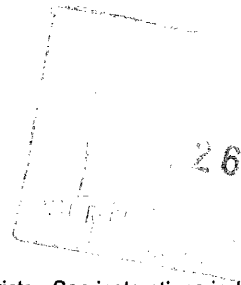


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Illinois Campground  
other names/site number Site # 34CK136

2. Location

street & number County Road D0775  not for publication  
city or town Tahlequah  vicinity  
state Oklahoma code OK county Cherokee code 021 zip code 74464

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
Bob [Signature] 10-25-04  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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 certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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 12/16/04  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Illinois Campground  
Name of Property

Cherokee, Oklahoma  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	2	structures
0	0	objects
1	2	Total

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

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

Historic and Historic Archaeological Resources of the Cherokee Trail of Tears, 1837-1839

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Camp

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/Agricultural Field

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

foundation N/A  
walls N/A  
roof N/A  
other N/A

**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 who's components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations N/A

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or 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)

ETHNIC HERITAGE/Native American

Period of Significance

1839

Significant Dates

1839

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Cherokee

Architect/Builder

N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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:

National Park Service, Long Distance Trails Office  
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Illinois Campground  
Name of Property

Cherokee, Oklahoma  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 47.6 acres

### UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>322565</u>	<u>3974145</u>	3	<u>15</u>	<u>323385</u>	<u>3973705</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>15</u>	<u>322635</u>	<u>3973675</u>	4	<u>15</u>	<u>323785</u>	<u>3973945</u>

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 Philip Thomason/Teresa Douglass  
organization Thomason and Associates date June 30, 2004  
street & number P.O. Box 121225 telephone 615-385-4960  
city or town Nashville state TN zip code 37212

### 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 SHPO or FPO.)

name See Continuation Sheet  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code 40201

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Illinois Campground  
Cherokee County, Oklahoma

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## DESCRIPTION

The Illinois Campground consists of open fields and pasture along Tahlequah Creek in Cherokee County, Oklahoma. The site is located approximately one-half mile south of the city limits of Tahlequah, the Cherokee County seat. The site is located to the north of County Road D0775 which connects Park Hill Road with the Tahlequah sewage treatment plant. To the north of the road is a large field which is kept in pasture and used for livestock grazing. Tahlequah Creek runs through the property in an east/west direction and there are numerous trees along this watercourse. To the north of Tahlequah Creek are additional fields and woodlands. The property undulates from an elevation of approximately 700 feet to 740' above sea level.

The majority of this property consists of open fields planted in hay and grass (Photos 1 and 2). This ground cover is kept low by livestock grazing and offers wide vistas of the property. Through the mid-section of the property is Tahlequah Creek which is approximately twenty feet in width and one to two feet deep (Photos 3 and 5). Along the creekbed and just to the south of the creek are scattered tree lines (Photo 4).

There are two non-contributing structures located within the property's boundary. One is an above-ground transmission line which parallels County Road D0775. This transmission line consists of a series of steel towers and electric lines which connect with the City of Tahlequah's waste water treatment plant (Photo 6). The second non-contributing structure is an underground sewage pipeline. This pipeline is largely underground but there are three concrete and steel manholes connecting with the pipeline within the property boundary. Both the transmission lines and pipeline were erected in 1971 when the waste water treatment plant for the city was constructed.

To the northwest and west of the property is residential development. To the south and northeast are woodlands on steep ridges, and to the east is the Tahlequah sewage treatment plant.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Illinois Campground  
Cherokee County, Oklahoma

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE - SUMMARY

The Illinois Campground is significant under National Register criteria A as a disbandment site associated with the Cherokee Trail of Tears of 1839. Under criterion A, disbandment sites mark the official dissolution of the organized groups and detachments which emigrated west. At these disbandment sites the detachments were officially turned over to U.S. government and military authorities. From these locations the Cherokee dispersed throughout the Indian Territory to begin their new lives in the west. The disbandment sites are the termination of the structure and organization of the groups and detachments which emigrated to the Indian Territory. The Illinois Campground is the location for the disbandment of the final Cherokee detachment to reach the Indian Territory during the Trail of Tears. This detachment was led by Captain John Drew and included Cherokee Chief John Ross and his family. This detachment left Tennessee in December but did not reach this site until March 18, 1839. The detachment camped at this site along Tahlequah Creek for at least one day before disbanding and dispersing throughout the Cherokee lands.

