

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

PH 0695327

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 22 1979

DATE ENTERED MAR 19 1979

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

Cherokee National Cemetery

Fort Gibson Citizens Cemetery

2 LOCATION

1.5 mi. E of Fort Gibson

STREET & NUMBER

1.5 miles East of (Sec. 7 T15N R20E - cf. No. 10) - NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fort Gibson

VICINITY OF

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Oklahoma

40

Muskogee

101

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER: Cemetery

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of Fort Gibson

STREET & NUMBER

City Hall

CITY, TOWN

Fort Gibson

VICINITY OF

STATE

Oklahoma

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the County Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

Muskogee County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Muskogee

STATE

Oklahoma

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Oklahoma Comprehensive Survey

DATE

1978

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Oklahoma Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Oklahoma City

STATE

Oklahoma

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 present Fort Gibson Citizens Cemetery occupies a roughly ten-acre rectangle of native grassland dotted with trees. A modest ridge runs the north-south length of the plot (see the map), giving the cemetery a pleasantly peaceful appearance from the nearby federal highway. The view from the cemetery is similarly tranquil and pleasing to the eye, looking down over rolling farm and pasture land to the east, south and west.

The cemetery has been well fenced and it is nicely maintained by the Town of Fort Gibson, a mile to the west. Although well over a third of its known graves are unmarked, it has a sprinkling of impressive stones and handsomely enclosed individual family plots.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1857 to the present

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In submitting this cemetery for National Register consideration it is recognized that cemeteries are not ordinarily acceptable ... unless, of course, there are unusual circumstances involved. At least two predominately Indian burying grounds in Oklahoma - Polson Cemetery and Chief's Knoll at Fort Sill - have already been placed in the National Register because of such circumstances. It is believed that the Fort Gibson Citizens Cemetery is similarly qualified.

*

Fort Gibson was established in early 1824, the first such military outpost in what is now Oklahoma. When it was abandoned by the War Department in 1857 title of the land reverted to the Cherokee Nation in accordance with Treaty provisions. In October of 1857, in his annual message to the Cherokee Legislature, then Principal Chief John Ross reported the transfer of title and directed the Council to make provision for a suitable cemetery to which could be transferred the remains of the many U. S. soldiers and others who had been buried at the post cemetery in its 33 years of existence.

The cemetery nominated here was thus established in late 1857. It was one of two such National Cemeteries maintained by the Cherokee Nation prior to the Civil War. The other, in Tahlequah, former capital of the Cherokee Nation, some twenty miles east of Fort Gibson. This Cherokee National Cemetery held its tribal status until May 10, 1906. Then approaching statehood and dissolution of the Indian nations led the Cherokees to transfer title to the Town of Fort Gibson. It has since been known as the Fort Gibson Citizens Cemetery.

In addition to the unusual nature of what might be called its "dual national background," the Cherokee National Cemetery at Fort Gibson contains the graves of several figures important in Oklahoma history - figures of whom there remains no other tangible physical relic. Primary among these would be William Potter Ross, one of the most highly respected and accomplished chiefs the Cherokee Nation produced. An 1843 Princeton graduate, he twice served as Principal Chief of the Nation, by election of the National Council, and throughout his life he was the foremost

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Material prepared by the legal counsel of the Cherokee tribe.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA ¹⁵

*According to the legal description. Due to scale of map the acreage enclosed figures to somewhat less.

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 11- $\frac{1}{4}$ acres*

QUADRANGLE NAME Hulbert

QUADRANGLE SCALE 15 minutes

UTM REFERENCES

NW A 1, 5 | 2, 9, 8 | 2, 5, 0 | 3, 9, 6, 3 | 7, 0, 0

NE B 1, 5 | 2, 9, 8 | 6, 5, 2 | 3, 9, 6, 3 | 7, 0, 0

SW C 1, 5 | 2, 9, 8 | 4, 4, 5 | 3, 9, 6, 3 | 3, 4, 1

SE D 1, 5 | 2, 9, 8 | 6, 5, 2 | 3, 9, 6, 3 | 3, 4, 1

E | | | |

F | | | |

G | | | |

H | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION.

The W/2 NW/4 NE/4 NW/4; and the W/2 E/2 NW/4 NE/4 NW/4; and the NW/4 SW/4 NE/4 NW/4; and the W/2 NE/4 SW/4 NE/4 NW/4; all of Sec. 7, Township 15 North, Range 20 East.

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

Kent Ruth, Deputy

ORGANIZATION

Oklahoma Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN

Oklahoma City

DATE

August 1978

TELEPHONE

405/884-5456

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

Harry L. Sampson M.D.

DATE

1-11-79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

3/19/79

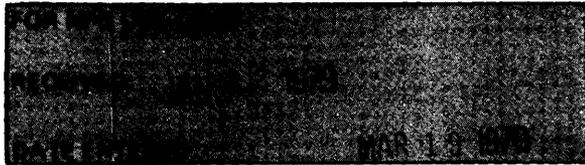
ATTEST: Bill Labovich
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

March 19, 1979

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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leader in the Cherokee effort to protect and preserve the Cherokee fee title domain in what is now eastern Oklahoma. He died in 1891, at 71, having successfully protected his people against aggressive action by the Federal Government to terminate the existence of the Cherokee Nation and to distribute its lands among Cherokee citizens. The sale of surplus tribal property, the allotment of tribal lands, and termination of tribal government all came about rapidly after his death.

Other important citizens and officials of the Cherokee Nation are buried here. Among them are George O. Sanders and Connell Rogers, both of whom served in the Senate of the Cherokee Legislature with honor and distinction. Elected officials, they were repeatedly returned to office by the Cherokee voters. After statehood in 1907 Rogers served as elected treasurer of Muskogee County, Oklahoma. (Of something more than passing interest: such has been the vote-getting power of the name - enhanced considerably by the national acclaim later accorded Oklahoma's own Will Rogers - that the ranks of elected public officials in Oklahoma - on both the state and national levels - has rarely failed to list one or more Rogers. Indeed the last - for now - was not turned back by the voters until Nov. 7, 1978.)

Near the center of Cherokee National Cemetery is also located the grave and monument of Elizabeth A. Bushyhead, wife of famed Principal Chief Dennis W. Bushyhead. She was one of three sisters of prominent Cherokee parents who educated all their daughters in eastern schools. Another sister was the mother of Will Rogers. The third was great-grandmother of movie-television personality Clu Gulugar.

Although absolute verification is still lacking, many believe the old Cherokee cemetery also contains the remains of Montford Stokes, former Governor of North Carolina, Revolutionary War veteran, former United States Senator, and Treaty Commissioner to the Cherokees and other tribes in this area. Records show that Commissioner Stokes died at Fort Gibson Nov. 4, 1842, and was buried in Fort Gibson Cemetery. He was then a Civilian officer of the Federal Government. The present U. S. National Cemetery at Fort Gibson (a half-mile to the north) was not established until 1868, eleven years after the military post was closed. And its records do not contain positive evidence that Stokes is buried there. This has led some to believe that his remains might well have been removed, with others, to the new Cherokee National Cemetery. If so, it is of course unmarked, as are approximately a thousand of the some 2,500 graves in the cemetery.

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Marked, but of only minimal significance: the grave of Crawford
Goldsby, better known as Cherokee Bill, along with several of his outlaw
companions.