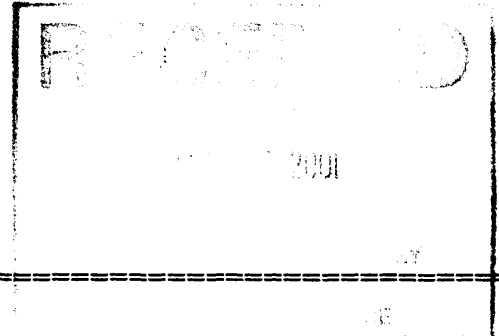


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

660



1. Name of Property

historic name Oklahoma Odd Fellows Home at Checotah

other names/site number Odd Fellows Widows and Orphans Home; Checotah Odd Fellows Home

2. Location

street & number 211 West North Street not for publication N/A  
city or town Checotah vicinity N/A  
state Oklahoma code OK county McIntosh code 091  
zip code 74426

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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      nationally X statewide      locally. ( N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] \_\_\_\_\_ Date 4-26-01

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property      meets      does not meet the National Register criteria. (      See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register Edson H. Beall 6/14/01  
     See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- See continuation sheet.  
determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

     other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
[Signature] \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper 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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>  1  </u>	<u>  1  </u> buildings
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> sites
<u>    </u>	<u>  1  </u> structures
<u>  2  </u>	<u>  1  </u> objects
<u>  3  </u>	<u>  3  </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register   0  

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

=====  
6. Function or Use  
=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>DOMESTIC</u>	Sub: <u>Institutional housing</u>
<u>EDUCATION</u>	<u>Education-related</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>DOMESTIC</u>	Sub: <u>Institutional housing</u>
<u>HEALTH CARE</u>	<u>Sanitarium</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

=====  
7. Description  
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Romanesque Revival /  
LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN  
MOVEMENTS: Craftsman

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: sandstone  
roof METAL: tin  
ASPHALT  
walls BRICK  
STONE: sandstone  
other \_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====  
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 a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE  
SOCIAL HISTORY  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance 1901-1951  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

=====  
8. Statement of Significance (Continued)  
=====

Significant Dates 1902  
c. 1905  
1922

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder Foucart, Joseph and Hardin, M.T. -- Architects  
A.D. Patterson Construction Co. -- Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====  
9. Major Bibliographical References  
=====

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data  
 State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other

Name of repository: Checotah Odd Fellows Home library

=====  
10. Geographical Data  
=====

Acreage of Property 6 mol

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>14</u>	<u>271350</u>	<u>3929000</u>	3	<u>14</u>	<u>271280</u> <u>3928840</u>
2	<u>14</u>	<u>271350</u>	<u>3928840</u>	4	<u>14</u>	<u>271200</u> <u>3929000</u>
	<u>N/A See continuation sheet.</u>					

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

=====  
11. Form Prepared By  
=====

name/title Glenn Vaughn-Roberson, Historian and Jim Gabbert, Architectural Historian

organization Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office date 2/01/01

street & number 2704 Villa Prom, Shepherd Mall telephone (405) 521-6249

city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73107  
=====

Additional Documentation  
=====

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====  
Property Owner  
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Oklahoma Grand Lodge

street & number 615 Delaware Street; PO Box 588 telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Perry state OK zip code 73077



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 9

Oklahoma Odd Fellows Home  
at Checotah  
name of property  
McIntosh County, Oklahoma  
county and State

=====

**SUMMARY**

The IOOF Widows and Orphans Home (Oklahoma Odd fellows Home at Checotah) was initially constructed in 1902 on the north side of the city of Checotah, on land donated by William Gentry. Designed by renowned Oklahoma architect Joseph Foucart, the initial building displays the characteristic details of Foucart's work - rough-hewn stone accents, prominent arched openings, dark brick walls, and finialled cornices. The addition done ca. 1905 is compatible to the Foucart design and may be his work. A Craftsman influenced wing was added in 1922 and in 1962, a contemporary addition was added to the 1922 wing.

The Odd Fellows Widows and Orphans Home sits at the southwest corner of 160 acres that comprise Gentry's original donation. The nominated property consists of approximately 6 acres and include the grounds surrounding the home. Delineated from the working fields by a wire fence, the home grounds include a number of structures and objects related to the Odd Fellows Home.

