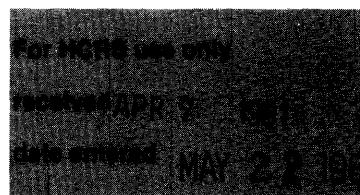


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 Seminole Whipping Tree

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 100 Block Wewoka Avenue \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Wewoka \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district 003

state Oklahoma code 40 county Seminole code 113

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Seminole County

street & number Seminole County Courthouse, 100 Block Wewoka Avenue

city, town Wewoka \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Oklahoma

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Clerk's Office, Seminole County Courthouse

street & number Wewoka Avenue

city, town Wewoka \_\_\_\_\_ state Oklahoma

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Oklahoma Comprehensive Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1980 \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Preservation Office, Oklahoma Historical Society

city, town Oklahoma City \_\_\_\_\_ state Oklahoma

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## 7. Description

---

**Condition** excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved date \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Seminole Whipping Tree is a pecan tree which stands in the courtyard of the Seminole County Courthouse. It reaches approximately 65 feet high and is nine feet seven inches in circumference. It is believed to be 114 years old and is in excellent shape today continuing to produce pecans and shade for the passersby. (See Photo #1). The whipping tree stands next to the site of the Seminole Nation Courthouse (no longer extant) which stood where the present county courthouse now stands. The main branch of the tree to which the guilty man was tied (see #8) has been removed but the location of the scar is visible in the photos.

# 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Tribal justice
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates**      1899-1907                      **Builder/Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Whipping Tree is significant because it is the only remaining symbol of the Seminole Tribe's late nineteenth and early twentieth-century manner of dispensing justice. The whipping tree was used from 1899 until 1907 for public whippings given to guilty persons by the Seminole Lighthorsemen. The Seminole Council was the body which conferred judgment and pronounced sentence. Whipping was punishment for crimes such as arson, perjury, incest, rape and small thefts. A man judged to be guilty of a crime by the Seminole Council was told to report at a certain time, usually the Saturday following his appearance before the Council. The Lighthorsemen (the Seminole police) were sent in search of pecan or hickory switches or rods which they used to whip the guilty person.

The whipping was a public affair. The guilty man was stripped to the waist and his feet loosely tied together with a rope. A pole 16 to 20 feet long was placed on top of the rope between the man's feet. Two men would sit on either end of the pole to hold the man in place. The man's hands were tied together palm to palm and the rope thrown over a limb of the tree and pulled tight. The effect was to keep the man upright for the duration of the whipping. Depending on the severity of the crime, 25, 50, 75 or 100 lashes were given. After the third offense the guilty person would be executed.

A Culprit accused and found guilty of murder or larceny was executed at the execution tree. The guilty person was given time to get his affairs in order and told to report for execution on a certain day. He would be seated on a rock with his back to the execution tree, blindfolded and shot by a group of Lighthorsemen. The old execution tree was cut down in 1902 and a piece of it is now kept in the Oklahoma Historical Society Museum in Oklahoma City.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Ruth, Kent, Oklahoma A Guide to the Sooner State. Norman: OU Press 1957, p. 358.  
 Stout, Weldon W., letter form, 707 S. Okfuskee, Wewoka, OK 74884, July 31, 1980  
 Wewoka Chapter, American Association of University Women, Barking Water, The Story of Wewoka, 1960, pp. 3-4.

# 10. Geographical Data

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

Acreege of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Wewoka East

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

Quadrangle scale 7.5 minutes

UMT References

A 

1	4	7	2	8	5	3	5	3	8	9	3	2	2	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 12 Block 22 in the Old Town Wewoka, on southwest corner of the lot.

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 Marjorie M. Schweitzer

organization Oklahoma Historic Preservation Survey

date December, 1980

street & number Oklahoma State University

telephone (405) 624-5678

city or town Stillwater

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*[Handwritten Signature]*

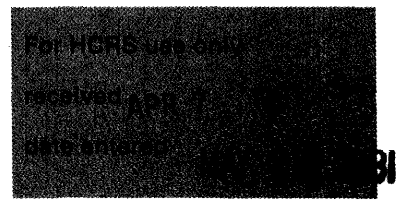
title

date 3/24/81

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>	date <u>May 22, 1981</u>
Special Agent in Charge	
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

Major Bibliographical References

Wright, Muriel, A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma. Norman: OU Press, 1951  
p. 235.