

**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 5 1973

1. NAME

COMMON:
Cherokee Female Seminary

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Seminary Hall

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Northeastern State College Campus

CITY OR TOWN:
Tahlequah

STATE Oklahoma	CODE 40	COUNTY: Cherokee	CODE 021
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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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input 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"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <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 (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
State of Oklahoma

STREET AND NUMBER:
State Department of Education

CITY OR TOWN:
Oklahoma City

STATE:
Oklahoma

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 Historic Sites Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1958
 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Oklahoma Historical Society

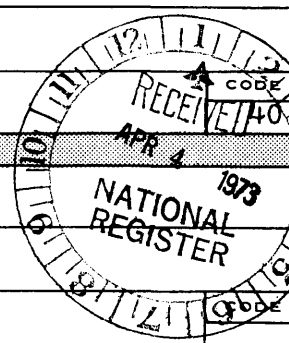
STREET AND NUMBER:
Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN:
Oklahoma City

STATE:
Oklahoma

CODE:
40

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: Oklahoma

COUNTY: Cherokee

ENTRY NUMBER: APR 5 1973

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DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Ruins Unexposed

(Check One) essentially

(Check One)

Altered Unaltered Moved Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

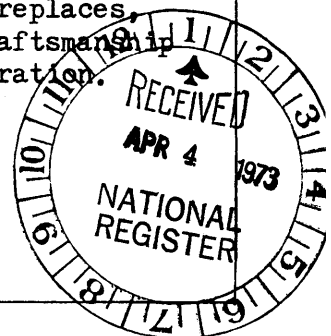
Construction of the original seminary, at Park Hill, began in 1847 and was plagued by shortages of both building materials and skilled labor. A local kiln burned native bricks for its walls. The first contract for these bricks was given to several Moravian brothers who had recently come into Indian Territory. 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 massive tower. This structure was destroyed by fire in 1887 and the site is marked today by three of its tall brick columns (see No. 8). Other bricks from this building, and from the identical Cherokee Male Seminary, built several miles to the northwest, have also gone into memorial columns on the campus of Northeastern State College in Tahlequah, where the Female Seminary was rebuilt.

The new seminary site, on the north edge of Tahlequah, was a beautiful one, a gently sloping wooded hill watered by a generous spring. C. E. Illsley of St. Louis was chosen chief architect. W. A. Illsley and Son of Chetopa, Kansas, won the construction contract for \$57,000. Construction began Nov. 3, 1887. Bricks were burned on the site. Lumber was sawed locally and the stone quarried near by. The cornerstone was laid April 25, 1888. It was a major social event that drew a crowd of 1,500 from all over the Nation. The building was completed April 18, 1889, at a final cost of over \$60,000.

The Seminary was the largest building ever erected by an Indian tribe. (Despite this, when it opened August 26, 1880, it had to turn away many prospective students for lack of accommodations.) Now Seminary Hall, the massive, three-story brick affair is roughly L-shaped, measuring 227 feet across its main east-west axis, with an ell projecting north 146 feet from the east end. The main building is approximately 78 feet wide. Over all it has 127 usable rooms with some 50,500 gross square feet. Two turreted towers flank the main entrance. Tip of the wooden clock tower over the body of the L is 98 feet above the ground. Over the years the only substantial change from the original has been removal of the one-story wooden porches that flanked the entrance archway on the south and the double gallery that lined the inner wall of the projecting ell. Interesting features of note -- handsome fireplaces, graceful stairways, columns, and other unusual example of craftsmanship in wood -- have been carefully preserved in the recent restoration.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



SIGNIFICANCE

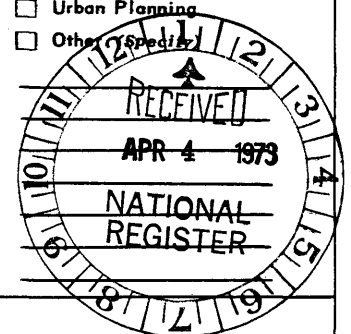
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input checked="" 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) 1887 to the present

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 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 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. Section 6, Article 9, of the Cherokee constitution, adopted in 1827 at New Echota, Georgia, 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 May 7, 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. But for a time during the Civil War it remained in operation until Easter Sunday 1887. Then fire broke out and the handsome Southern Colonial affair was destroyed to its brick columns. (Three of these are now part of the Tsa-La-Gi village/theatre/museum complex being developed by the Cherokee National Historical Society.)

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, completed two years later. A still handsome three-story brick affair, it was dedicated on May 7, 1889.

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

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

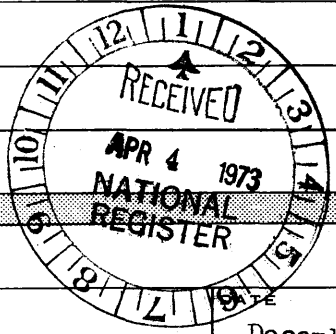
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	35°	55'	13"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	94°	58'	12"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

NO UTI
HL

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

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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

ORGANIZATION: **Oklahoma Historical Society**

STREET AND NUMBER: **Historical Building**

CITY OR TOWN: **Oklahoma City**

STATE: **Oklahoma** CODE: **40**

DATE: **December 1972**

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: [Signature]

Title: SL0

Date: APR 2 1973

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

[Signature]
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 4/5/73

ATTEST: [Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: 4 4 73

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Oklahoma	
COUNTY	
Cherokee	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	APR 5 1973

(Number all entries)

No. 8. Significance

Cherokee Female Seminary

Indian Territory joined Oklahoma Territory to become the State of Oklahoma in 1907. Two years later, in 1909, the Cherokee Female Seminary was purchased by the new state. As Northeastern State Normal School it opened September 14, 1909, with an enrollment of 511 students. A decade later, in 1919, the normal school became a full four-year college, its name changed to Northeastern State Teachers College. In 1939, its curriculum broadened in scope, it became Northeastern State College. Today the school has a \$50 million physical that sprawls over 176 acres, its 30-plus major buildings accommodating some 5,000 students and a staff of 225. And the old seminary building, well maintained over the years, remains its highly decorative centerpiece. Only recently refurbished inside and out, and its name changed officially to Seminary Hall, it stands as a fine tribute to the Cherokee's high regard for education.

By tracing its lineage to the Enabling Act of 1846, by which the Cherokee National Council authorized establishment of the Cherokee Female Seminary, present Northeastern State College claims to be:

- * The second oldest public institution of higher learning west of the Mississippi River.
- * The oldest public institution of higher learning in the trans-Mississippi West dedicated to provide a liberal arts education for women.
- * One of the half-dozen oldest American institutions to provide a liberal arts education for women.
- * The first institution in America to pay equal salaries to men and women professors.
- ✓ * The first nationally operated institution of higher learning in America.
- * The first institution of higher education to provide tuition, books, room, board and supplies free of charge to its students.
- * The Alma Mater of more Indian students than any other accredited college in the United States.

Today, to round out its clutch of claims to fame, Northeastern has more Indian students enrolled than any other accredited college in the country. Unique, then, in many ways, the school is a handsome monument to the Cherokee Nation that gave it birth and in the history and culture of which its roots remain firmly entwined.