**DESCRIPTION**

The Odd Fellows Widows and Orphans Home is an imposing brick building consisting of three major wings. The first wing, designed by noted Oklahoma architect Joseph Foucart, is two-and-a-half stories in height, on a raised basement and features a tower on the front facade. This main body, constructed in 1902 and c. 1905, is attached to a 1922 wing by a flat-roofed passage. The 1922 wing, designed by M. T. Hardin, is two stories in height and designed in a restrained Craftsman style. The third wing, which is attached perpendicularly to the rear of the 1922 wing, is a single story in height and was added in 1962.

The main wing, finished in 1902, is a red brick edifice with a hip and lower cross-gable roof. The eaves feature brackets at the corners and a wide frieze board. The gables feature full returns and a date stone reading "IOOF 1902" in the tympanum. The walls are red brick, laid in a running bond. The raised foundation walls are quarry-faced ashlar sandstone. Prominently featured on the front is a square tower. The tower is on a stone base and has red brick and sandstone walls. The sandstone is featured at the corners and in bands and panels around the arched windows. At the top of the tower, a wide frieze separates the stone walls from the steep, pyramidal roof. Four square

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   7   Page   10  

Oklahoma Odd Fellows Home  
at Checotah  
name of property  
McIntosh County, Oklahoma  
county and State

=====  
pinnacles are carried up from the corners through the cornice. Each features a round ball on a pyramidal cap.

The tower features three levels of windows. The first floor has a pair of rectangular openings on each face. These feature flat, quarry-faces sandstone sills and lintels. The second level has a divided, half-round arch. A wide, central muntin of brick creates two quarter round windows. These consist of steel casements with large, single panes above. The sill of this opening is a belt course of quarry-faced stone. The arch is created by quarry-faces voissures and the spandrels are also quarry-faced stone. The first and second level openings are in panels slightly recessed from the stone corners of the tower. The third level openings, a single lunette in each face, is flush with the corners. Again, the voissures and spandrels are stone.

The main body of the 1902 wing features regularly spaced rectangular windows with stone sills and lintels. There is one window per wall surface, except under the gables, where they are paired. The entries flank the tower. The entire front and east side has a raised porch. The deck is carried on stone piers and the roof is supported by decorative iron posts, replacing wooden Tuscan columns.

A short time after opening, it was apparent that there was not enough room in the home. A rear addition was added, tripling the space. The addition matches the main body of the 1902 building, with a slightly higher hip roof. It features three hipped dormers on the east and west sides. There are eight irregularly placed windows on the second floor and seven on the first. The porch continues around the east side; there is a small gable over the rear entry steps.

The 1922 wing is attached to the west side of the c. 1905 addition by a flat-roofed, single story on raised basement passageway. The passageway has red brick walls in a running bond and featuring a corbelled string course below the parapet. An entry pavilion flanked by paired 1/1 windows is centered between the wings. Brick wing walls flank the steps leading to paired glass doors.

The west wing, constructed in 1922, is two stories in height and covered with a cross-gabled roof. The front section, facing south and the rear section, facing north, have side gables. The central section has a ridge running perpendicular to these gables. There is a gabled dormer on the front. The front features a two-story, shed roof porch. The first level is supported on four brick piers, the second with four wooden posts. There is a central

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 11

Oklahoma Odd Fellows Home  
at Checotah  
name of property  
McIntosh County, Oklahoma  
county and State

entry flanked by original paired 8/1 windows. The walls are brick, laid in a running bond, and are pierced on the east and west sides by paired 8/1 windows, regularly placed. The second floor windows feature dressed stone sills and plain lintels. The first floor windows have stone sills and plain brick lintels with limestone keystones. There are large, shouldered arch louvered vents in the gables. The gables also once had knee braces supporting the wide eaves, but these have been removed.

The hospital wing, added in 1963, is a single story, red brick addition that joins the 1922 wing at the rear. It juts out perpendicularly to the west. Ten regularly placed 1/1 windows are on each wall. The west gable end has an ambulance-capable entrance screened by a decorative concrete block, lattice wall.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

For the most part, the interior of the building is intact. Modification include the use of paneling and carpeting in the rooms and updates to the electrical and HVAC systems. The first and second floors feature a central hallway with guest rooms on each side. The tower and front room are open on each floor. The rear of the main wing and the passageway are open space, used for meals and gatherings. Of note is the third floor classroom in the c. 1905 wing. This space, although deteriorated from age and neglect, retains the original materials and layout. Scribbled in the dormer alcoves are notes and signatures of students and visitors.

