

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



335

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Thomas Community Building

other names/site number N/A

## 2. Location

street & number 120 East Broadway

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

not for publication

city or town Thomas

vicinity

state Oklahoma code OK county Custer code 039 zip code 73669

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide X local

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Thomas Community Building  
Name of Property

Custer, Oklahoma  
County and State

## 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

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	<b>Total</b>

### Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social: Meeting Hall

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Vacant/Not in Use

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: WPA

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Stone

walls: Stone

roof: Asphalt

other:

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### Summary Paragraph

The Thomas Community Building, located at 120 East Broadway, is a one-story building, situated in the downtown area of Thomas. Constructed in 1939, the building is the work of the Works Progress Administration. Common elements identified on the building include the random course stone exterior and metal frame casement windows.

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### Narrative Description

The one-story flat roof façade has a projecting central bay. Within the central bay is a set of recessed pane and panel wood doors. The entry is accented by a slight arch with a diamond shaped keystone. Directly above the arch, in the central bay, is a stone placard titled "COMMUNITY HALL." On either side of the entry is a four-pane metal frame casement window with a solid stone sill. To the west of the central bay are two wood panel and glass overhead garage doors. To the east of the central bay are three six-pane metal frame windows and a solid door. Each window opening has a solid stone sill. The central portion of the building, which serves as a gymnasium, rises above the first floor of the façade but has no openings.

The west elevation is divided into three segments; the one-story segment at the northwest corner, the central core and the one-story segment at the southwest corner. The one-story segment at the northwest corner has a six-pane metal frame casement window and a solid door. The central two-story core has a solid door at the street level and four twelve-pane metal frame casement windows running in a band across the center of the elevation. Each of the windows has a solid stone sill. The one-story segment at the southwest corner has no openings.

The south elevation has a single six-pane casement window in each one-story segment. The main two-story core has four six-pane metal casement windows. Each window has a stone sill. The central core also has a metal door. The east elevation has four twelve-pane metal frame casement windows in the central core and no other openings. Each window has a solid stone sill.

#### Interior:

The interior is divided into three areas. The front area serves as office space. The central core is the gymnasium. It has a wooden basketball court floor and exposed metal rafters. The rear area serves as stage.

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## 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.)

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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Economic

Architecture

### Period of Significance

1939

### Significant Dates

1939

### Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

B.W. Nolen

### Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance is associated with the date the building was constructed, 1939.

### Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)



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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Thomas Community Building is significant within the economic context of Works Progress Administration project in Thomas, Oklahoma and within the architectural context of the Works Progress Administration construction locally. It is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the work undertaken by the Works Progress Administration using local men who were qualified for work relief under specific guidelines established by the WPA. It is also eligible under Criterion C for its architectural significance as an excellent example of Works Progress Administration construction reflecting the goals of the building program of the WPA. The work relief provided by the WPA allowed many local people to survive the trying times of the 1930's while also stimulating the local, and therefore state and national, economies. The building is located in the downtown of Thomas, Oklahoma and was built in 1939.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Economic conditions and the morale of the southwestern region of Oklahoma were in dire circumstances in 1935. Fortunately, the WPA provided timely assistance. The construction component of the WPA greatly assisted those in need in southeastern Oklahoma. It provided meaningful employment and some degree of financial security. The Thomas Community Building is significant for its association with the WPA program.

The physical, economic and cultural environment of the community of Thomas shaped the built environment. As the Thomas Community Building was part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) building program it had to be: useful in terms of the needs of the community, sponsored by a public body and project workmen had to come from persons on the relief rolls.

Both skilled and unskilled relief workers were used for the construction of the Thomas Community Building. Because of the nature of the workers, the building was simple in design and uncomplicated in construction technique. At any one time sponsors of projects had to supply from 10 to 25% of the total construction cost which meant that the building was generally modest. With a WPA appropriation of \$38,681, the Thomas Community Building is vernacular in style but distinctly identifiable as WPA architecture.

The method of construction, contribution of materials, and sources of labor were standard operating procedures for the WPA throughout the nation. WPA buildings are significant as the program through which they were funded significantly reduced the economic and social distress of the national depression of the 1930s. The Thomas Community Building provides a legacy to the WPA through recognizable architecture by its type, style, scale, materials and workmanship. The Thomas Community Building is significant as an excellent local example of WPA construction in both Thomas and Custer County.

