

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Oklahoma	
COUNTY: Choctaw	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70.10.35.0009	DATE 9/29/70

1. NAME

COMMON:
Fort Towson

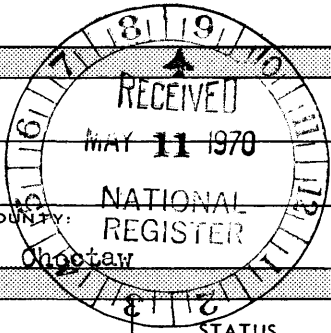
AND/OR HISTORIC:
Cantonment Towson

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
1 m. northeast of the town of

CITY OR TOWN:
Fort Towson

STATE Oklahoma	CODE 35	COUNTY: Choctaw	CODE 023
-------------------	------------	--------------------	-------------



3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" 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) At present ruins are merely being protected.

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Lessee: Oklahoma Historical Society	Fee Owner: The Kirkpatrick Foundation
STREET AND NUMBER: Historical Building	
CITY OR TOWN: Oklahoma City	STATE: Oklahoma
	CODE: 35

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Office of the County Clerk

STREET AND NUMBER:
Choctaw County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN: Hugo	STATE: Oklahoma	CODE: 35
-----------------------	--------------------	-------------

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Oklahoma Historical 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: 35
--------------------------------	--------------------	-------------

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Oklahoma
COUNTY: Choctaw
ENTRY NUMBER: 70.10.35.0009
DATE: 9/29/70
FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Ruins Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved Original Site

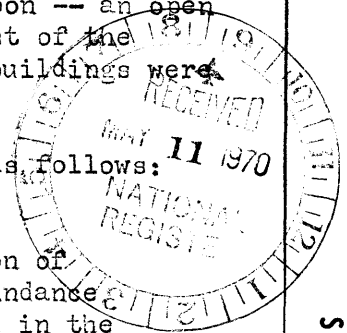
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Cantonment Towson, the original post, was never anything more than a temporary installation, a collection of wooden huts and tents that served the five years the first site on the Red River was in use. In November 1850, however, when the government ordered establishment of a permanent fort, a new and improved location was decided upon -- an open stretch of prairie above Gates Creek about a mile northeast of the present town of Fort Towson -- and much more substantial buildings were erected.

Historian W. B. Morrison describes the rebuilt fort as follows:

All the work done in connection with the erection of this post was thorough and substantial. There is abundance of fine limestone most suitable for building purposes in the cliffs near by. Three buildings, comprising the officers' quarters, extended along the edge of the hill on the north side of the rectangle. These each had three foot stone foundations, and were built of logs -- a story and a half in height, with openings and covered porches facing south. Four other buildings were erected along each wing on the east and west respectively. As the ground slopes towards the south, the foundations of the last of these buildings was about nine feet high, affording an ample basement, though all of the eight buildings were theoretically of one story. The first two buildings on each wing, nearest to the officers' quarters, were used for sub-officers' barracks, quartermaster's office, amusement parlor, and school room. The last two buildings were used as barracks for the common soldiers -- three tiers of bunks along each wall, and racks for their guns -- while the kitchen and dining rooms were located in the basements. One striking feature of these buildings was the great stone chimney, with fireplace nine feet wide and four feet deep, and six feet from the stone floor to the arch. It is said that a whole steer could be roasted in one of these fireplaces and still leave room for the baking and the boiling.

All of the buildings were painted white. Gravel walks, lined with rows of shade trees, extended in front of the buildings around the hollow square, which latter space was kept open for the parade ground. Two hundred and fifty feet farther south from the last barrack building on the east tier was the hospital. Outside of the rectangle to the east, the stables, shops and gardens were situated, while on the west side were the suttler's building, the dairy and poultry yards. About three hundred yards still farther west was the cemetery, always an important but melancholy feature of every military post. The soldiers buried here were removed to the cemetery at Fort Gibson after 1954.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