GROUNDS

Located on the grounds of the Odd Fellows Widows and Orphans Home are a number of contributing and noncontributing resources. Directly in front of the main building, next to Ninth Street, is an entry arch. Two concrete piers with a natural aggregate texture finish support a pair of square concrete posts. The arch between the posts is inscribed "I.O.O.F HOME" I.O.O.F and HOME are separated by the three chain links that are the fraternities symbol. Each link stands for one of the guiding words of the organization, Friendship, Love, and truth. (See photo #5)

East of the main building is a gate that leads to the working section of the property. This decorative iron gate was created in the 1930s and features

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 12

Oklahoma Odd Fellows Home  
at Checotah  
name of property  
McIntosh County, Oklahoma  
county and State

=====  
a wagon wheel, horse shoes, and welded chain spelling out the words "IOOF HOME." An eagle tops the gate, appearing to land on the three link emblem. (See photo #6)

There are three noncontributing resources on the grounds. At the foot of the steps leading up to the old formal entrance by the tower is a modern granite commemorative monument. It is dedicated to the Gentry family and the opening of the home. It was dedicated in the 1980s and is noncontributing due to age.

A multi-car carport has been constructed to the east of the c. 1905 building. It, too, is a noncontributing resource due to age. Behind the building is a gabled garage. It dates to the 1940s, but has been altered with the addition of vinyl siding and a new door. It is noncontributing due to alteration.

CONCLUSION

The Odd Fellows Widows and Orphans Home retains a high degree of integrity of design, workmanship, feeling, association, setting, and location. The addition of the hospital wing in 1962 does not detract from the overall ability of the Home to convey its historic significance as a social institution, nor does it detract from the design intent of Joseph Foucart, the original architect. Changes to the windows and porch supports are lamentable, but they have no great impact on the facility's overall significance and are readily reversible. The building is significant in the state of Oklahoma as a rare example of a fraternal social services complex dedicated to the care of orphans and the aged. It is also a singular example of the work of a master architect, Joseph Foucart. For these reasons, it is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section  8  Page  13

Oklahoma Odd Fellows Home  
at Checotah  
name of property  
McIntosh County, Oklahoma  
county and State

=====

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows Widows and Orphans Home in Checotah is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the social programs of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. The Odd Fellows built Widows and Orphans Homes throughout the world. The fraternal organization built homes in Oklahoma Territory at Carmen - closed in the early 1920s - and in Checotah, Indian Territory. The only other such homes in the two territories that now comprise the present state of Oklahoma, were the Masonic Orphanage originally built in Atoka, Indian Territory, that merged during the 1920s with the "Old Folks' Home in Guthrie, the old capital of Oklahoma Territory. It is also eligible under Criterion C for its distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction in Oklahoma and is the work of a master architect, Joseph Foucart.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Like so many towns of the American West, Checotah had an inauspicious beginning. The Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad - also known as the Katy Railroad- arrived at site of the future town of Checotah in February of 1872. Officials named the place the, "Checote Switch," in honor of Chief Samuel Checote of the Creek Nation. A telegraph station and post office arrived shortly after the railroad, and ranchers and railroad workers added cattle pens sometime during the next ten years. Ranching proved enough economic activity to bring the first general store in 1888. But no further development by whites of the Checote Switch occurred until the Dawes Commission in 1893, operating along side the provisions of the Curtis Act of 1898, altered life in the Indian Territory forever by ending tribal ownership of lands and mandated land allotment to individuals.<sup>1</sup>

Allotment opened lands to white settlers. The Curtis Act provided for incorporation of towns and Checotah settlers took the opportunity to do so in 1898. Officials surveyed and platted the site and whites in ever increasing number moved into the new city limits. Located on fertile farming ground,

<sup>1</sup> C. W. West, ed., McIntosh County Memories, unpublished manuscript, (Checotah: McIntosh County Historical Society, 1933), 54.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 14

Oklahoma Odd Fellows Home  
at Checotah  
name of property  
McIntosh County, Oklahoma  
county and State

=====  
Checotah became a commercial center for wheat, corn, cotton, and a variety of vegetables as well as cattle.

Thus was the state of the Checotah community when citizens under the direction of Grand Master, E. D. Allen, organized Lodge #20, of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) for the Indian Territory on February 8, 1894.2 The Rebekahs, the female branch of the Odd Fellows, came later in the year.