**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

Custer County was an agricultural region. The town of Thomas functioned as a trading point during its early years, pre-railroad. In 1902, the Oklahoma Railway Townsite platted Thomas. By 1906, two railroads operated through Thomas, the Blackwell, Enid and Southwestern Railroad and the Kansas City, Mexico and Orient Railway. These railroads provided access to outside markets for grains, livestock, oil gas and building materials. Thomas served as a trade center for the surrounding agricultural areas.<sup>1</sup>

Oklahoma suffered severely during the early period of the Great Depression. In the predominately rural state, 65% of the population lived in rural areas in 1930; at the same time, 27 of the state's 77 counties had no urban areas. The drought,

<sup>1</sup> Linda Wilson, "Thomas," *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia> (accessed December 1, 2010).

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agricultural failures, and a downturn in the petroleum industry from 1932 to 1938 exacerbated the general economic depression of Oklahoma. The rural areas that depended on agriculture and petroleum, as a result, were devastated.<sup>2</sup>

Oklahoma's state and local governments were unable to provide for the citizenry of Oklahoma. Urban unemployment and displaced farm families combined to create a situation whereby 33% of all Oklahoma families were on the direct relief rolls by the time Roosevelt created the WPA by executive order in May of 1935. Communities in Oklahoma compete for WPA funds from the very beginning of the program. Projects in Oklahoma had to meet three major criteria to be considered: must meet a well-defined community need, must be sponsored by a public body that provides a percentage of the project costs; and, 90% of those hired must be unemployed employable workers who were on the relief rolls.<sup>3</sup> By January of 1936, WPA rolls were at an all-time high of 94,281.<sup>4</sup>

The Thomas Community Building is one of three identified building projects in the town of Thomas. Due in large measure to the work provided through the WPA, the community of Thomas was able to survive the years of the Great Depression. Because of the building's high degree of architectural integrity and the association with the Works Progress Administration in Oklahoma, specifically in Custer County, the Thomas Community Building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A for its association with the WPA program and its economic implications and Criteria C as an excellent local example of WPA architecture.

<sup>2</sup> K.E. Hendrickson, Jr, editor, *Hard Times in Oklahoma: The Depression Years*, (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1983), 71-72, 78-79, 81.

<sup>3</sup> "Questions and Answers on the WPA" [brochure], (Washington D.C.: Work Projects Administration, December 1, 1939), Vertical File, Oklahoma Historical Society.

<sup>4</sup> *Guthrie Daily Leader*, June 23, 1935; *ibid.*, November 13, 1935; *Daily Oklahoma*, September 12, 1937.

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Name of Property

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County and State

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Baird, W. David. "Final Report: WPA Structures Thematic Survey (Phase III)." Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1987.

Daily Oklahoma, September 12, 1937.

Guthrie Daily Leader. June 23, 1935; November 13, 1935.

Hendrickson, K.E., Jr., Editor. Hard Times in Oklahoma: The Depression Years. Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1983.

"Questions and Answers on the WPA" [brochure]. Washington D.C.: Work Projects Administration, December 1, 1939.

Wilson, Linda. "Thomas." Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture, <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia> (accessed December 1, 2010).

### 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 # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☐ Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** Less than 1 acre  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>14</u> Zone	<u>522732</u> Easting	<u>3955551</u> Northing	3	<u>      </u> Zone	<u>      </u> Easting	<u>      </u> Northing
2	<u>      </u> Zone	<u>      </u> Easting	<u>      </u> Northing	4	<u>      </u> Zone	<u>      </u> Easting	<u>      </u> Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)  
Block 98, Lot 3-5 of Original townsite of Thomas, Oklahoma.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)  
The boundaries include all the land that has historically been associated with the community building.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lynda B. Schwan/National Register Program Coordinator; Allison Marshaus/Survey Coordinator

organization OK/SHPO

date December 1, 2010

street & number 800 Nazih Zuhdi Dr

telephone 405-522-4478

city or town Oklahoma City

state OK

zip code 73105

e-mail lschwan@okhistory.org

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Thomas Community Building

City or Vicinity: Thomas

County: Custer

State: Oklahoma

Photographer: Allison Marshaus

Date Photographed: 22 February 2011

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

No.	Subject	Dir.
0001	Façade	South
0002	West and South Elevation	Northeast
0003	Interior	