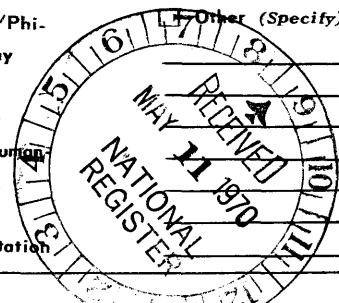
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1830 to 1865

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Fort Towson, near the Red River in southeastern Oklahoma, deserves National Register status for several valid -- not to say varied -- reasons. Established by Major Alexander Cummings in May 1824, only a few months after Fort Gibson, it is Oklahoma's second oldest military post. (The original installation, a temporary affair of wooden shacks and tents on the Red near the mouth of the Kiamichi River some six miles to the south, was abandoned in 1829. When re-activated the following year, "Cantonment Towson" was moved to this site on Gates Creek just northeast of the present town of Fort Towson.)

Fort Towson, however, saw little actual military activity. It was established as something of a symbol of authority for both raiding Plains Indian tribes to the north and west and white marauders making their headquarters along the Red River. Its purpose was thus largely defensive, its soldiers occupied mainly in building roads. Even after re-location and re-activation -- with the forced removal of the Choctaws to this area -- the fort was not particularly "military." And this points up the unusual fact -- especially unusual in the case of a frontier outpost -- that Towson's one distinguishing trait was its moral atmosphere. Consider this observation by the Presbyterian missionary Cyrus Kingsbury in 1837:

I have never seen a place where there was a more decided religious influence. Those who have never witnessed the dissipation and almost total disregard of morality and religion among soldiers at our frontier posts can have but a faint conception of the happy change that has been made here.

Nor was the Rev. Mr. Kingsbury alone in his high regard for the post. General Henry H. Leavenworth spoke specifically in 1834 of the "highly moral condition of the troops." And Methodist missionary William H. Goode was similarly flattering in his comments ten years later. "The establishment," he noted, "is altogether superior to any other I have visited on this frontier in point of neatness and permanence of improvements, comfort and good order, and especially

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Gibson, A. M., Oklahoma: A History of Five Centuries, (Norman: Harlow, 1965), pp. 67-69
 Imon, Frances, "Mystery of Grave Unraveled," Oklahoma City Times, March 30, 1965, p. 8
 Lackey, Vinson, The Forts of Oklahoma (Tulsa, 1963), pp. 8-9
 Morrison, W. B., "Fort Towson," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. 8, pp. 226-232
 Ruth, Kent, Great Day in the West, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), pp. 192-193

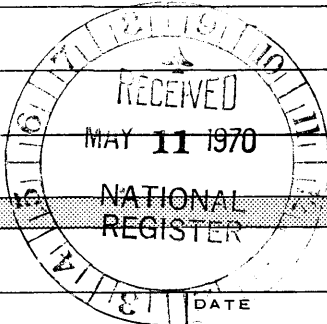
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	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	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	34° 01' 40"	95° 15' 16"		0	0	
NE	34° 01' 40"	95° 15' "				
SE	34° 01' 28"	95° 15' "				
SW	34° 01' 28"	95° 15' 16"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **c. 40 acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Kent Ruth

ORGANIZATION: Oklahoma Historical Society DATE: March 1970

STREET AND NUMBER: Oklahoma Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN: Oklahoma City STATE: Oklahoma CODE: 35

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: Liaison Officer to Oklahoma

Date: 4 May 1970

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

[Signature]
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

SEP 29 1970

Date: _____

ATTEST:

[Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

JUL 26 1970

Date: _____

NO UT
HL

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

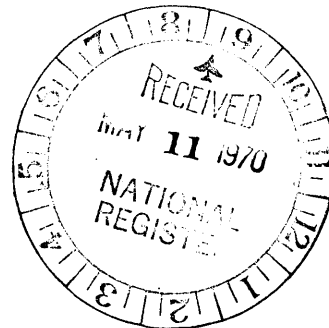
STATE	Oklahoma
COUNTY	Choctaw
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
70.10.35.0009	9/29/70

(Number all entries)