The old fraternal order dates back to the early Eighteenth Century England. The earliest known reference to a site of a lodge mentions the Globe Tavern (location unknown) in 1748. Membership consisted of working-class men who banded together under the motto of, "Friendship, Love, and Truth." Because their charitable work was aimed at the poorest people in the community, those outside the order began calling them, "Odd Fellows," and the name stuck.

Independent lodges first appear in the United States in New York City in 1806.3 Independent they might have been, but the first members of the Shakespeare Lodge No.1, as it was known, were very much like their Anglican cousins - three boat builders, and two stage performers, a comedian and a vocalist.4 Over the next century Odd Fellows lodges appeared across the country. Baltimore boasted the second lodge. Then came Gloucester, Massachusetts, whose sea-faring members organized a lodge in, "the City of Oregon, on the Columbia River." Odd Fellows followed the "forty-niners" to gold fields in California and Washington Territory, and a decade later participated in a new gold rush east to Colorado in 1859.5 The I.O.O.F. first arrived in Oklahoma in 1875 founding the Caddo #1 Lodge. By the time Checotah # 20 was established, Odd Fellow lodges were in virtually every state and territory.

---

2 Harold Bacon, "Odd Fellow Lodge." unpublished paper, (Vertical files, Checotah Public Library 1986), 1.

3 Don R. Smith and Wayne Roberts, Eds. "History of Odd Fellowship," The Three Link Fraternity - Odd Fellowship in California: An Introduction to the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and Rebekahs, Saratoga: Linden Publications, 1993), 1.

4 Ibid. 2.

5 Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 15

Oklahoma Odd Fellows Home  
at Checotah  
name of property  
McIntosh County, Oklahoma  
county and State

=====

A mission statement -"visit the sick, relieve the distressed, bury the dead, educate the orphan," - had joined the old motto. Evidence the Odd Fellows took the charge seriously is the proliferation of homes for widows and orphans throughout the United States, - the first in Meadville, Pennsylvania, in 18726 - in neighboring Canada, and across the Atlantic Ocean in countries throughout Europe. Legislation creating Widows and Orphan Funds found its way into every state Grand Lodge organization.<sup>7</sup>

And so it was that in May, 1899, at the Grand Lodge Meeting, (the annual territorial-wide convention of all the local lodges), a Committee on Widows and Orphans introduced a resolution calling for a, "home for the dearly loved widows and orphans of our members."<sup>8</sup> The delegates gave rousing approval to the resolution, but created no mechanism for choosing the appropriate site until 1900 when the Grand Lodge called for bids - minimum to be 160 acres and \$2500 - and created a four-member committee composed of three representatives from lodges around the territory and William T. Gardner, the Grand Master, from Ardmore.<sup>9</sup>

Leaders of the major towns throughout Indian Territory quickly saw an Odd Fellows Widows and Orphans home as a point of civic pride, and their bids proved stiff competition for the site. Late 1900, members of Checotah Lodge #20 gained permission from Grand Master Gardner to float bonds to liquidate the indebtedness for a lodge building they were constructing. The restructured debt freed funds for a bid on the site.<sup>10</sup> In April 1901, citizens of Muskogee, the location of the Union Agency for the Five Civilized Tribes, proposed a

<sup>6</sup> Ida F. Wolfe, Album of Odd Fellows Homes, (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Joseph M. Wolfe Co.1927), 43.

<sup>7</sup> A Digest of the Decisions and Legislation of the Sovereign Grand Lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows From Its Organization to 1903, (Guthrie, 1903), 157.

<sup>8</sup> "Committee Report of Widows and Orphans Home, May, 1899," Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of the Independent Order of the Odd Fellows, XXI, (Trenton, New Jersey: J. L. Murphy Publishing, 1900), 341.

<sup>9</sup> Checotah Enquirer, 12 April 1901.