The Illinois Campground is also significant under criterion A as the site of the Cherokee National Convention held in July between the pro- and anti-treaty factions of the Cherokee. This meeting followed the assassination in June of pro-treaty leaders Major Ridge, his son, John Ridge, and nephew, Elias Boudinot. The deaths of these Cherokee leaders resulted in great turmoil and the meeting at Illinois Campground in July brought about a peaceful settlement between these two factions and the formation of the Cherokee Nation.

Due to the temporal occupation of the site by the Cherokee during this period, the Illinois Campground is not eligible under criterion D for its archaeological potential. Prior and subsequent occupations would be indistinguishable from those as the disbandment site and Cherokee National Convention.

The Illinois Campground was a well watered site along Tahlequah Creek and this land has remained in cultivation and woodlands since 1839. The site has not been extensively disturbed, and retains much of its sense of time and place from this period. The property meets the registration requirements within the multiple property documentation form, "The Historic and Historic Archaeological Resources of the Cherokee Trail of Tears, 1837-1839."

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Beginning in June of 1838, the forced expulsion of the Eastern Cherokee began under the orders of President Martin Van Buren. The members of the Eastern Cherokee in North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama were moved from their lands into temporary stockades or forts. From these forts the Cherokee were assembled into three emigration depots, two in Tennessee and one in Alabama. The first detachments of Cherokee were forcibly removed west by steamboat to the Indian Territory in June and July of 1838. The majority of the Cherokee planned to travel west by land but were unable to leave until October 1st due to a prolonged summer drought. From early October of 1838 until March of 1839, some 13,700 Cherokee embarked overland along three major routes. At least one thousand perished due to hunger and exposure along the journey.

The Capt. John Drew detachment was the last group of Cherokee to leave the east. The detachment, consisting of just 231 Cherokee, left the Cherokee Agency near Calhoun, Tennessee on December 5, 1838 and included Cherokee Chief John Ross and his family. By this time the drought in Tennessee was over resulting in higher water in the rivers. This detachment left the Cherokee Agency on four flatboats and floated down the Hiwassee and

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3Illinois Campground  
Cherokee County, Oklahoma

Tennessee Rivers to Ross's Landing.<sup>1</sup> During the month of December the detachment floated down the Tennessee River paying for pilots to safely transport them through the "Suck" and other hazardous areas near Chattanooga. This detachment also paid tolls to use a canal which bypassed the worst of the rapids in the Muscle Shoals area. This canal was built by the state of Alabama and was used until the mid-1840s.<sup>2</sup> This canal is now under Wilson Lake.

At Tuscumbia, John Ross purchased the steamboat *Victoria* for \$10,000 and the detachment boarded the boat for the trip downriver.<sup>3</sup> The *Victoria* followed the route previously followed by the other water route detachments. This route led down the Tennessee River to the Ohio River, past Paducah, Kentucky and then along the Mississippi River past Memphis before entering the Arkansas River. The detachment proceeded upriver to Little Rock, where John Ross's wife, Quatie, died of pneumonia. It was the intent of Drew and Ross to proceed upriver to Fort Gibson in the Indian Territory, but low water forced the *Victoria* to stop at the mouth of the Illinois River near present-day Dardenelle, Arkansas. Ross was forced to hire teamsters and wagons which transported the detachment into the Indian Territory along a road approximating US 64 and State Route 82 to the Illinois Campground near Tahlequah. The Capt. John Drew detachment camped and rested at this site before officially disbanding on March 18, 1839.<sup>4</sup> The detachment reported twelve deaths along the way and arrived with 219 members at the Illinois Campground. The Cherokee in this detachment then dispersed throughout the Cherokee lands within the Indian Territory.

The open fields and well watered site of the Illinois Campground resulted in its selection as the meeting point for the Cherokee National Convention in July of 1839.<sup>5</sup> This convention was held to try to bring the Eastern and Western Cherokee Nations together after several months of strife and turmoil. Some Cherokee who had settled in the Indian Territory prior to 1837 were resentful of the thousands of Cherokee who emigrated west. The arrival of over 17,000 Cherokee by water and land placed enormous strains on the Western Cherokee Nation to absorb and accommodate this large number of tribal members. There was also continual tension between the factions of Cherokee represented by those who signed the Treaty of New Echota in 1835 and those which opposed it. This tension resulted in the assassination of three of the major pro-treaty leaders, Major Ridge, his son, John Ridge, and nephew Elias Boudinot. All three were attacked and killed on June 22, 1839.