Thomas Community Building  
Name of Property

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**Property Owner:**

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

name City of Thomas  
street & number 122 West Broadway/PO Box 250 telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Thomas state OK zip code 73669

**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 listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Thomas Community Building  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: OKLAHOMA, Custer

DATE RECEIVED: 4/27/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/18/11  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/02/11 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/12/11  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000335

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 68.11 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



Thomas Community Building

120 East Broadway

Thomas, Luster County, Oklahoma

photograph 0001





Thomas Community Building

120 East Broadway

Thomas, Custer County, Oklahoma

photograph 0002

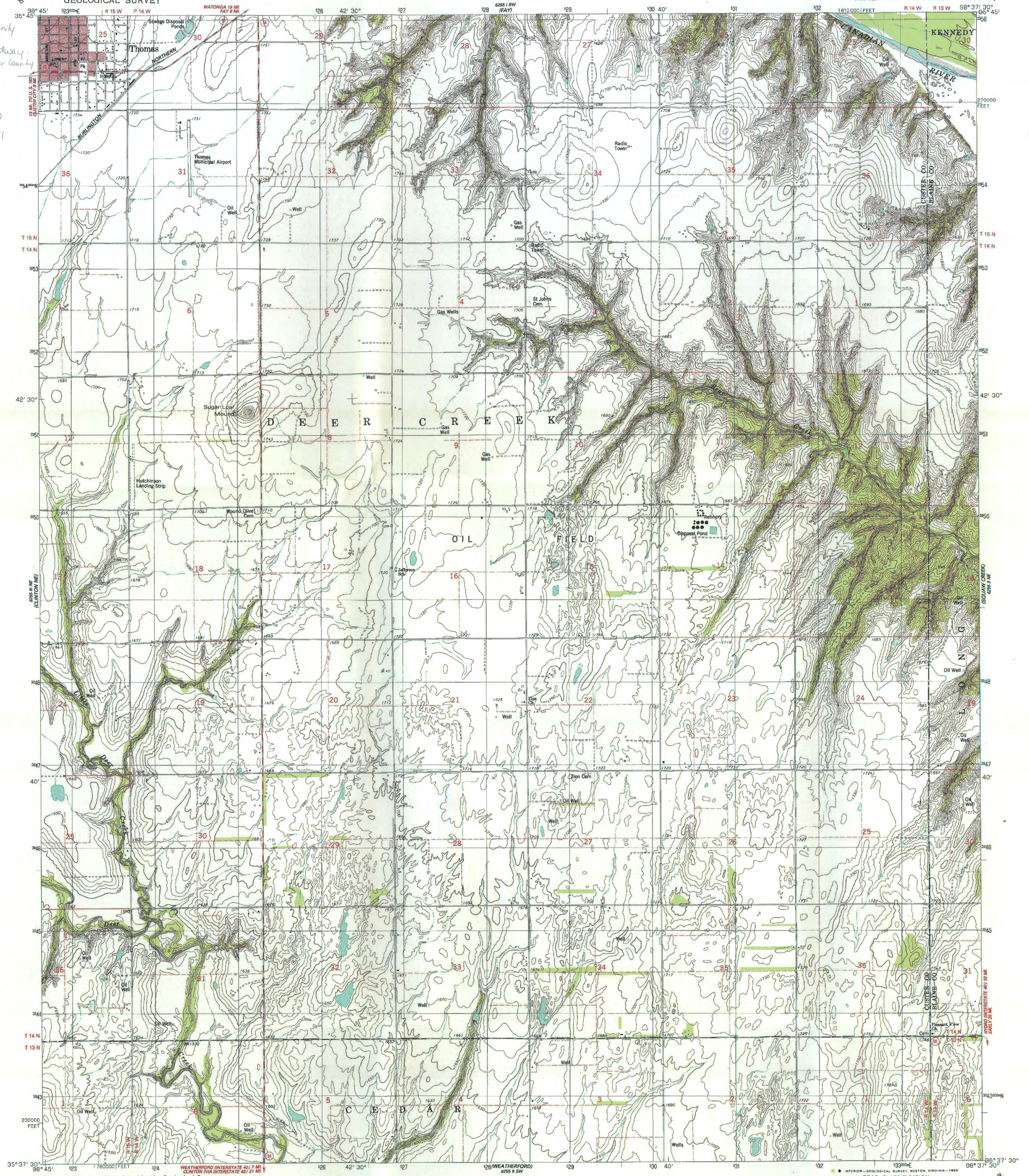


Thomas Community Building  
120 East Broadway

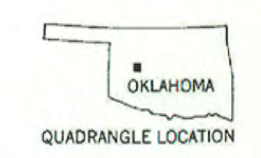
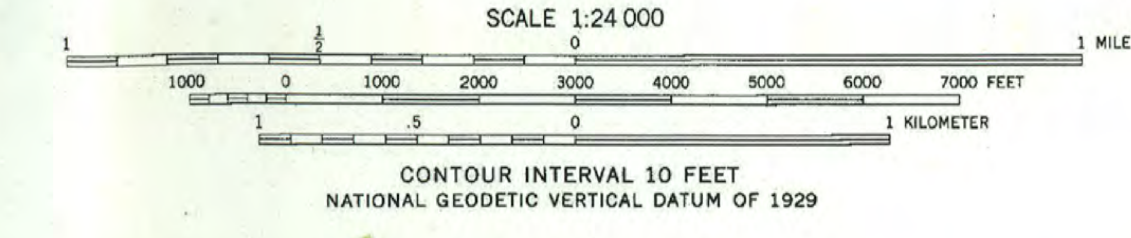
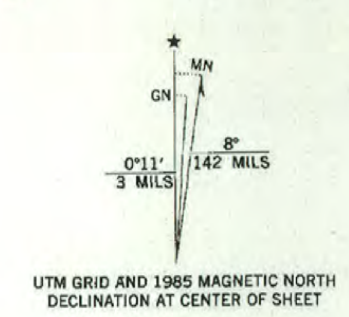
Thomas, Custer County, Oklahoma  
photograph 0003



Thomas Community Building  
60 East Broadway  
Thomas, Custer County  
Oklahoma  
Z=14  
E=522732  
N=395551



Maped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
in cooperation with the Oklahoma Highway Department,  
Oklahoma Water Resources Board, and Oklahoma State Soil  
Conservation Board  
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
taken 1959. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1981  
Field checked 1984. Map edited 1985  
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Oklahoma coordinate  
system, north zone (Lambert conformal conic)  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 14  
1927 North American Datum  