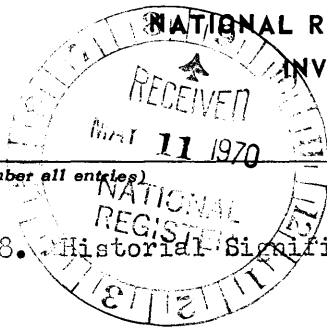
FORT TOWSON

7. Description - 2

Only a few broken sections of those massive masonry walls, together with parts of foundations and scattered, isolated stones remain on the site to mark what was once an extensive military installation. The beauty of the site remains, however - the grassy prairie, nearby woods, and flowing stream that influenced its selection nearly a century and a half ago. As for Doaksville, the "service town" that lived and died with the fort, its memories are kept alive in the "Old Doaksville Cemetery" which is the present Fort Towson Cemetery. In it are the graves of Colonel David Folsom, first elected chief (under the 1826 constitution of the Choctaw Nation) and a leader of the tribe during its removal from Mississippi to Indian Territory under terms of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, and of Colonel J. H. Nail, another Choctaw leader who died in 1846. Both graves are marked by impressive marble slabs brought up the Mississippi and Red Rivers by steamboat. Not far from these graves is one marked simply "Tryphena's Grave." Though an aura of mystery and romance surrounds her, Tryphena is believed to be a high-born Choctaw "princess" who died tragically in a canoe accident while still in her twenties.



STATE Oklahoma	
COUNTY Choctaw	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70.10.35.0009	DATE 9/29/70



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

FORT TOWSON

8. Historical Significance - 2

the moral and religious influences among the soldiers." Large numbers of the "pious" soldiers attended Sunday services, and the two weekly prayer meetings. He also noted with satisfaction the flourishing of a temperance society. This admittedly high moral tone is unusual because it was apparently maintained in a not entirely favorable physical setting. At least an official report in 1844 called attention to one disturbing development at the post. "The men," it noted, "to avoid the bed bugs, which are in countless numbers, sleep either upon the galleries or the floor of their quarters."

Though unpalisaded, Fort Towson was substantially constructed and was long considered one of the best-built and best-kept posts in the West. In 1849, while Captain Randolph B. Marcy was commandant, his wife Mary considered it "beautiful," noting that there were "great walks running in every direction" and "many trees." The post was a busy one during the Mexican War. But after that, with the frontier moving westward rapidly, its importance as a military base also declined rapidly. Abandonment came on June 8, 1854, and the post was used as a Choctaw Indian agency until the outbreak of the Civil War.

The Civil War brought Towson back to life . . . and gave it yet another somewhat unusual distinction. Confederate troops used the fort throughout the war (Federal troops withdrew from southern Oklahoma when the war began) and General S. B. Maxey made it his headquarters in 1863. And the following year -- on June 8, 1865 -- Fort Towson earned its footnote status in American history. Here, two months after Appomattox, General Stand Watie, the valliant Cherokee warrior, surrendered his Indian troops. It is believed to have been the last organized Confederate force to do so. (The incident was colorful and exciting enough to rate a spirited re-enactment 100 years later as one of the last celebrations of the Civil War Centennial.) After this surrender, abandonment was complete and Fort Towson quickly fell into ruins.

No history of Fort Towson would be complete without at least some consideration of Doaksville. Established in 1821 by the Doaks brothers, who were fur traders, the settlement sprang to life in 1831 when Fort Towson was re-activated across Gates Creek to the east. For many years it was an important center for a large area. Shallow-draft Red River steamboats and overland freight wagons served the settlement. In 1833 seventeen boats discharged cargoes for Doaksville - such varied items as powder and shot, churns, and cloth. Furs and cotton were loaded for the return trips.

