

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

1026

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 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.



1. Name of Property

Historic name: Union School District 19 1/2
Other names/site number: Negro Union School, Stella Union School, Stella Separate School
Name of related multiple property listing:

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

2. Location

Street & number: SW Corner of 149th Street and S. Luther Road
City or town: Newalla State: OK County: Cleveland
Not For Publication: Vicinity:

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
Applicable National Register Criteria:
X A ___ B ___ C ___ D

[Signature] Oct 20, 2014
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

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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:)

Joe Gibson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

12.10.14
Date of Action

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Education: School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Vacant/Not in Use

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movement

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Weatherboard

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Union School District 19 1/2 is located a mile east of the four-way stop marking the small unincorporated community of Stella, Cleveland County, Oklahoma. The building is a one-story with a partial basement, weatherboard, rectangular, Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movement style, two-room, schoolhouse. The two-room schoolhouse with a poured-in-place concrete, partial, two-room basement was constructed around 1936. The building was abandoned as a school in 1955, although it continued to serve the local community as a social center for decades after this. While the school was apparently not built under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Union School district was included in a county-wide school landscaping project undertaken by the WPA in 1940 which included construction of the stone retaining wall located on the north and part of the east property boundary line. The building has an asphalt covered, side gabled roof and a combination foundation of painted brick and concrete. The nonhistoric windows are metal, one-over-one and two-over-two, hung with many of the original windows boarded over. The building features two entry porches, located on either side of a projected, dropped, cross gable on the east elevation. The shed porch roofs were removed after 2007. Both non-original entry doors are gray, metal, slab with small square lights. The basement concrete stairs and below-grade entry is sheltered by a weatherboard lean-to attached

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on the west side of the south elevation. In the concrete of the northeast entry stoop and top basement stair are WPA stamps showing the year 1940 to correspond with the WPA landscaping project. Centrally located above the dropped cross gable is a red brick, interior, ridge chimney. Decorative details consist of double windows, extended eaves, exposed rafter tails and triangular knee braces. To the east of the south corner of the building, there is a small pile of concrete blocks which formed a well house in 1955. Along the north and northeast line of the property is a rock retaining wall. Part of the WPA's 1940 landscaping effort, the fence is counted as a contributing object within this nomination. The historic integrity of the building has been diminished by the changes to the fenestration pattern, including boarding of some windows and replacement of the remaining windows and doors, and removal of the porch roofs. However, as the building is historically significant for its association with African-American education in Cleveland County from the mid-1930s through desegregation in the mid-1950s, the alterations to the fenestration pattern do not destroy the ability of the building to convey its significance.

Narrative Description

The Union School District 19 ½ is located one mile east of the four-way stop marking the small community of Stella. Consisting of a convenience store, shuttered white schoolhouse and a scattering of housing, plus a cemetery located south on Peebly Road, Stella is a rural enclave located at the crossroads of Southeast Peebly Road and East Stella Road (also known as Southeast 149th Street). The Union School served as the separate school for the Stella community from its construction in about 1936 through desegregation in 1955.

Situated on the northeast corner of Section 28, Township 10 North, Range 1 East, the Union School building is set back a distance from the road. On a site containing two acres, the north perimeter is marked by a low stone retaining wall with a concrete top which wraps around the east corner for a short distance (see photographs #9 and #10). Although there are no markings in the wall, the wall was reported in the local newspaper as being constructed by the WPA in 1940 as part of a county-wide school landscaping project.¹ Present during the period of significance, the wall is considered a contributing object for the purposes of this nomination. The stone wall extends along the east line of the property only about a quarter of the way south. The rest of east line of the property is marked by symmetrically spaced wooden posts and some trees (see photograph #8). The west line of the property is marked by a heavy tree line. A cursory inspection of the area west of the schoolhouse did not reveal evidence of any outhouses. The south boundary line is not distinguished in any way, although there is a short concrete wall that extends off the building towards the well house.

The Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movement style building is emblematic of 1930s rural school architecture in Oklahoma. The weatherboard building is largely painted white, although there are a few sections of unpainted weatherboard. The building measures sixty feet north-south and twenty-eight feet east-west. The schoolhouse has an asphalt-covered, side gabled roof broken by a centrally-located, dropped, cross gabled projection (see photographs #1, #2 and

¹ *Norman (Oklahoma) Transcript*, 25 August 1940.

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#4). A rectangular, red brick, interior, ridge chimney straddles the cross gable near where it joins the building. Towards the southeast side of the roof, there is a small metal vent which also protrudes above the roof. Ornamenting the extended wooden eaves on the long east and west sides of the building proper are exposed rafter tails with narrow triangular knee braces on the corners of the north and south elevations. In contrasting harmony, the small cross gabled projection features exposed rafter tails on the north and south sides with triangular knee braces marking the outside edges of the east elevation. Mimicking the main building, the lean-to features exposed rafters along the long south wall.

The foundation of the Union School District 19 ½ is a combination of painted brick and concrete. Most of the building has a painted red brick foundation. Portions of the south and west elevations, containing the partial poured-in-place concrete basement, have a concrete foundation. The building site is uneven as the foundation is barely visible on the east side with a greater expanse of the foundation visible on the west side.

The east elevation is the primary elevation (see photographs #1 and #2). The façade is broken into three equal twenty foot sections. Historically, the north and south sections of the east wall contained a set of double windows towards the outside and a single covered entry porch on the inside. Both sets of double windows have been boarded with matching weatherboard, although the outline of the windows remain visible. Underneath the historic location of the double windows on the south section, there is a rectangular crawlspace in the brick foundation. The shed porch roofs over both entry porches, originally supported by wooden triangular knee braces, were removed after 2007. In the concrete landing of the north entry porch, there is a WPA stamp with the year 1940. The south door appears to have newer, replacement, concrete steps which are shorter and lack the WPA stamp. Both single doors are gray, metal, slab with small rectangular lights. The doors are a fairly recent security addition to the building. The north door opens onto a small vestibule which contains a wooden slab door topped by a boarded transom. The interior door is nailed shut to prevent unauthorized entry. The vestibule features a tall vertical wood wainscoting below a weatherboard wall.

The center section of the east elevation historically featured four symmetrical windows. At an unknown time, the four windows were replaced by two, aluminum, one-over-one, hung windows with the remaining space filled with weatherboard siding that is similar to the rest of the building. The vent historically located above the center windows remains in place, although it appears to have been enlarged in comparison to the vents in the 1955 photograph of the building available in the *Norman Transcript* and *Daily Oklahoman*.²

The south elevation of the Union School District 19 ½ has no visible windows (see photographs #2 and #3). There is a rectangular vent centrally located in the upper wall with the outline of the original smaller vent still partially visible. Located about twelve feet from the east corner, there is a shed roofed, weatherboard lean-to which shelters the concrete basement stairs. Stamped in the uppermost step of the basement stairs is a WPA stamp, also with the year 1940. There is a low concrete wall (see photograph #5) which extends off the southeast corner of the lean-to

² Ibid, 30 August 1955. See also *Daily Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma), 30 August 1955.

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towards the concrete block well house located towards the south side of the east part of the building site (see photograph #2). Due to its small scale and association with the building, the concrete wall is not counted separately. In ruins, the well house is also not counted separately.

The lean-to contains a framed entryway on the east side and a single framed window opening on the west side (see photographs #2, #3 and #5). The basement stairs are concrete with poured-in-place concrete walls (see photograph #6). In the north wall of the stairs, there is a double window. The basement entry is located below grade on the northwest side. The partial basement is separated into two rooms by a vertical wood dividing wall with a center framed entry. The basement floors are dirt and the ceilings are wood (see photograph #7). The basement features three, metal, six-over-six, hopper, wire glass windows on the west side. Two of the windows are in the larger north room with the third window in the south room. The two outside basement windows have been covered with wooden boards from the outside.

