

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

1. Name of Property

historic name Clinton Armory

other names/site number Clinton National Guard Armory

2. Location

street & number 723 S. Thirteenth Street not for publication N/A  
city or town Clinton vicinity N/A  
state Oklahoma code OK county Custer code 039  
zip code 73601

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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      statewide x locally. ( N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Blake Wade  
Signature of certifying official

February 22, 1994  
Date

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

     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):     

Edson H Beall 4/7/94

Entered in the  
National Register

for Signature of Keeper

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>  1  </u>	<u>  0  </u> buildings
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u> sites
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u> structures
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u> objects
<u>  1  </u>	<u>  0  </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: DEFENSE Sub: arms storage

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DEFENSE Sub: arms storage

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\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/Works Progress Administration

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

roof ASPHALT

walls BRICK

other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

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8. Statement of Significance

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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)

ECONOMIC

MILITARY

ARCHITECTURE

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance 1935 - 1937

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates 1937

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



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10. Geographical Data  
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Acreage of Property Less than one (1) acre

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>14</u>	<u>502240</u>	<u>3929060</u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	<u>N/A</u> See continuation sheet.					

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 Dianna Everett, Research Associate

organization State Historic Preservation Office date December 23, 1992

street & number 621 N. Robinson, Suite 375 telephone (405)521-6249

city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73102

=====  
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 State of Oklahoma/Oklahoma Military Department  
street & number 3501 Military Circle Northeast telephone 405-425-8000  
city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73111



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SUMMARY:

The Clinton Armory (Clinton National Guard Armory) is a self-contained, horizontal, one-story building measuring 140 feet by 125 feet and constructed of red brick with cast concrete detailing. A local project of the Works Progress Administration in Oklahoma, it was constructed in 1935-1937. The armory property is located at 723 S. Thirteenth Street. The surrounding area is residential, and a park lies across the street to the south. The armory's main entrance faces south. The floor plan is typical of WPA-built armories, in that the building comprises two distinct sections: A north section, with barrel roof, contains the drill area, while a flat-roofed south section comprises offices, supply and arms rooms, and a garage area. The building exhibits decorative brickwork and cast concrete detailing, all exemplifying WPA architecture and construction philosophy in Oklahoma. Though the massing is strongly horizontal, several architectural details give the building a vertical emphasis: the upwardly projecting, stepped entrance bay; castellated parapet on the south side; corner and central pilasters topped with pediment-shaped concrete caps; a vertical concrete panel over each window on the south wall in the administrative/garage section; and narrow, vertical steel-framed multiple-light hopper-opening windows in all facades. Other decorative elements include cast-concrete window sills, diamond- and rectangular-shaped insets in the pilasters, and an elaborate main entry door surround, created in cast concrete, consisting of a compound arch recessed under a stepped panel. The steel-framed windows are all original, as are the single interior overhead vehicle door and most office doors and exterior pedestrian doors. Exterior alterations are limited to the replacement, in 1988-1991, of five original wood exterior overhead vehicle doors with steel doors, and the replacement of the original main entry wood doors with a single steel door. Interior alterations are minimal: An interior wall was removed in one office, a wood-framed wall has divided a classroom into two rooms, and a wood-framed wall has created a new office in the garage area. The Clinton Armory retains appropriate integrity of location, setting, design, materials, and workmanship to enable it exemplify WPA-type military architecture in Oklahoma.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION:

The Clinton Armory is a self-contained, horizontal, one-story building constructed of red brick with cast concrete detailing. The building measures 140 feet north-to-south and 125 feet east-to-west. A local project of the Works Progress Administration in Oklahoma, it was constructed in 1935-1937 of red brick manufactured in McAlester, Oklahoma, at the state penitentiary. The armory property is located at 723 S. Thirteenth Street. It is bordered by Thirteenth on the west, by Opal on the south, by an alley on the north, and by a wood privacy fence on the east. The surrounding area is residential, with a city park lying to the south across Opal.

