODE: **021**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	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"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Cherokee National Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:
P. O. Box 515

CITY OR TOWN: **Tahlequah** STATE: **Oklahoma** CODE: **40**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Office of the County Clerk

STREET AND NUMBER:
Cherokee County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN: **Tahlequah** STATE: **Oklahoma** CODE: **40**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Oklahoma Historical Sites Survey

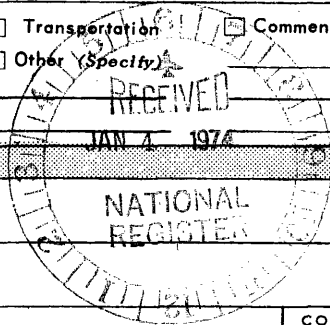
DATE OF SURVEY: **1958** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Oklahoma Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:
Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN: **Oklahoma City** STATE: **Oklahoma** CODE: **40**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: **Oklahoma**

COUNTY: **Cherokee**

ENTRY NUMBER: **APR 30 1974**

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

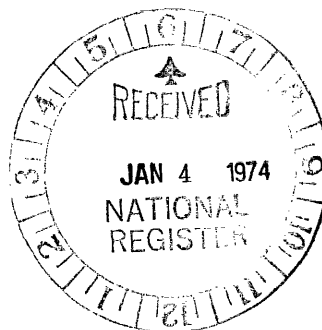
CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Construction of the original seminary, at Park Hill, began in 1847 and was plagued by shortages of both building materials and skilled labor. A local kiln burned native bricks for its walls. The first contract for these brick was given to several Moravian brothers who had recently come into Indian Territory. They were expelled, however, before they could finish their work, when it became known they were secretly preaching their religious doctrines. It was some time before another contract could be awarded.

The building was 185 feet long, 109 feet wide; its walls were two feet thick. The back section was three-story in height, the front two-story and rimmed on three sides by a handsome two-story gallery supported by massive columns. The roof line, broken by solid phalanxes of brick chimneys, was topped by a tall circular tower. (Tower of the virtually identical male seminary building was square.) This structure was destroyed by fire in 1887 and the decision was made (see No. 8) to rebuild the school in nearby Tahlequah.

Over the years the original site was marked by three remaining brick columns, broken and overgrown with vines and shrubs. Today, thanks to the Cherokee National Historical Society, they stand as an enduring symbol of the tribe, in the patio of the new \$500,000 Cherokee National Museum and Archives (to be dedicated in 1974), the impressive center piece of the multi-million-dollar Cherokee Cultural Center complex that already includes Tsa-La-Gi Village (portraying Cherokee life around 1700) and Tsa-La-Gi Theater (summer-time dramatization of the "Trail of Tears"). Also on the sandstone patio surrounding the columns are individual monuments in the Cherokee National Hall of Fame series which already includes Sen. Robert L. Owen, Oklahoma's first senator and an enrolled Cherokee, and Admiral J. J. "Jocko" Clark, who rose to the highest rank of any Indian in the armed forces.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1851-1887**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input 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 type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input 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

From their arrival in Indian Territory, many historians believe, the Cherokees were the most progressive of the so-called Five Civilized Tribes. They recognized that only through education could they hope to keep pace with the whites. The Cherokee Constitution (Sec. 6, Art. 9), adopted in 1827 at New Echota (Ga.), declared: "Religion, Morality and Knowledge being necessary for good government, the preservation, liberty and happiness of all the people, schools and all means of education shall be forever encouraged in this nation and to that end, we recommend that all means of education be given full support of all legislative bodies so far as the financial condition of the nation allows." In the main, the Cherokee Nation lived up to this pledge, maintaining a generally good educational system until it was dissolved in 1907. (The claim is even made that in 1841 the Nation had the world's first free, compulsory, co-educational public school system.)

It was in 1846 that Principal Chief John Ross proposed establishment of two seminaries, one for boys, the other for girls. An enabling act to that effect was passed immediately by the National Council. Construction work was begun and the two schools opened their doors simultaneously in May of 1851. The Male Seminary was located about a mile southwest of Tahlequah.