The west elevation features two sets of four, symmetrically placed, single windows (see photographs #3 and #4). With the exception of the northernmost window, the windows on the west elevation are two-over-two, hung, metal. The northernmost window is a newer, metal, one-over-one, double hung window matching the windows on the east elevation. Although barely discernible, it appears the original windows were taller and possibly wider with the space above the existing windows clad with weatherboard siding to match the rest of the wall. The concrete foundation extends to about the mid-point under the southernmost window of the north set of windows. This is past the halfway point, which corresponds roughly to the center of the space between the two sets of windows. Towards the north side of the building, there are two small openings in the brick foundation.

The north elevation of the building is void of any openings save the rectangular vent located in the upper gable wall (see photographs #1 and #4). As with the other vents in the building, the replacement vent is longer and narrower than the original vent. The ground visibly slopes along the north elevation with only one row of the brick foundation visible on the east side and eight rows of brick visible on the west side.

ALTERATIONS

The Union School District 19 1/2 has been altered by the replacement of the windows, infill of other windows, replacement of the doors, removal of the entry porch roofs and replacement of the vents. While these changes diminish the building's integrity of materials, workmanship and design, the schoolhouse retains sufficient characteristic details to convey its historic significance as a rural African-American school in Cleveland County, Oklahoma. This includes the characteristics of location, setting, feeling and association. The building is unmistakable as a historic school which merits recognition for its educational and ethnic significance on the local level.

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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.)

- 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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Education

Ethnic Heritage: Black

Period of Significance

1936-1955

Significant Dates

1940

1955

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Union School District 19 ½ is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the areas of education and black ethnic heritage for its significance as the historically black school for the community of Stella. Constructed in about 1936, the building served the educational needs of the community until 1955 when the Stella schools underwent desegregation. At least for a time in the 1930s, the Union School was the only separate school in operation by Cleveland County. The Stella community gained statewide notice in 1955 due to the proposed use of the Union School building for the desegregated school. With a boycott launched by area parents which resulted in the entire Stella School Board resigning, the Union School was abandoned in favor of the similar, frame, two-room, white school building located at the crossroads that identify the Stella community. Before and after 1955, the Union schoolhouse continued to serve the locals as a community center. The period of significance for the Stella separate school extends from 1936 to 1955, corresponding to the building's use as a school.

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

Education has long been one of the foundations of community development. However, during the first half of the twentieth century, the educational opportunities for black schoolchildren were stifled by racism, a shortage of money and inadequate facilities. These conditions were allowed to persist relatively unchecked for decades by federal laws that allowed, and state laws that mandated, separate schools for white and black children. Although black schools in towns and cities tended to have more substantial facilities, better educated teachers and more consistent school terms than their rural counterparts, the separate schools were never accorded the resources of the majority schools as required by law.

From Oklahoma's early days, African-Americans comprised a significant section of the population. In 1870, more than 6,000 blacks lived in Indian Territory. Twenty years later, the federal census recorded 18,000 African-Americans in Indian Territory and 3,000 in Oklahoma Territory. Until approximately 1897, Oklahoma was fairly well integrated. However, using the "separate but equal" doctrine of the 1896 United States Supreme Court decision in the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the 1897 territorial legislature mandated racial separation of schools, juries and public facilities. Notably, the number of blacks had substantially grown to number almost 38,000 in Indian Territory and nearly 19,000 in Oklahoma Territory by the turn of the twentieth century. The policy of segregation continued into statehood when the 1907 state legislature, as one of its first undertakings, enacted a "Jim Crow" law restricting use of not only schools and public facilities but also transportation. Section III, Article XIII of the Oklahoma Constitution provided for a "complete plan of separation between the white and colored races, with impartial

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facilities for both races.” As defined by the statute, the term “white” included all non-black races.³