In order to avoid further bloodshed, several Cherokee leaders including Sequoyah and Rev. Jesse Bushyhead brought together the various Cherokee factions at the Illinois Campground on July 1, 1839. While many of the pro-treaty party and older Cherokee settlers did not attend, the convention did establish the groundwork for a unified Cherokee Nation.<sup>6</sup> After meeting for over a week, Sequoyah representing the Western Cherokee and George Lowery representing the Eastern Cherokee signed an agreement on July 12<sup>th</sup> which formed the Cherokee Nation.

<sup>1</sup> Duane H. King, "Report on the Cherokee Trail of Tears: Correcting and Updating the 1992 Map Supplement," unpublished manuscript, National Park Service, 1999, 64.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 65.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 64.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 57-58, 63-65.

<sup>5</sup> W. David Baird, "Historic Context for the Native American Theme, Management Region # 3, 1830-1941," Manuscript on file with the State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 1991, p. 189.

<sup>6</sup> Vicki Rozema, "Voices From the Trail of Tears," Winston-Salem, North Carolina: John F. Blair Publisher, 2003, 166.

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4 Illinois Campground  
Cherokee County, Oklahoma

The agreement agreed to “form ourselves into one body politic under the style and title of the Cherokee Nation.” Although acknowledging “unsettled business” from the union, all of the factions agreed to use the courts of the Cherokee Nation to settle future disputes.

Since 1839, this section of the Illinois Campground site has remained in cultivation and woodlands. The property was part of communal lands of the Cherokee until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when the land was divided for sale to individual property owners. The lands comprising this section of the Illinois Campground site changed hands numerous times in the 20<sup>th</sup> century until their purchase by the present owners. The western tract of the property is owned by Percy Nodine who uses the land for agricultural purposes. The eastern tract is owned by the City of Tahlequah and is adjacent to the city’s sewage treatment plant. With the exception of a transmission line through part of the property, the site retains much of its rural integrity of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The Illinois Campground meets the registration requirements for the property type “Disbandment Sites” as outlined in the Multiple Property Documentation Form, “The Historic and Historic Archaeological Resources of the Cherokee Trail of Tears, 1837-1839.” These registration requirements outlining integrity are as follows:

**Location:** The Illinois Campground’s location has been the subject of discussion throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Various authors and researchers during this period identified the site as between one to three miles southeast of Tahlequah along the creek. Recent research by Lois Albert of the Oklahoma Archaeological Survey suggests that the nominated site is accurate, however, the campground likely extended further east for some additional distance.<sup>7</sup> The nominated property does not extend further east due to the presence of the Tahlequah sewage treatment plant and other modern buildings. The nominated property is within a larger area commonly known as the “Illinois Campground.” The nominated property represents the largest area historically associated with the site which retains integrity.

**Design/Materials/**

**Workmanship:** As a campground, no intentional design to reconfigure this land for this property type is apparent. Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are not applicable for this property type.

**Feeling/Setting/**

**Association:** Integrity of feeling, setting, and association is conveyed through a disbandment site’s ability to evoke a sense of time and place of its period of significance. The landscape of this section of the Illinois Campground has not been extensively disturbed since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The open fields used by the Cherokee remain in place along the bed of Tahlequah Creek. Tahlequah Creek remains a free flowing stream through the property and has not been dammed or otherwise impeded. There are no modern buildings within the 47.6 acre boundary for the property. The utility lines which extend through the property are intrusive elements but only comprise a small part of the physical boundary. There are numerous vistas where these power lines are not readily visible, and overall the Illinois Campground retains a strong sense of appearance from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The Illinois Campground possesses sufficient integrity and significance to meet National Register criteria for its association with the Cherokee Trail of Tears. As a known disbandment site, this property retains its sense of time and place from the period of the Trail of Tears of 1837 to 1839.

<sup>7</sup> Lois Albert, Oklahoma Archaeological Survey, University of Oklahoma, Personal Interview, 17 October, 2002.



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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Illinois Campground  
Cherokee County, Oklahoma

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 6

Illinois Campground  
Cherokee County, Oklahoma

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## Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for the Illinois Campground includes all of parcel 0002 and a section of parcel 0007 on the accompanying Cherokee County tax map 03-16N-22E which is drawn at a scale of 1" = 600'. The two tracts contain a total of 47.6 acres. The property is bounded on the west by a tract containing a modern dwelling, on the south by the right-of-way of Cherokee County Road D0775, on the north by lot lines which extend along a row of hills, and on the east by tracts containing Tahlequah's sewage treatment plant.

## Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundary for the Illinois Campground includes all of parcel 0002 and a section of parcel 0007 on Cherokee County tax map 03-16N-22E. These two tracts encompass a portion of the historic location of the Illinois Campground which has been identified since the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the fields along the south bank of Tahlequah Creek towards the Illinois River. The hundreds of Cherokee who utilized this site during the period of disbandment and the convention would have camped for a significant distance along the creek towards the Illinois River. Therefore the overall campground site would have been larger than the nominated property. However, the nominated property represents the largest contiguous area which retains integrity from the period of significance. Within these two tracts are open fields and the watercourse of the Tahlequah Creek which have been traditionally associated with the Illinois Campground. The nominated property continues to be characterized by open fields and small tracts of woodlands along the creekbed. The boundary includes all property retaining integrity which has been historically associated with the Illinois Campground.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Illinois Campground  
Cherokee County, Oklahoma

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Photo by: Thomason and Associates

Date: March, 2002

Location of Negatives: Thomason and Associates, Nashville, TN

Photo No. 1: Illinois Campground, open fields, view to the northeast.

Photo No. 2: Illinois Campground, open fields, view to the northwest.

Photo No. 3: Illinois Campground, Tahlequah Creek and fields to the north, view to the north.

Photo No. 4: Illinois Campground, field and tree line south of Tahlequah Creek.

Photo No. 5: Illinois Campground, Tahlequah Creek, view to the northwest.

Photo No. 6: Illinois Campground, open fields, view to the northwest.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number	Owner Data	Page	8	Illinois Campground Cherokee County, Oklahoma
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## Property Ownership

Map 03-16N-22E, Lot 0002  
Percy Nodine  
2108 Riverview Drive  
Tahlequah, OK  
74464

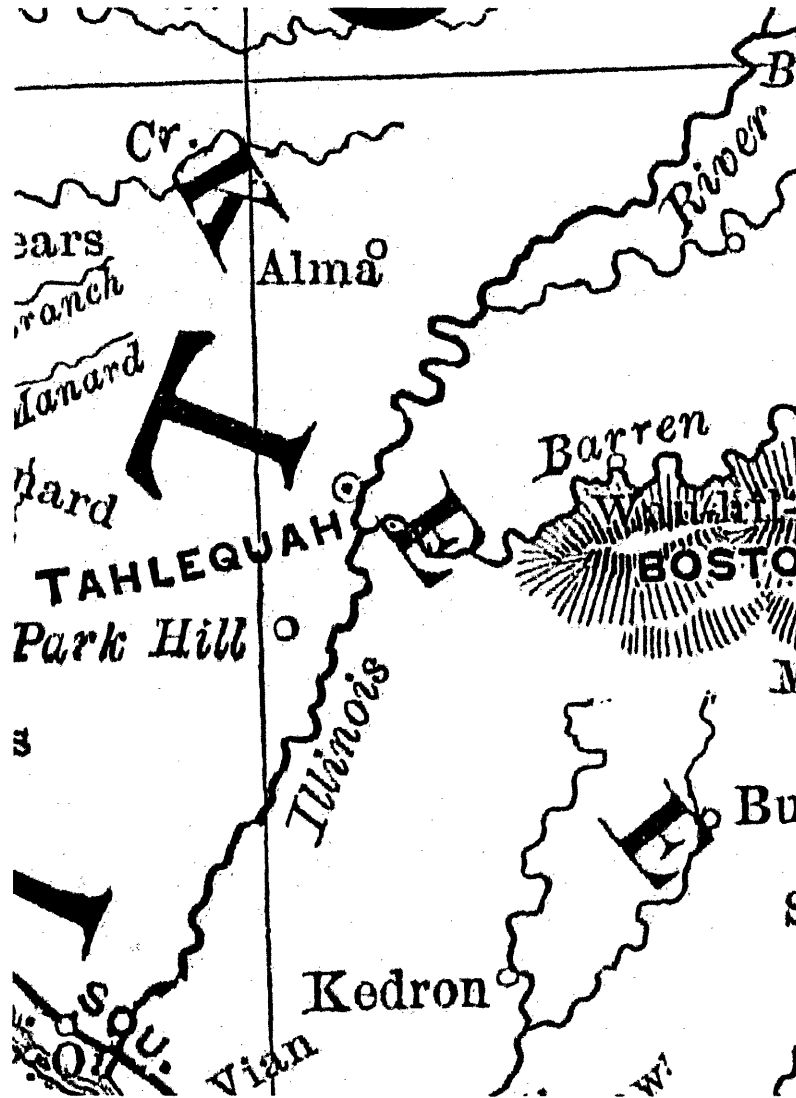
Map 03-16N-22E, Lot 0007  
Tahlequah Public Works  
P.O. Box 29  
Tahlequah, OK  
74465