<sup>10</sup> Bacon, "Odd Fellow Lodge," 2.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 16

Oklahoma Odd Fellows Home  
at Checotah  
name of property  
McIntosh County, Oklahoma  
county and State

handsome offer of \$5,000 and 166 acres of land. Tahlequah, Capital of the Cherokee Nation, could not muster a lump sum but bid \$1650 per year for five years and a 120-acre site. The Durant community offered \$3600, plus 200 acres.<sup>11</sup> Exactly what Checotah operatives first proposed is not known. But other civic leaders, led by the local newspaper, found the effort lacking. "The people here must go to work and not let up until it (the Odd Fellows Home) is landed," is typical of editorialized front-page articles.<sup>12</sup>

Rivalries between the various communities in Indian Territory arrived with the first immigrants during the 1830s and 1840s. Divisions within the tribes over what side to fight for in the Civil War inflamed tribal hatreds. White settlers who came soon thereafter encouraged the hatred as a way of gaining political power in the Indian Territory. "Victories" in contests pitting one town against another were ballyhooed and bemoaned. So the campaign for the Odd Fellows Home was much more than an appealing addition to town. It added weight to arguments of what community could boast superiority. Addressing the Odd Fellows Home issue a week before the committee would make public all bids, the editor of the Enquirer exhorted, "It is a matter of a great deal of interest to all of us and we should no leave any wheel unturned to get it done!"<sup>13</sup>

Members of Lodge #20 responded with a pledged note of \$5000 to the First National Bank. William Gentry, a local businessman and lodge member, offered to contribute 160 acres of land originally allotted under the Curtis Act, to his Creek wife, Sallie. His only condition was if the time came when the building and lands would cease to be used as an Odd Fellows home the property would revert back to his decedents. The committee finally announced on April 11, 1902, that the Checotah offer had won. No record exists of the committee's deliberations. Certainly, Checotah's offer ranked above those of Durant and Tahlequah and on par with that proposed by Muskogee. The editor of the Checotah Enquirer trumpeted Checotah's central location within the territory as a deciding factor.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Checotah Enquirer, 12 April 1901.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 15 March 1901.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 5 April 1901.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 11 April 1902.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 17

Oklahoma Odd Fellows Home  
at Checotah  
name of property  
McIntosh County, Oklahoma  
county and State

Workers broke ground on the Gentry property in late spring of 1902, three-quarters of a mile from the center of town. The first occupants arrived in March of 1903. Dedication ceremonies for the three-story building came a month later in April. Final construction costs came to \$14,099. In all, the Oklahoma Odd Fellows collected \$10,214 through assessed fees from the separate lodges plus the \$5000 pledged from Checotah Lodge #20 for a total of \$15,214. Value of the Gentry land they estimated at \$10 per acre.<sup>15</sup>

Odd Fellow regulations require a "Home Board," charged with operating the institution. Five men, all Odd Fellows, and two women, members of the Rebekahs, all serve three-year terms, meet the first Tuesday in January, April, July, and September, established institutional policy, approve all expenses and income, and produce the monthly report the Superintendent submitted to the Grand Lodge.<sup>16</sup> The Board remained the local ruling authority until March 2000, when H. A. Hand, Grand Master of the Oklahoma Independent Order of the Odd Fellows, relieved the members of their responsibilities.<sup>17</sup>

The only residents for the first sixteen years were orphans. The Home Board oversaw every aspect of the child's life. "educate the orphan," meant all children had to attend school. Other rules forbade card games, tobacco, intoxicating liquors, and vulgar language.<sup>18</sup> Admission to the home required children or a member sponsor to complete an, "Application for Admission," and to receive a physical exam from a doctor. Once admitted, children found the home a safe, if restrictive place to live. Regulations required siblings to be admitted together, and while officials encouraged adoption, no families could

---

15 "From the Home," Oklahoma and Indian Territory Odd Fellow, May 1903.

16 Ibid, 19. See also Plan of Organization Rules and Regulations, Checotah Independent Order of Odd Fellows Home Library, April 1911.

17 The Daily Oklahoman, 26 March 2001.

18 Plan of Organization Rules and Regulations, 11 April 1911.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 18

Oklahoma Odd Fellows Home  
at Checotah  
name of property  
McIntosh County, Oklahoma  
county and State

=====

be split.<sup>19</sup> The children lived on the second floor in segregated by gender dorm rooms. The third floor housed the school that would exist until the early school system.<sup>20</sup>

Children lived busy lives at the orphanage. The Gentry acreage consisted not only the home but also a farm with barns for livestock and hay, a dairy, pasture for cattle, and a fruit and vegetable garden where the children grew corn, green beans, okra, and tomatoes. The boys did the milking and the girls churned butter.<sup>21</sup> While the Superintendent oversaw the operation, the children were responsible for carrying out all daily operations. What products they did not consume the children sold to help with the expenses of running the home. By July 1912, the Superintendent reported a staff of two men, four women, and 27 boys and 25 girls in residence. The cost of room and board ran \$17.37 per month.<sup>22</sup>