The school system in Oklahoma was designed so that members of the majority race in the school district, either African-American or white, composed the school board, which had authority over the local school district. The county then maintained a separate school for the minority students or made arrangements for their transfer to a compatible racially composed school in another district. The majority school was supported by a tax levied on all property in the district. The minority school was maintained by a tax levied on all property in the county, not to exceed one mill. A popular method of handling this situation in urban areas was for the county to construct and maintain the building and the local district to provide the furnishings and teacher for the minority school. Because many counties were unable to levy sufficient funds to adequately maintain the separate schools, the state legislature increased the amount of levy from one mill to two mills in 1921. This mill levy still remained generally inadequate to construct and maintain facilities for African-American schoolchildren which at that time exceeded 36, 000 students statewide.⁴

The 1930 federal census puts the population of the Stella Township at 390 total residents with a 127 of these being black. Notably, the rural farm population of the Stella Township numbered 381, equaling all but nine of the township citizens. The total black population in Cleveland County in 1930 was 624, an increase of 164 from 1920. In both 1920 and 1930, the percentage of black residents in Cleveland County was markedly low, with 2.4% of the 1920 population being black and 2.5% of the 1930 population. In a dramatic change, the total black population in Cleveland County fell to just 142 blacks in 1940. This 482 persons decline is attributable to the Great Depression with the dominantly agricultural citizenship of Cleveland County particularly hard hit. Of note, of the 142 blacks residing in Cleveland County in 1940, 130 lived in the Stella Township. This was about 29% of the total 440 person Stella Township 1940 population. By 1950, the total Stella Township population decreased from 440 to 249, a decline of just over 43% from 1940 to 1950. Continuing its decline, the 1950 black population fell to 107 in Cleveland County with no reporting specifically for Stella Township. Thus, the black population in Cleveland County declined by 83% from 1930 to 1950. In 1960, the black population in the Stella Township equaled 51 of the 196 residents. The 51 black Stella residents equaled 31% of the total 167 black citizens in Cleveland County in 1960.⁵

³ Arrell Morgan Gibson, *Oklahoma: A History of Five Centuries*, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 237. See also *Twelfth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction Together with the Ninth Report of the State Board of Education*, (Oklahoma State Board of Education, 1928), 62-63.

⁴ *Tenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction Together with the Seventh Report of the State Board of Education*, (Oklahoma State Board of Education, 1924), 41. See also *Twelfth Biennial Report, 62-63; Eighteenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction of Oklahoma and the Fifteenth Biennial Report of the State Board of Education of Oklahoma*, (Guthrie, OK: Co-Operative Publishing Company, 1940), 79; *Seventh Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction Together with the Fourth Report of the State Board of Education*, (Oklahoma State Board of Education, 1918), 17; and, *Ninth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction Together with the Sixth Report of the State Board of Education*, (Oklahoma State Board of Education, 1922), 42.

⁵ *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Population, Volume 3: Part 2* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1932), 559, 565 and 589. See also *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Population, Volume 2: Part 5: Chapter 8*

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Prior to Oklahoma's statehood, Cleveland County was divided into seventy equal-sized school districts, roughly three miles apart. The numbering started in the northeast corner of the county and proceeded to the northwestern corner. The system then dropped three miles south to continue the numbering back to the east. Thus, located on the far east side of the second row of districts was the Stella School District 19. On June 22, 1910, District 20 consolidated with District 19 by majority vote of residents of both districts. For unknown reasons, the consolidated district continued to go by numbers 19 and 20, as well as C-1 as the first consolidated district in Cleveland County.⁶

As the minority school in the Stella area, the Union School, also known as the Negro Union School, was designated as School District 19 ½. The Union School was one of three black schools in the northeast corner of Cleveland County in the first half of the twentieth century. Located to the north in Districts 1 and 2 were the Norris School (District 1 ½) and the Brown's Valley School (District 2 ½). To the direct west of the Union School, was the West Point School (District 17 ½). In all, there were about five historically black schools in Cleveland County with the fifth school located in the southeast part of the county and consisting of the McIntosh School (District 55 ½). However, at least for a time in the 1930s, the only black school in operation in Cleveland County was the Union School District 19 ½.⁷