At Doaksville in 1837 the Choctaw Nation agreed to grant equal rights in their country to the Chickasaws and the boundaries of the Chickasaw District were defined by treaty. In 1855 the tribes agreed to formal

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Oklahoma	
COUNTY	
Choctaw	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
70.10.35.0009	9/29/70

(Number all entries)

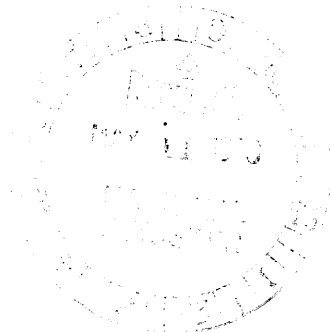
FORT TOWSON

8. Historical Significance - 3

separation and the Chickasaw District became the Chickasaw Nation. From 1850 to 1863 Doaksville was the Choctaw capital. Here in 1860 the Choctaw Convention drafted the Doaksville Constitution under which the Nation operated until 1907. The first Masonic Lodge in what is now Oklahoma was formed at Doaksville. The town's decline and eventual disappearance were due to the Civil War, discontinuance of river traffic, and finally the removal of the capital itself. But for a quarter of a century it was one of the principal trade centers of all Indian Territory. In 1842 Choctaw Indian agent William Armstrong described the settlement in an official report as follows:

Doaksville is one of the most orderly and quiet towns that you will find in the West. There is a resident physician, a good tavern, blacksmith shop, wagonmaker and wheelwright. A church has been erected. A temperance society is organized which numbers a large portion of the most respectable Choctaws and Chickasaws as well as our own population. I have been in this village a week at a time without seeing anything like ardent spirits or a drunken Indian.

Fort Towson and Doaksville alike, it seems, were a bit on the unusual side for the raw western frontier.

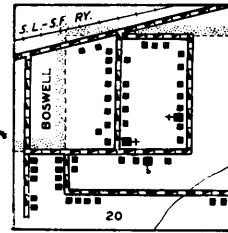
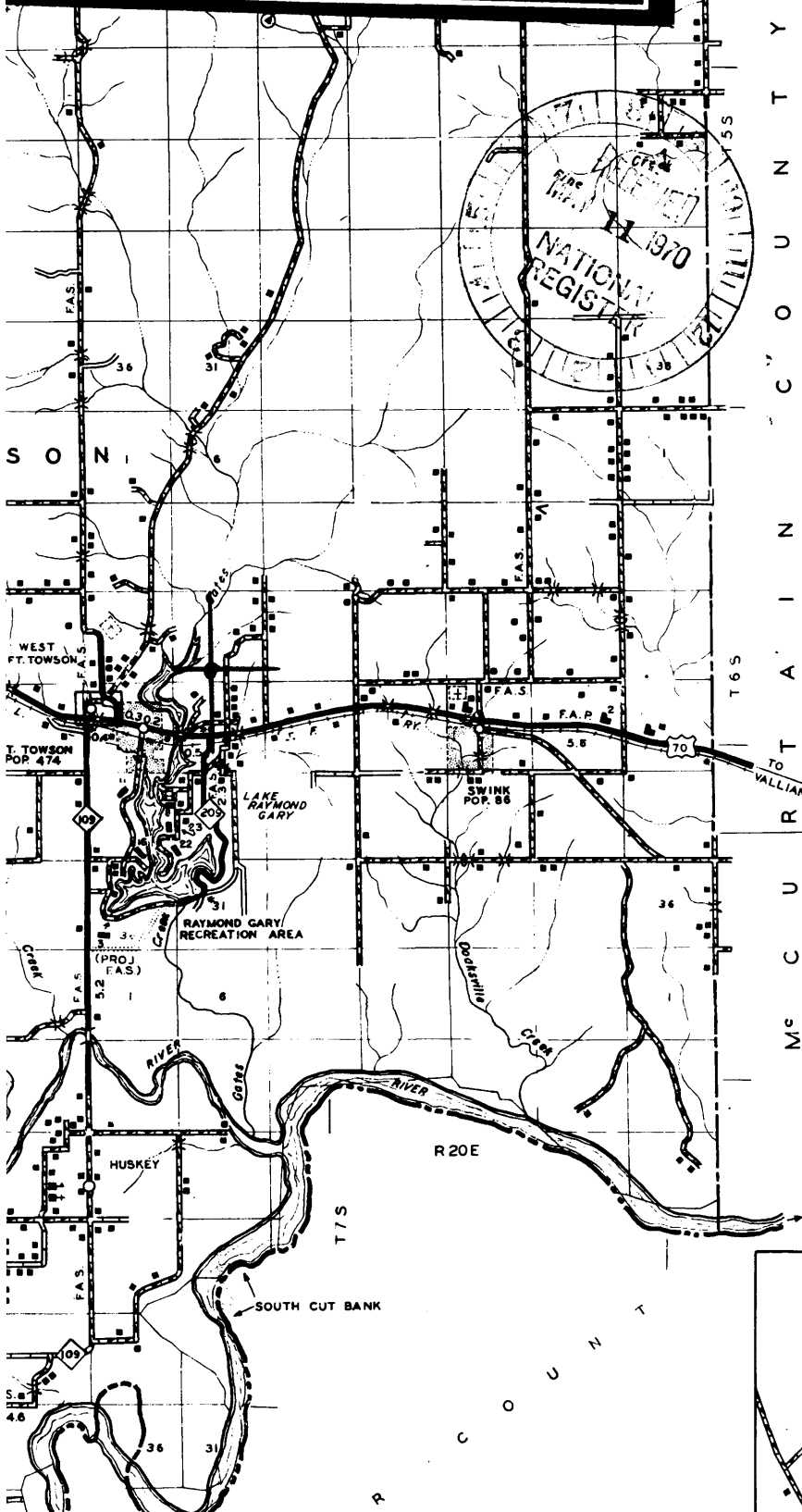