The first elderly people arrived in 1919. Plans to add rooms began three years later. The sister Odd Fellows home located in Carmen, Oklahoma Territory, closed in the early 1920s and space was needed for former Carmen residences plus the normal growth in demand the home had experienced since its founding. Joseph Foucart, the architect of the original building, had died in 1919 so the architect for the new west wing was M. T. Hardin. The drawings called for 31 rooms, a dining hall, a hospital ward, a sitting room, two bathrooms, and a living area could house 50 adults.<sup>23</sup>

Construction did not go smoothly. The Grand Lodge appropriated \$30,000 for the undertaking, but costs ran \$6000 over budget. An additional expense of \$2000 for debt service ran the total cost of the wing to \$38,000. Also, the

<sup>19</sup> Constitution of the Grand Lodge Independent Order of Odd Fellows of the Jurisdiction of Oklahoma, Article XIV, (Guthrie, 1915), p. 272; Interview with Emmy Scott Stidham. Checotah I.O.O.F. Home office, 9 January 2001.

<sup>20</sup> Stidham interview; Interview with Ruby Williams, in Checotah I.O.O.F. Home office, 9 January 2001.

<sup>21</sup> Stidham interview; Williams interview.

<sup>22</sup> "From the Home," Oklahoma and Indian Territory Odd Fellow, July 1912, 7.

<sup>23</sup> Checotah Times, 1 December 1922.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 19

Oklahoma Odd Fellows Home  
at Checotah  
name of property  
McIntosh County, Oklahoma  
county and State

=====  
construction company became embroiled in court over a previous job taking time away from the Checotah project. Still, the company finished the wing and November 30, 1922 witnessed a grand ceremony dedicating the additional facilities.<sup>24</sup>

General opinion with the Oklahoma I.O.O.F. members concluded the 1923 construction would satisfy all foreseeable demand; for forty years they proved correct. But the same year dial telephones came to Checotah, 1962, the Odd Fellows added a second wing north of the first addition. Its 5600 square feet included 26 rooms, a kitchen, a lounge, a new utility room, and a reception area. Total costs ran to \$75,000.<sup>25</sup> No major changes have occurred since.

The Checotah Odd Fellows Home has had a significant impact on territorial society and the future state of Oklahoma. In ninety-seven years of use, the buildings have been home to over 900 residents - 550 adults and 448 children.<sup>26</sup> Modern government regulations have altered the workings of the home. The orphanage closed in 1981 because federally and state mandated standards were too cost prohibitive. Currently the institution houses 9 residents with 10 staff members.<sup>27</sup>

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Odd Fellows picked Joseph Foucart of Guthrie, Oklahoma Territory, to be the architect of their Checotah home. <sup>28</sup> Guthrie's DeFord Building, done in 1890, the Grey Brothers Building, the State Capital Publishing Company,

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. See also "From the Home," Oklahoma Odd Fellow, 15 December 1922.

<sup>25</sup> Checotah News, 19 January 1962.

<sup>26</sup> "I.O.O.F. Home Serving Area Since 1903," Oklahoma Grand Lodge, (Perry, Oklahoma), 10/18/00 <http://norm28.usc.edu/IOOF/USA/Oklalahoma/Oklahoma.html>

<sup>27</sup> The Daily Oklahoman, 26 March 2001

<sup>28</sup> Joseph Foucart, "Specifications for Labor Performed and Materials used for the Checotah Home," (Vertical file, The Oklahoma Grand Lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, 1913). This is Foucart's description of what materials he used in the building. The I.O.O.F. membership was considering possible repairs in 1913. Foucart was to do these

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section  8  Page  20

Oklahoma Odd Fellows Home  
at Checotah  
name of property  
McIntosh County, Oklahoma  
county and State