When exactly the existing two-room Union School building was constructed is unknown. In October 1930, the rural school system of Cleveland County boasted fifteen accredited schools with seven rated as superior model and seventeen as model schools. The Union School, at the time a one-room, one-teacher school, was both accredited and classed as a model school.⁸

In the 1930s, the rural schools of Cleveland County were the subject of several Master's theses at the University of Oklahoma. Unfortunately, none of these included specific information about the Union School. However, according to Ben Fugate's 1937 thesis titled "A Comparative Analysis of Achievement of One and Two-Or-More-Room Schools of Cleveland County, Oklahoma," there were thirty-six one-room schools and thirteen two-or-more-room schools in operation in 1933-1934.⁹ The C-1 District was noted as being among the one-room group. Additionally, in June 1935, only one teacher was appointed to teach for the summer term at the

(Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1943), 824, 831, 862 and 881; *A Report of the Seventeenth Decennial Census of the United States*, Census of Population: 1950, Volume II: Part 36 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1952), 1, 75, 86; *The Eighteenth Decennial Census of the United States*, Census of Population: 1960, Volume I: Part 38 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1964), 13 and 61-62.

⁶ Ethel D. Burkett, *The Effect of the War Years on the Rural Schools of Cleveland County*, (M.A. Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1947), 3 and 6.

⁷ Cleveland County Genealogical Society, *Map Showing Locations of Olden Days Rural Schools* (<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~okccogs/maps/schools.gif>) and *Early-Day Rural School Districts and Locations* (<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~okccogs/schools/schooldistricts-legals.htm>), retrieved 19 January 2014. See also *Norman Transcript*, 15 June 1937.

⁸ *The Daily Oklahoman*, 12 October 1930.

⁹ Ben Fugate, *A Comparative Analysis of Achievement of One and Two-or-More-Room Schools of Cleveland County*, (M.A. Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1937), 3.

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Stella school. While neither of these documents mentioned the Union School, it is presumed that the black school would not have been enlarged prior to the expansion of the white school.

In a June 15, 1937 article which placed the value of all Cleveland County rural schools at \$133,290, the Union School is noted as being the sole black school operating among the total fifty-eight county-maintained rural schools in Cleveland County. Additionally, the Union School is described as a two-room, frame building. Based upon this information, the date of construction for the building is estimated as 1936. Frame school buildings dominated the rural schools of Cleveland County with sixteen of the seventeen two-room schools in the county being frame.

This construction of the two-room Union School District 19 ½ likely coincided with the construction of a two-room building for the white schoolchildren of Stella township. Still extant, the white school building was similar in terms of design, style and materials to the Union School with the exception of a centrally located entry in the projecting cross gable and a second entry on the west corner of the south elevation in place of the Union School's two entry porches on either side of the projecting cross gable. Critically, the white school building was situated on land that would revert to its original owners if it ceased to function as a school. The Union School was located on land owned by the county.

The July 28, 1938 issue of the *Norman Transcript* noted that "The summer term of school started at the Union school, Monday, July 18, with J.L. Trotter as principal. Mrs. Trotter taught last week in Middle Brown's place while she was finishing her school at Langston. They have a good attendance in both rooms." As was common at the time, the Union School also served as a community center. In the same July 28, 1938 issue of the *Norman Transcript* was the snippet that "The Negro farm women's club met Thursday at the Union school house. Members present were Mrs. Trotter, Pinkie Johnson, Johnnie Johnson, Laura Lee and Beulah Lambeth." Further, as reported in 1955, the school building was used for religious services, funerals, weddings, and other community events that typified life during the mid-twentieth century.¹⁰

As evidenced by the WPA stamp in the concrete, the Union School benefitted from a county-wide landscaping project in 1940. Although the extent of the work is unclear, this included construction of the native stone retaining wall which continues to mark the north and part of the east line of the school property. The county superintendent of schools sponsored a second WPA county-wide school repair project in 1941; however, it is unknown what, if any, work occurred at the Union School as part of that program of work.¹¹

In addition to repair and landscaping work, the WPA also offered a school lunch program. The Union School was one of the thirteen Cleveland County schools which participated in this program in 1940-1941 with plans to participate in the 1941-1942 school year. Notably, the rural women's clubs of Cleveland County sponsored similar hot lunch projects in the early 1930s previous to the WPA. This included hot lunches for pupils sponsored by the Union Club

¹⁰ *The Norman Transcript*, 28 July 1938. See also *Daily Oklahoman*, 18 August 1955.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 25 August 1940 and 31 August 1941.