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As with many WPA armories in Oklahoma, the building is designed to have two principal facades that each give pedestrian and/or vehicular access to a street. The Clinton Armory has two principal facades, one accessing Opal (main entry, on the south), and one accessing Thirteenth Street (on the west). These walls are characterized by outwardly projecting pilasters that enframe window/door bays. The south facade's main focus is an elaborate door surround consisting of stepped parapet and tall, shallow pilasters that enframe a compound segmental pointed-arched portal. The west facade is divided by shallow pilasters into two parts, one being the administrative/garage section, characterized by vehicle doors under segmental arches, and the other being the drill hall section, characterized by its barrel roof and window/door arrangement. Cast-concrete detailing is an important visual aspect of the primary facades. The secondary facades, on the north and east, have almost no decoration. The east facade has irregularly spaced pairs and triplets of windows, and the north facade has regularly placed window pairs along its length.

The roofline of the Clinton Armory indicates that the building comprises two distinct sections: A north section, with barrel roof, comprises the drill area, while a flat-roofed one-story south section comprises offices, supply and arms rooms, and garage. (Historically and presently), the drill hall roof is covered with roll roofing, while the south section is covered tar and gravel. The roofline of the Clinton Armory gives the building a fortress-like aspect. The south roofline exhibits a castellated and stepped parapet. On the east and west the arc of the barrel roof, over the north section, contrasts with the horizontal line of the south section. At the northwest and southwest corners of the drill hall, shallow pilasters buttress the corners and rise to become square-topped "towers." On the north (drill hall), the roofline is horizontal, with an exaggerated step at each corner.

Each facade exhibits regular openings that indicate the dual nature of the building and the functions of interior spaces. All windows are original. Glazing patterns include combinations of two or three lights set in four, five, or six rows (4/4/2, 3/6/3, 6/6/3, 3/6/3/3, 6/3/6/3, usually with one or two sets of vertical center-pivot windows and a bottom row that opens in hopper fashion). The SOUTH facade consists in four bays: Slightly off-center is the pedimented, stepped, upwardly projecting entry bay, with its compound segmental pointed-arched portal and new steel door with single light. Flanking the entry bay are two bays enframed by pilasters; each bay contains a pair of 3/6/3/3 windows flanked by a 4/4/2 window. A small, four-light casement window lies close to the inside pilaster on each side of the entry bay. The westernmost bay contains a single 4/4/2 window which illuminates the garage area. On the WEST side, the southernmost bay contains four steel (new) overhead doors, while the northernmost bay contains a central steel (new) overhead door flanked by a triplet of 6/3/6/3 windows on the north and a 3/6/3 transom atop an original wood pedestrian door and two 6/3/6/3 windows on the south.

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All of the overhead vehicle doors were replaced with steel doors in the 1980s.<sup>1</sup> Openings in the NORTH facade illuminate the drill hall. At the extreme east end is a 3/6/3/3 window, and west of this, two pairs of 6/3/6/3 windows are placed on each side of a central pair of original wood pedestrian doors that are topped with 3/6/3 transoms. On the EAST, the facade is irregularly pierced; there are two 3/6/3/3 windows and a triplet of 3/6/3 windows in the administrative section and a single 3/6/3/3 window in the drill hall section. There is a small, two-foot-square ventilation window close to the ground in the center of the drill hall section. Some lights are painted to block sunlight.

Though the massing is strongly horizontal, several architectural details influenced by Medieval English style give the building a military bearing; the arched doorway of the main entry; and the castellated parapet on the south side, with indentions over the windows. Other details influenced by Art Deco style give the building a vertical emphasis: the stepped parapet marking the main entry; pediment-shaped, concrete-capped pilasters decorated with cast-concrete diamonds and rectangles; vertical concrete panels above the windows in the south facade; and narrow, vertical steel-framed multiple-light windows in all facades. Original metal downspouts are in place on the east and west facades.

One of the distinguishing architectural features of the Clinton Armory is the uneven quality of the brickwork. In constructing the south facade, or front of the building, builders used good-quality face brick having a vertically striated pattern, and the mortar was pointed. On the east and north facades, however, common bricks were used, and these are not perfectly shaped nor are they professionally laid. The courses wander off level, the mortar is flush with the stretcher face, and in numerous spots, broken chunks of brick were used to piece out a row. This unsophisticated, less-than-perfect application of bricklaying technique is typical of many early-day WPA endeavors, and it gives visual documentation of the use of untrained workers, or "trainees," on the Clinton project.<sup>1</sup>

Cast-concrete decorative elements are another feature of the building: These consist of the parapet coping on the west and south, all pilaster pediment-shaped caps, all window sills, the southwest and southeast corners of the building, where a concrete corner is jointed to look like individual stone blocks, the corners of the upwardly projecting "towers" that enframe the drill hall on the west side, a concrete drip-mould at the base of the south wall, and the stepped panel in the south entrance door surround. A four-step concrete porch leads to the main entrance.