=====

designed for newspaper publisher Frank Greer in 1902, and the P.J. Heilman home gave argument that before drawings of the Checotah home were ever committed to paper Foucart had already developed the reputation as the most prominent architect in Oklahoma Territory. For a time, he actually held an official position as City Architect in Guthrie, the territorial capital. There is even a Foucart Building. Foucart had already formed a relationship with the local Odd Fellows. Records show him a member of Lodge #3 in Guthrie.<sup>29</sup> One of his creations, the Victor Business Building, was the first home of the local I. O. O. F. Lodge and still houses an assortment of Grand Lodge records.<sup>30</sup> While architectural historians identify Guthrie as Foucart's architectural gallery, other Foucart buildings populate the state of Oklahoma. Perry displays the First National Bank and Trust, listed in the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>31</sup> Sapulpa is the home of another I.O.O.F. building, the mirror image of the one in Guthrie, where Foucart officed in 1910 and 1911.<sup>32</sup> The library at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater and the main building on the Northwestern State College in Alva give witness that Foucart enjoyed wide admiration.

Foucart was born in Arlon, Belgium, on November 14, 1848. He completed local schools and studied architecture in Ghent. After a stint as a railroad and mining engineer, he worked with other architects on a new city hall in Paris. Foucart immigrated to the United States in 1888, lived for a short time in Texas and St Louis before settling in Guthrie in 1889.

repairs; none were ever done. As far as this researcher knows, there are no other documents connecting Foucart to the home.

29 Interview with Lavon Lawson. Grand Secretary of the Oklahoma Grand Lodge. Perry, Oklahoma. 11 December 2000.

30 Lloyd McGuire, Birth of Guthrie: Oklahoma's' Run of 1889 and Life in Guthrie in 1889 and 1890s, With Follow-up Through the Twentieth Century, (San Diego: Lloyd McGuire, 2000), 234.

31 Enrique Ramirez, Sr. National Register Single Property Document, "First National Bank and Trust, Perry, Oklahoma," (1979).

<sup>32</sup>McGuire, 237.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 21

Oklahoma Odd Fellows Home  
at Checotah  
name of property  
McIntosh County, Oklahoma  
county and State

Foucart's style comes from diverse origins. One noted architect has gone so far as to describe Foucart's work as, "*gloriously eclectic*."<sup>33</sup> At first glance one notices heavy influences of Gothic Revival and Romanesque Revival styles; domes on turrets and oriels, round arches, and rounded arch windows, common to a Foucart building, are associated with Russian and Moslem design.<sup>34</sup>

The I.O.O.F. Widows and Orphans Home in Checotah reflects Foucart's style. He loved to mix materials in all his work. The rectangle tower in front of the home is constructed of quarry faced sandstone alternated with dressed sandstone. This alternating sandstone also appears over the windows embedded in red brick walls. One can see the same use of materials over the windows in the Gray Brothers Building, and mixed sandstone, both dressed and quarry faced, with brick in the Heilman House. The square broach spires at all four corners of the I. O. O. F. tower, each topped with pyramidal pinnacles, we see in rounded form on the Guthrie City Hall, but the effect is much the same. The large pyramidal spire at the very top of the I.O.O.F. tower is also present in top of the rectangle tower of the Guthrie City Hall.

The Odd Fellows Widows and Orphans Home in Checotah stands out among the building stock of the town. Designed by renowned territorial architect Joseph Foucart, the IOOF Home is distinctive in its design from any other building in the town. The downtown commercial district, listed in the National Register in 1982, consists primarily of one and two-story business blocks in the Commercial Style. The banks that once graced the corners of the main intersection showed the most flair, with canted entry corners with arched doors and granite columns. Still, the imposing Foucart building on the north edge of town is the most visually distinct edifice in town. The textured and variegated walls and the size of the complex add to its distinct presence. The 1922 addition, designed in a more restrained Craftsman style, only serves to highlight the beauty of the original building.

Over the years, there have been changes made to Checotah's Odd Fellows Widows and Orphans Home. At the time of the 1962 wing, the windows on the main

<sup>33</sup> Arn Henderson, FAIA, "Joseph Foucart, Territorial Architect," Meredith, Howard and Mary Ellen, Eds. Of The Earth: Oklahoma Architectural History, (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1980), 76.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 75.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   8   Page  22 

Oklahoma Odd Fellows Home  
at Checotah

name of property

McIntosh County, Oklahoma

county and State

=====

floors of the original building were replaced. What had been tall 1/1 wooden windows were transformed into triple sash aluminum windows. It was not long after that the columns on the wrap around porch were replaced. Decorative iron posts were installed in the place of wooden Tuscan columns. These changes are minor visual distractions, though, in the overall effect of Foucart's design and do not affect the integrity of design to a great degree. The Odd Fellows Widows and Orphans Home retains a high degree of integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, workmanship, and integrity of design and materials.