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presumably at the Union School.¹² Sponsored by the local school boards and assisted by the women's clubs, as well as other interested agencies, the WPA lunch program provided a complete meal, including a supplementary starchy dish, a green vegetable, raw or cooked, and a simple dessert. The food was supplied by the surplus marketing administration through the state board of welfare and other local sponsors. Minimal requirements for the program included a kitchen built by the school which included screens on all openings, three-way dishwashing vats, adequate storage space, covered garbage can, sanitary toilets and an approved water supply. The program provided a WPA cook and required that each lunch room meet the standards of the state board of health, as well as pass an inspection by the county sanitarian. As part of the preparation for the 1941-1942 school year, 5,826 quarts of green beans, tomatoes, English peas, corn, beets, carrots and snap peas were canned. According to Mrs. Mary C. Stubbs, area project supervisor for Cleveland County, approximately five times more food was canned during the summer of 1941 than the preceding summer.¹³

The Union School District 19 ½ continued to operate as a separate school for black schoolchildren in Cleveland County through the remainder of the 1940s into the early 1950s. In May 1954, the United States Supreme Court ruled that segregation in public schools must end. This landmark decision arose from the *Brown v. Board of Education* case. The following year, in a second *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the Supreme Court ordered compliance by all states with the decision that "separate but equal" had no place in public education. This order went into effect for the school year 1955-1956 with the Lula School in Pontotoc County reportedly the first public school in the state to provide integrated high school classes.¹⁴

The Stella Consolidated School District, which went through the 8th grade only, initially planned to address the desegregation order by moving the anticipated forty-seven pupils, consisting of thirty-eight white and nine black students, to the Union School. However, in mid-August 1955, a temporary injunction was issued by Acting District Judge Elvin J. Brown against the school board. The injunction restricted the school board from spending any money on, holding school in, or moving any materials from the Union School as part of the effort to desegregate the Stella schools. The injunction was based on a petition filed by two Stella residents which claimed that the majority of district residents objected to the use of the Union School.¹⁵

The Stella school board favored use of the Union School for four reasons. First, the Union School was more centrally located. Second, the building was reportedly in better condition. Third, the playground facilities at the Union School were better. Fourth, the Union School was larger. However, the board was not completely united in their intent to use the Union School building. Of the three-member board, two were in favor with the third reportedly opposed.¹⁶

As presented by the petitioners' lawyer, there were three reasons that the desegregated school should not utilize the Union School. First was that if the white Stella school was not utilized, the

¹² *The Cleveland County Democrat-News*, (Norman, Oklahoma), 8 February 1931.

¹³ *The Norman Transcript*, 31 August 1941.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 12 July 1955

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 17 August 1955.

¹⁶ *Daily Oklahoman*, 18 August 1955.

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property would revert to the legal owners, amounting to a loss of \$15,000 for the school district. The land on which the Union School sat was owned by the county; thus, discontinuation of use as a school would have no economic impact. The second reason cited by the Norman attorney was the “great sentimental attachment for the present (white) building and grounds.” The third reason was that “the present white school (was) much more ideally suited to school purposes than the building which the board was planning to use.” The petitioners noted that the school board had been spending money on the Union School building and, thus, sought the restraining order to stop further spending on the school.¹⁷

The County Attorney quickly responded that the school district would not lose the white school building valued at \$15,000 because a 1950 decision of the Oklahoma Supreme Court allowed school districts to retain possession of buildings that were abandoned for school uses. However, the district would be required to move the building. In the same article, it was noted that the plaintiffs’ allegation that the majority of the district residents opposed the move was contradicted by the school board’s petition advocating the move which was signed by “some 60 district patrons.”¹⁸