OKLAHOMA: Choctaw . . .

Fort. Towson

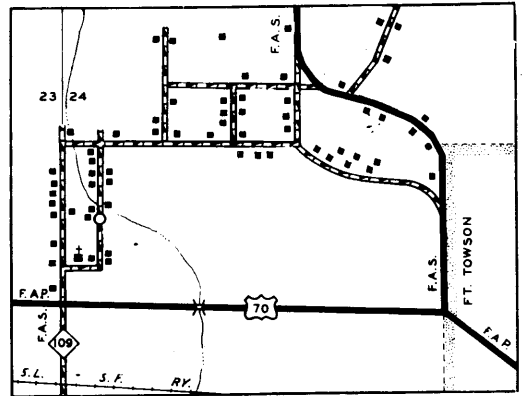
Lat.: 34° 01' 28-40"

Long. 95° 15' 00-16"



INSET NO. 1.
SEC. 20, T6S, R14E
SCALE

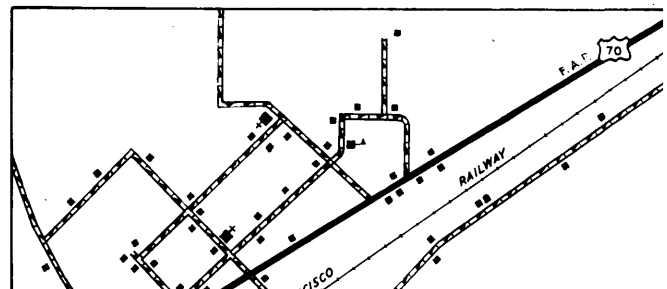
0.0 0.1 0.2 0.3 MILE



WEST FT. TOWSON, OKLA.
SEC. 24, T6S, R19E
SCALE

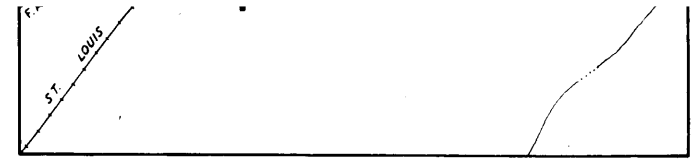
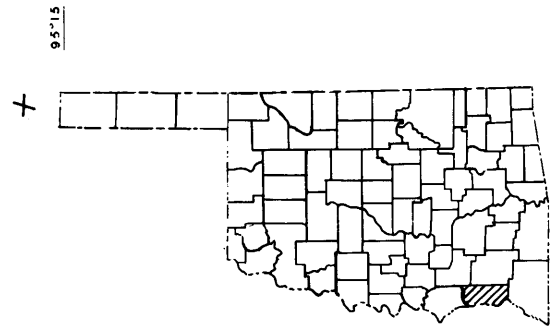
0.0 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 0.5 MILE

34°00'



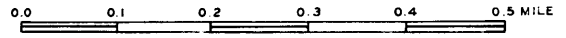
T8S

R19E
R
E
D
T



SAWYER, OKLA.
SEC. 24, T6S, R18 E

SCALE



POPULATION FIGURES BASED ON 1960 U.S. CENSUS
DRAINAGE FEATURES OBTAINED FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS.

