

DH0369713

# DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUL 30 1976
DATE ENTERED	NOV 7 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

Oklahoma High School

AND/OR COMMON

Central High School *use this*

### LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

700 Block of N. Robinson

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Oklahoma City

\_\_ VICINITY OF

No. 5

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Oklahoma

40

Oklahoma

109

### CLASSIFICATION

#### CATEGORY

#### OWNERSHIP

#### STATUS

#### PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

### OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Board of Education - Oklahoma City Public Schools

STREET & NUMBER

900 N. Klein

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Oklahoma City

\_\_ VICINITY OF

Oklahoma

### LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the County Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

Oklahoma County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Oklahoma City

Oklahoma

### 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Special Central High School Survey

DATE

1976

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Central High School occupies much of the half-block facing Robinson between 7th and 8th streets. Though not yet finished, it was first used in 1910. Bonds in the amount of \$300,000 had been voted for its construction, but cost overruns (not unknown even then) pushed the cost eventually to near \$500,000. Campbell and O'Keefe were the contractors. Architects were Layton, Wemyss-Smith and Hawk.

The building is a handsome four-story structure in light, dressed stone. It was listed in 1967 in Oklahoma Landmarks, a selection of noteworthy structures prepared by the School of Architecture at Oklahoma State University. It describes the building like this: "Before the migration to suburbs, downtown high schools were built, and this adaptation of late Gothic architecture was intended to combine academic and urban characteristics." Crenelated towers frame the three street entrances. The end towers, on 7th and 8th street, are flat and more in the nature of false fronts. But the main entrance supports a full four-cornered tower, with each corner topped by cupola. An arched cornice ties together the five fourth-floor tower windows, highlighting the handsome formal entranceway. Ornamented pediments at the corners relieve the otherwise rather severe roof line of the massive rectangular structure. The broad expanse of symmetrically designed wall sections is similarly relieved by strong horizontal lines and the effective use of overhanging window cornices at the second and fourth levels. Sculptured stone panels, statuary niches, iron lamps, and other decorative touches complete the design, giving the building an ageless attractiveness.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1910 to present

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Layton, Wemyss-Smith and Hawk

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The history of O. H. S. is typical of the phenomenal progress and undying spirit of the city in which it is located. From its inception in 1892 it steadily grew and developed and now in 1912, after a short period of twenty years, it stands proudly among the few magnificent High Schools of the world, a true exponent of the Oklahoma spirit.

Granted, Winnie Bailey, 1911, was a bit enthusiastic about the school from which she had just graduated. But a glance at the enclosed pictures tends to verify the fact that even today her recently completed O. H. S. is not UN-magnificent. Nor, curiously enough, has the progressive spirit she hails so lyrically disappeared from inside those handsomely designed stone walls. Consider this lead to a January 1976 newspaper story on the new role O. H. S. is assuming in the educational development of Oklahoma's capital city:

Perhaps the boldest, most inventive, least understood and most frequently attacked experimental venture ever conducted by the Oklahoma City Public School System officially leaves the launching pad Monday morning. Classes begin for 222 students at the new Central Innovative High School.

\* \* \*

Secondary education began in Oklahoma City in 1892, just three years after the "run" into Old Oklahoma. A Mrs. Mary D. Couch opened, in a dingy, one-room frame structure at 313 West California Avenue, what was soon to become Oklahoma High School. An organized high school greeted the start of the fall 1893 term, in somewhat more adequate quarters provided by the old U. S. Military headquarters. After a year this structure burned and the school, now with an enrolment of 81, moved into the Methodist Episcopal church on Third Street. At the end of the 1894-95 school year O. H. S. graduated its first accredited class - and the first in the state - with six members.

Other moves and other buildings followed as the growing city attempted to keep pace with expanding educational demands. Toward the end of the first decade of the new century the need for a new building was critical. At the corner of Seventh and Robinson the city owned a quarter of a block. The other quarter-block facing Robinson was purchased and a bond election was called to building a \$300,000 school on the site. In the campaign for its adoption O. H. S. students took an active role, parading banners in the streets and passing out literature they had paid for themselves. The issue carried overwhelmingly and work on the building began almost immediately.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bailey, Winnie, "Central High School," unpublished article, 1912  
 Killackey, Jim, "Reading, 'Riting, Innovation," The Sunday Oklahoman,  
 Oklahoma City, January 18, 1976  
 ----- Oklahoma Landmarks, Oklahoma State University, 1967

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY c. 2 acres

UTM REFERENCES

600

A	1,4	63,4	5,9,9	3,9	2,6	5,9,5	B					
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING						
C							D					

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

STREET & NUMBER

Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN

Oklahoma City

DATE

February 1976

TELEPHONE

405/884-5456

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

SHPO

DATE

JUL 27 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

ATTEST: Charles [Signature]  
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

11/9/96

DATE

11-3-76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

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Oklahoma High School

Because they had worked so hard to get the new building, the class of 1910 wanted to be able at least to hold their graduation exercises in it. And in a nice gesture of appropriateness the school board ordered the contractors to finish the Auditorium by the end of May 1910. This was done and the exercises held, though even in September, when the first classes were met, the building was still only half-completed. Then, finally, in the middle of the second term the new building was completely finished and a formal opening held, attended by the Governor and other prominent state and local dignitaries. But let's allow Winnie Bailey to finish her story.

Now as we tread these splendid marble halls, as we daily use all these perfect appointments, as we are taught by an excellent faculty of over fifty teachers, as we and fifteen hundred of our fellow students attend this institution of which any college might be proud, let us not forget the spirit that made this school possible and the splendid woman who courageously founded O. H. S. in a humble shack in the south part of town. All honor to Mrs. Mary D. Couch.

\* \* \*

Today Oklahoma City has ten high schools. And Central, as it has long since been known, has lived through all the familiar stages of urban adjustment to suburban migration. Finally in 1968 declining enrolment dropped Central briefly to middle school standing. But now in 1976, with 222 students and a faculty of 14 -- quite a numerical comedown from the halcyon days of 1912 -- the new Central Innovative High School would seem once again to be following the pioneer trail blazed by Mrs. Couch and her one-room school back in 1892.

The new Central will, hopefully, meet the educational needs of both the bright, accelerated students and the apathetic, possible dropout. The students were picked by a lottery, with proportional representation according to race, sex, and grade level. However, there are no class levels or grades. Academic work is not broken down by subject matter, but based rather by theme. Volunteer "experts" from the community augment the faculty. The school is frankly experimental, but the Oklahoma City school board has high hopes for it. Curiously, its initial operational budget is about \$305,000 - almost the exact amount voted in bonds to build the school originally.