As the work of master architect Joseph Foucart and for its significance in the area of social history in Indian Territory, the Odd Fellows Widows and Orphans Home is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic places under Criteria A and C.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 23

Oklahoma Odd Fellows Home  
at Checotah

name of property  
McIntosh County, Oklahoma  
county and State

=====

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bacon, Harold. "Odd Fellow Lodge." A speech given before the Historical Society of McIntosh County, [5 August 1986]. Vertical files, Checotah Public Library, Checotah.

Checotah Enquirer (Checotah). 15 March; 5, 12 April 1901; 11 April 1902; 1 December 1922.

Checotah News (Checotah). 19 January 1962.

Foucart, Joseph. Specifications for Labor Performed and Materials Used for the Checotah Home. 1913. Vertical Files, The Oklahoma Grand Lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Perry, OK.

"From the Home." Oklahoma and Indian Territory Odd Fellow, May 1903; July 1912.

"From the Home," Oklahoma Odd Fellow" 15 December 1922.

Henderson, Arn. "Joseph Foucart, Territorial Architect." In Of The Earth: Oklahoma Architectural History, eds. Howard Meredith and Mary Ellen Meredith. Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1980.

Home Board. Plan of Organization Rules and Regulations. Checotah: Checotah Independent Order of Odd Fellows Home, April 1911.

"I. O. O. F. Home Serving Area Since 1903." Perry: Oklahoma I.O.O.F. Grand Lodge, 18 October 2000.  
<http://norm28.usc.edu/IOOF.USA/Oklahoma/Oklahoma.html>.

Independent Order of Odd Fellows. "Committee Report of Widows and Orphans Home May, 1899." Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of the Independent Order of the Odd Fellows. XXI. Trenton, New Jersey: J. L. Murphy Publishing, 1900.

Independent Order of Odd Fellows. "Widows Fund." A Digest of the decisions and Legislation of the Sovereign Grand lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows From Its Organization to 1903. Trenton, New Jersey: J.L. Murphy, 1903.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   9   Page  24 

Oklahoma Odd Fellows Home  
at Checotah  
name of property  
McIntosh County, Oklahoma  
county and State

=====

Lawson, Lavon. Interview by Glen Vaughn-Roberson, 11 December 2000. State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, OK.

McGuire, Lloyd. Birth of Guthrie: Oklahoma's Run of 1889 and Life in Guthrie in 1889 And 1890s, With Follow-up Through the Twentieth Century. Second edition. San Diego: privately published, 2000.

Oklahoma. 1915. Constitution of the Grand Lodge Independent Order of Odd Fellows of The Jurisdiction of Oklahoma. Article XIV. Guthrie.

Ramirez, Enrique, Sr. "First National Bank And Trust, Perry, Oklahoma." National Register Of Historic places Nomination. State Historic Preservation Office. Oklahoma City, OK. 1979.

Smith, Don R. and Roberts, Wayne, Eds. "History of Odd Fellowship." The Three-Link Fraternity - Odd Fellowship in California: An Introduction to the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and Rebekahs. Saratoga: Linden Publications, 1993.

Stidham, Emmy. Interview by Glen Vaughn-Roberson, 9 January 2001. State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, OK.

The Daily Oklahoman (Oklahoma City). 26 March 2001.

West, C. W., Ed. "McIntosh County Memories," 1933 TMs (photocopy) McIntosh Historical Society, Checotah.

Williams, Ruby. Interview by Glen Vaughn-Roberson, 9 January 2001. State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, OK.

Wolfe, Ida F. Album of Odd Fellows Homes. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Joseph M. Wolfe, 1927.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 25

Oklahoma Odd Fellows Home  
at Checotah  
name of property  
McIntosh County, Oklahoma  
county and State

=====

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

From the junction of West North Street and Oklahoma Highway 69 (Broadway), proceed east along North Street 200', to the location of a fence line. Proceed north along the fence line 320' to the junction with another fence line. Turn west along the fence line 280' to the Oklahoma Highway 69 (Broadway) roadbed. Turn south on Highway 69 (Broadway), following the curve, to the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This area contains the land and contributing resources most closely associated with the IOOF Home. Outside of these boundaries, the land was used as part of the working farm.