The Female Seminary, which primarily concerns us here, was built originally three miles southeast of Tahlequah, in Park Hill, then the Nation's cultural and social center. A shortage of funds caused the closing of both seminaries in 1856. Troubled times before the Civil War and the tragic war years themselves kept the schools closed into the early 1870s. After re-opening, the female seminary remained in operation until Easter Sunday 1887. Then fire broke out and the handsome vaguely Colonial affair was destroyed to its brick columns (see No. 7). (While the Cherokee leaders were still trying to decide about rebuilding, Tahlequah merchants offered them a 40-acre site on the north edge of their own business section. As Park Hill had never fully recovered from the ravages of the Civil War, the Nation accepted the offer. The new seminary building was started in 1887 and dedicated in 1889. The school operated under tribal auspices until statehood in 1907. Two years later Oklahoma purchased the school from the Cherokees and has operated it ever since, first as Northeastern State Normal School, then Northeastern State Teachers College and Northeastern State College. The physical

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Halliburton, R., Jr. "Northeastern's Seminary Hall," Research Paper, 1972, on file in Oklahoma Historical Society Archives
 Robinson, Ella, "Cherokee Seminaries," Indian Pioneer History, Grant Foreman Collection, Vol. 82, pp. 82-98
 Starr, Emmett, History of the Cherokee Indians, Warden Co. 1921, pp. 231-243

Cherokee Nation, Laws of the Cherokee Nation: Adopted by the Council at Various Periods, Tahlequah, Cherokee Advocate Office, 1852, pp. 59-61

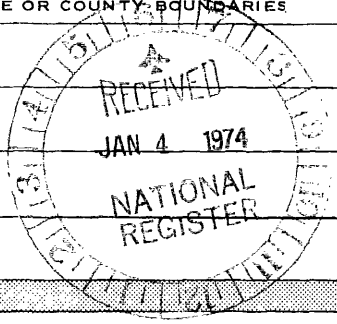
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		35° 51' 59"	94° 57' 11"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **One acre**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



No VIM
HL

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Kent Ruth, Deputy**

ORGANIZATION: **Oklahoma Historical Society** DATE: **November 1973**

STREET AND NUMBER: **Historical Building**

CITY OR TOWN: **Oklahoma City** STATE: **Oklahoma** CODE: **40**

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: *Don W. Shaw*

Title: *SHO for Oklahoma*

Date: _____

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

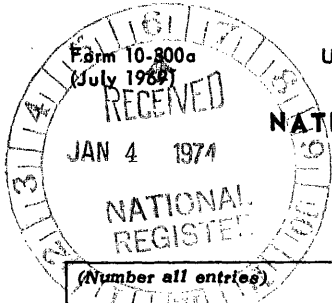
A. R. Markens
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: *4/30/74*

ATTEST:

Wm J. Smutz
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: *4.30.74*



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Oklahoma	
COUNTY	
Cherokee	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	APR 30 1974

No. 8. Significance

Cherokee Female Seminary (1st site)

plants has been vastly enlarged, of course. But the original seminary building, built 1887-1889, is still in use and has already been placed in the National Register.)

The two seminaries were in many ways remarkable. They were maintained largely by the interest from tribal funds invested in registered bonds with the U. S. Government. This money was augmented by the \$5.00 per month charged each student. The \$5.00 fee included board and room, medical care, text books, and all necessary supplies. Each school accepted 200 students a year, but 50 of these were accommodated without charge (the so-called indigent department), yet with all the advantages given the regular boarding students.

It has been said the Cherokees did nothing by halves. This is apparent in the methodical way they went about setting up the two schools. Some of the young Cherokee girls had previously attended Mt. Holyoke at South Hadley, Mass. Tribal leaders were familiar with its methods ... and pleased with its results. Wanting to make sure their own seminaries were as good they sent two of their leading young men -- William P. Ross and David Vann -- to Mt. Holyoke to see how it was governed and to secure teachers for the female seminary. Mt. Holyoke did indeed help to plan the curriculum, arrange for supplies, and provide the young lady teachers. This explains why one knowledgeable student of the schools has called the seminary "the Cherokee daughter of Mt. Holyoke." This influence was especially strong over the years when one remembers that the tribal leaders were insistent on securing instructors proficient not only in all educational work, but in religious work as well. And that teachers and students lived in the same building and were closely associated together, which was a distinct advantage to the young girls.

How good were the schools? Historian A. M. Gibson puts it this way:

Latin, algebra, botany, music geography, grammar, and arithmetic were among the subjects taught. The buildings were reputed to be the finest in all of Arkansas and the Indian Territory. Indian youth could pursue an education from kindergarten through academy or high school level in their own Nation; then the top scholars were selected to attend stateside colleges to complete their education. Princeton and other eastern universities received a number of these outstanding Cherokee students. As a matter of fact, Cherokee schools during the Golden Years far exceeded anything available to white children in the frontier states and territories of Missouri, Arkansas, Texas and Kansas.

OKLAHOMA: Cherokee County - Cherokee Female Seminary

Note: This Zerox may or may not be acceptable for your files, hence the submission of the Oklahoma Highway Department map with the "official" location. We'll send this along anyway for the larger scale.