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983,  
move the projection lines 2 meters south and  
31 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks  
Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where  
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
Primary highway, hard surface. Light-duty road, hard or improved surface.  
Secondary highway, hard surface. Unimproved road.  
Interstate Route U. S. Route State Route

WEATHERFORD NW, OKLA.  
NW/4 WEATHERFORD 15' QUADRANGLE  
35098-F6-TF-024





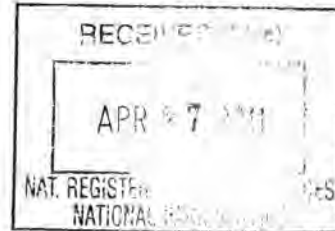
**Oklahoma Historical Society**  
**State Historic Preservation Office**

*Founded May 27, 1893*

Oklahoma History Center • 800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive • Oklahoma City, OK 73105-7917  
(405) 521-6249 • Fax (405) 522-0816 • [www.okhistory.org/shpo/shpom.htm](http://www.okhistory.org/shpo/shpom.htm)

April 22, 2011

Ms. Carol Shull  
Acting Keeper of the Register  
National Park Service 2280, 8th floor  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW  
Washington D.C. 20005



Dear Ms. Shull:

We are pleased to transmit seven National Register of Historic Places nominations for Oklahoma properties. The nominations are for the following properties:

- ✓ Chandler Baseball Camp, Chandler, Lincoln County
- ✓ Thomas Community Building, Thomas, Custer County
- Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education, Norman, Cleveland County
- Joyce House, Snyder Vicinity, Kiowa County
- Dobson Family House, Miami, Ottawa County
- Frazer Cemetery, Altus Vicinity, Jackson County
- Garnett, Elmer and Lela, House, Altus, Jackson County

Also included for transmittal is one Multiple Property Documentation form:

Resources Designed by Herb Greene in Oklahoma

We look forward to the results of your review. If there may be any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either Lynda B. Schwan of my staff or myself.

Sincerely,

Melvena Hirsch  
Deputy State Historic  
Preservation Officer

MKH:lbs

Enclosures