About a week after the initial injunction, Judge Tom Pace granted temporary permission for the school district to conduct business as usual and open mixed classes as scheduled on August 29, 1955, in the Union School building. Before the hearing, the school board’s attorney filed a demurrer against the plaintiff’s petition based on the 1950 Oklahoma Supreme Court decision. The plaintiffs’ attorney asked for and was granted five days to file an amended petition.¹⁹

The day classes started at the new integrated Stella School, only eleven black and two white children attended classes. About twenty-two other white children loitered at the previous Stella School and sixteen others made no appearance. As stated by Mrs. Maudie Butler, school board member, in the local newspaper, the general sentiment of Stella’s white community was that “We do not object to the colored children coming to our white school. But we’re not going to close ours and go over to theirs.” According to Mrs. Ethel Burkett, county school superintendent, “The people of the Stella district have a deep attachment for their white school building.” She went on to explain that “For many years school has been conducted there, weddings have been held there and even funerals.” As indicated in photographs provided in the local newspaper on August 30, 1955, both schools were of a similar size, material and style.²⁰

As the boycott entered its third day, it was reported that one black family was also keeping their children from attending the newly integrated school. The plaintiffs’ lawyer filed an amended petition concerning the building issue on August 31, 1955. The following day, the three-member Stella School Board resigned as a result of the controversy. While Mrs. Burkett sought to make appoints to the vacant elected positions, she also dismissed the Stella school for a week. The following week, it was determined that the resignation of the board invalidated the suit, as such the plaintiffs’ attorney dismissed the action. On Friday, September 9, 1955, the local newspaper

¹⁷ *Norman Transcript*, 17 August 1955.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 18 August 1955.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 26 August 1955.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 29 August 1955 and 30 August 1955.

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announced that the school would open the next week in the white building. The thirty new desk and chair units, purchased over the summer for use at the Union School, were moved with permission of the local black community to the white school. The white Stella school building had also been “re-equipped” and was ready for use by the twenty-two white, sixteen black and five Native American children that resumed classes without any further incident over the building on Monday, September 12, 1955. The Union School was designated for continued use as a community and church building, a function it served for decades.²¹

For almost twenty years, the Union School District 19 ½ served the local black community as an educational center. In the 1930s, the school served as the only separate school that Cleveland County operated. Also during the 1930s and early 1940s, the school and its occupants benefitted from various activities undertaken by the WPA, including landscaping and building repair efforts that resulted in the permanent addition of the stone retaining wall along the north side of the property and concrete entry porches. The WPA school lunch program at the school assisted children in need of a nutritious meal on a consistent basis. The state-wide desegregation of schools in the mid-1950s resulted in focused attention on the Union School District 19 ½ with the community ultimately moving to abandon the Union School for educational purposes. While the building continued to serve the black community of Stella, the end of its original use as a schoolhouse marked the terminal point of the building’s historic significance as an educational facility that served the black community.

²¹ Ibid, 31 August 1955, 1 September 1955, 2 September 1955, 4 September 1955, 6 September 1955, 9 September 1955, 12 September 1955.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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

A Report of the Seventeenth Decennial Census of the United States, Census of Population: 1950, Volume II: Part 36. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1952.

Burkett, Ethel D. *The Effect of the War Years on the Rural Schools of Cleveland County.* M.A. Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1947.

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Cleveland County Genealogical Society. *Map Showing Locations of Olden Days Rural Schools*, <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~okccogs/maps/schools.gif> and *Early-Day Rural School Districts and Locations* <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~okccogs/schools/schooldistricts-legals.htm>, retrieved 19 January 2014.

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The Eighteenth Decennial Census of the United States, Census of Population: 1960, Volume I: Part 38. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1964.