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Illinois Campground  
Cherokee County, Oklahoma



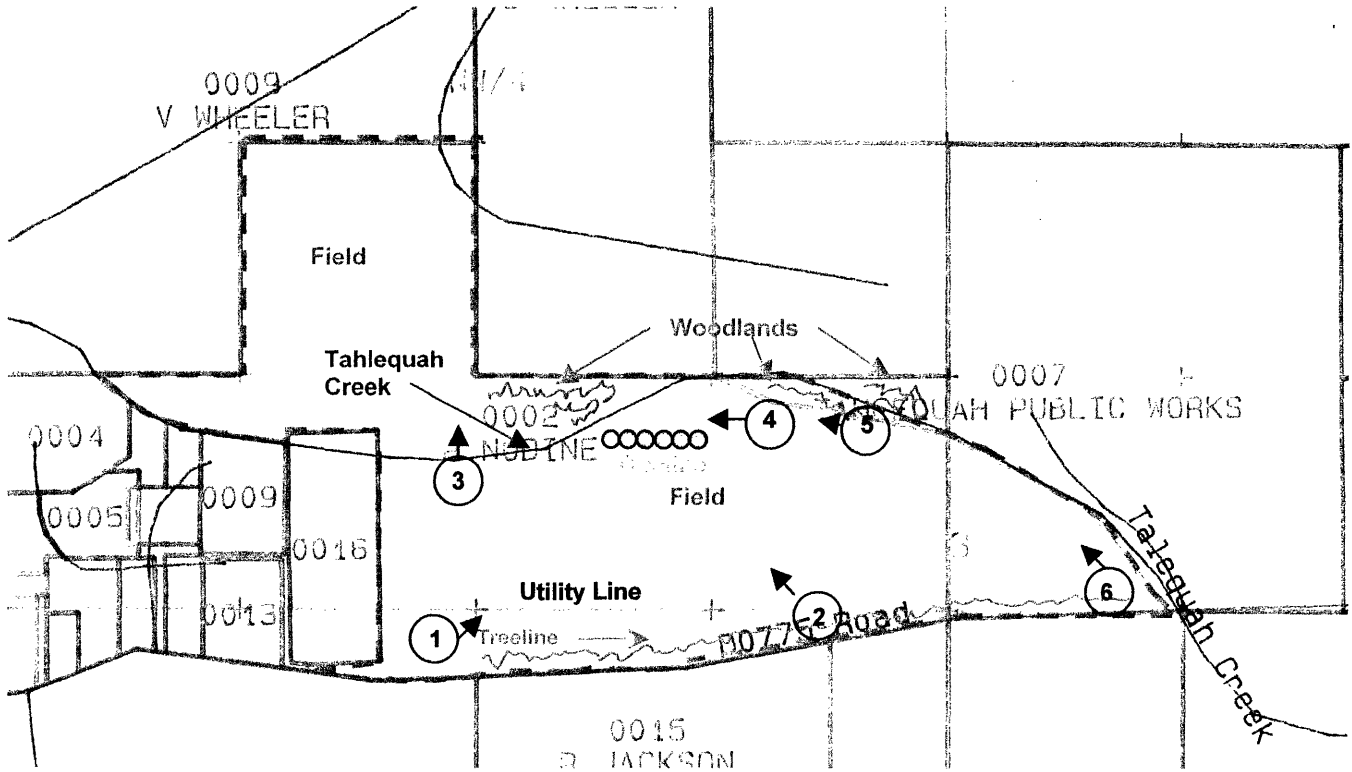
Map 1: The vicinity of the Illinois Campground is shown on the Rand McNally Map of Oklahoma, 1897. The site is just southeast of Tahlequah. (Source: David Rumsey Map Collection, [www.davidrumsey.com](http://www.davidrumsey.com)).

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Illinois Campground  
Cherokee County, Oklahoma



Map No. 2: Cherokee County Tax Map 03-16N-22E which shows the boundary of the Illinois Campground as the dashed line. The photo key is also shown. Scale 1" = 600".