DATE OF INVENTORY
1964

REVISIONS

DATE	BY
1-1-65	M.B.
ALL DATA EXCEPT CULTURE	
1-1-66	M.B.
ALL DATA EXCEPT CULTURE	
1-1-67	J.K.
ALL DATA EXCEPT CULTURE	
1-1-68	M.B.
ALL DATA EXCEPT CULTURE	
1-1-69	T.H.
ALL DATA EXCEPT CULTURE	
1-1-70	L.S.
ALL DATA EXCEPT CULTURE	

GENERAL HIGHWAY MAP

CHOCTAW COUNTY

OKLAHOMA

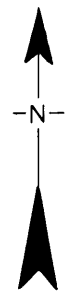
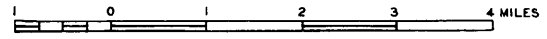
PREPARED BY THE

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS
PLANNING DIVISION

IN COOPERATION WITH THE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS

SCALE



LAMBETH CONFORMAL CONIC PROJECTION U.S. COAST & GEODETIC SURVEY DATA 20,000
FOOT GRID BASED ON PLANE COORDINATE SYSTEM SOUTH PROJECTION ZONE.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

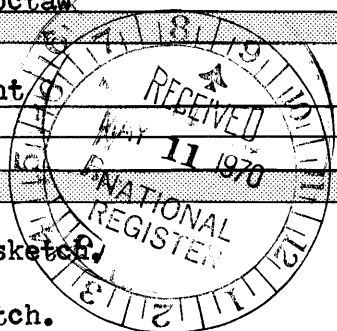
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE Oklahoma	
COUNTY Choctaw	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70-10-35-0009	DATE 9/29/70

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

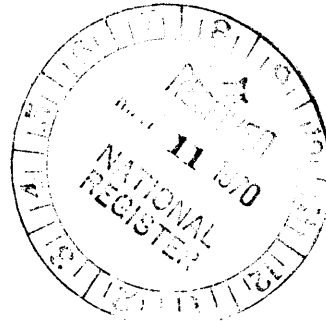
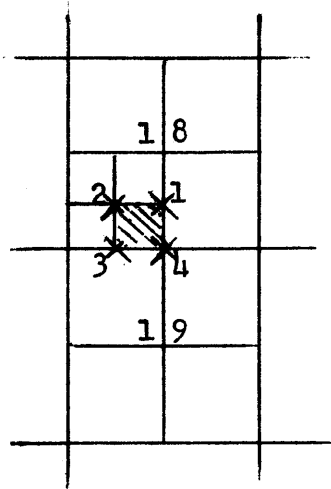
1. NAME			
COMMON: Fort Towson			
AND/OR HISTORIC: Cantonment Towson			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
1 m. NE of town of (SE/4 SW/4 Sec. 18, T 6 S, R 20 E)			
CITY OR TOWN:			
Fort Towson			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Oklahoma	35	Choctaw	023
3. MAP REFERENCE			
SOURCE:			
County Map, Oklahoma State Highway Department			
SCALE: 1/2 inch equals 1 mile			
DATE: 1964			
4. REQUIREMENTS			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.	Cf. attached sketch.		
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.	Cf. attached sketch.		



Oklahoma

Choctaw

Fort Towson - SE/4 of SW/4 of Sec. 18, T 6 S, R 20 E.



Pt. 1 - Long. 95° 15'	Lat. 34° 1' 40"
Pt. 2 - Long. 95° 15' 16"	Lat. 34° 1' 40"
Pt. 3 - Long. 95° 15' 16"	Lat. 34° 1' 28"
Pt. 4 - Long. 95° 15'	Lat. 34° 1' 28"