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The Norman (Oklahoma) Transcript. 15 June 1937; 28 July 1938; 25 August 1940; 31 August 1941; 12 July 1955; 17 August 1955; 18 August 1955; 26 August 1955;

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29 August 1955; 30 August 1955; 31 August 1955; 1 September 1955; 2 September 1955; 4 September 1955; 6 September 1955; 9 September 1955; and, 12 September 1955.

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Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Population, Volume 2: Part 5: Chapter 8. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1943.

Tenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction Together with the Seventh Report of the State Board of Education. Oklahoma State Board of Education, 1924.

Twelfth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction Together with the Ninth Report of the State Board of Education. Oklahoma State Board of Education, 1928.

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): _____

Union School District 19 1/2
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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 2 MOL

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 35.318130 | Longitude: -97.195260 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

A rectangular tract of land beginning in the Northeast corner of the Northeast quarter of Section 28, Township 10 North, Range 1 East, proceed 210 feet west, then 420 feet south, then 210 feet east, then 420 feet north to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries include the property historically associated with the Union School District 19 ½.

Union School District 19 1/2
Name of Property

Cleveland, Oklahoma
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Cynthia Savage, Architectural Historian for Preservation Oklahoma
organization: A.R.C.H Consulting
street & number: 346 Country Road 1230
city or town: Pocasset state: OK zip code: 73079
e-mail savage3@wildblue.net
telephone: 405-459-6200
date: March 2014

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Union School District 19 1/2

Cleveland, Oklahoma

Name of Property

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: **Union School District 19 1/2**

City or Vicinity: **Stella** County: **Cleveland** State: **OK**

Photographer: **Cynthia Savage**

Date Photographed: **19 January 2014**

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 0001: East elevation (left), north elevation (right), camera facing southwest.

Photo 0002: East elevation (background), ruins of well house (foreground), camera facing northwest.

Photo 0003: West elevation (left), south elevation (right), camera facing northeast.

Photo 0004: North elevation (left), west elevation (right), camera facing southeast.

Photo 0005: Concrete wall (left), basement lean-to entry (center), south elevation (right), camera facing west.

Photo 0006: Basement stairs, camera facing west.

Photo 0007: North basement room, camera facing northeast.

Photo 0008: Property from section line road, camera facing southwest.

Photo 0009: Building (background), stone retaining wall (foreground), camera facing southwest.

Photo 0010: Stone retaining wall, camera facing southwest.

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 100 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.

Union School District 19 1/2
SW Corner of 149th Street (also known as E. Stella Road) and S. Luther Road
Newalla, Cleveland County, Oklahoma























UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Union School District 19 1/2
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: OKLAHOMA, Cleveland

DATE RECEIVED: 10/24/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/14/14
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/01/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/10/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14001026

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 12-10-14 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.



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



October 20, 2014

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:

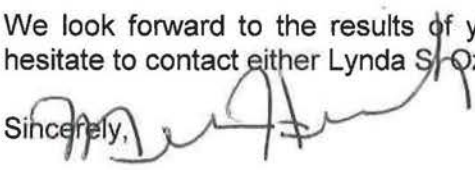
We are pleased to transmit seven National Register of Historic Places nominations for Oklahoma properties. The nominations are for the following properties:

Kennedy Mansion, 502 South Okmulgee Avenue, Okmulgee, Okmulgee County
Union School District 19 ½, SW corner of 149th Street and South Luther Road, Newalla,
Cleveland County
Town House Hotel, 627 Northwest Fifth Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County
Main Street Arcade, 629 West Main Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County
Oklahoma A&M Dairy Barn, 2624 West McElroy Road, Stillwater, Payne County
Fox Hotel, 201 East W.C. Rogers Boulevard, Skiatook, Tulsa County
Bacone College Historic District, Old Bacone Road, Muskogee, Muskogee County

All members of the Historic Preservation Review Committee (state review board) were present for the public meeting at which each of these nominations was considered and the recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Officer was formulated. Therefore, the member possessing the requisite professional qualifications for evaluation of each nominated property participated in the recommendation's formulation.

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

Sincerely,


Melvena Heisch
Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer

MKH:Iso
Enclosures