A window-type air conditioner has been installed in a south side and an east side window. The building retains its original metal downspouts on all facades. On the south wall near the southwest corner of the building is a cornerstone marking the construction as a 1936 WPA project, and over the main

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entry is affixed a diamond-shaped red and gold metal sign, symbol of the 45th Infantry Division. A gasoline pump sits near the garage doors, and a recently installed steel flagpole rises above the main entrance bay. On the west, a wooden sign at curbside identifies the building as a National Guard Armory.

Exterior alterations are limited to the replacement, in 1988-1991, of five original wood exterior overhead vehicle doors with steel doors, and the replacement of the original main entry wood doors with a single steel door.<sup>2</sup>

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION/ALTERATIONS:

The Clinton Armory exhibits a rectangular plan that was standard for WPA armories. The building is divided into two functional sections, a drill hall area on the north, and an administrative/garage section on the south. The original floor plan has been maintained. In the administrative/garage section, rooms lie on either side of a north-south center hallway. A four-bay garage occupies the west half of the south section. Within the garage, a small original tool room was enlarged in the 1950s. The west wing's original concrete ceiling is still visible in the garage. Between the garage and the central hallway are offices, a supply room, and a kitchen; in one of the offices an original wall was removed in 1990 to open up the space. On the east side of the hallway, the space is still divided into a classroom (now subdivided by a false wall), a supply room (with original arms vault), and a shower/latrine. All interior walls are brick; in the 1970s the central hallway walls were "furred out" and paneled, and drop ceilings were added in the offices and in the hallway.<sup>3</sup> Between the south section and the drill hall is a load-bearing brick wall having original wood double doors, accessing the central hallway, and a panel-type overhead garage door, joining the garage and drill hall.

The 86' by 125' drill hall retains much of its original interior. The ceiling was and is a high barrel vault with exposed steel roofing panels and exposed steel truss system. Flanked by pilasters resembling those on the exterior, an open and useable stage rises in the east wall. On each side of the stage are steps and original wood doors leading to dressing rooms, and to the north of the stage are steps leading down to an original wood door that accesses the now-condemned underground rifle range. The drill hall's original 1037 wood-block floor was removed in the 1960s, but the concrete "lip" which surrounded it is still in place, giving the floor two levels.<sup>4</sup>

Except for the replacement of deteriorated wood exterior doors in the 1980s, the Clinton Armory is essentially unaltered from its original appearance. It retains sufficient integrity of location, setting, design, materials, and workmanship to enable it to convey its past identity and its architectural significance.

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ENDNOTES

1. W. David Baird, "Final Report: WPA Structures Thematic Survey (Phase III)," (Stillwater, Okla.: Oklahoma State University, 1987), 12, 15-16.
2. Sgt. Kenneth Nunemaker, Batt. A, 171st Field Artillery, interview by Dianna Everett, Clinton, Oklahoma, December 23, 1992.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

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SUMMARY:

The Clinton Armory (Clinton National Guard Armory) is significant within the economic context of Works Progress Administration projects in Clinton, Oklahoma, 1935-1937, within the military context of national defense requirements of the Oklahoma National Guard's local unit in the era between the two world wars, and within the architectural context of WPA building style and methodology locally and in Oklahoma. The armory was constructed between 1935 and 1937 by local men who were qualified for work relief under WPA guidelines. The project brought \$50,000 into the economy of Clinton, Oklahoma, by employing an average of forty-five previously unemployed, unskilled workers for more than sixteen months. The armory also filled a longstanding military need for an adequate, secure drill hall and arms storage building for the Headquarters Battery and Combat Train, 1st Battalion, 158th Field Artillery, of the 45th Infantry Division of the Oklahoma National Guard, which had previously had no permanent armory. The Clinton Armory is significant architecturally as an excellent, intact example of WPA architecture. The materials, brick manufactured in Oklahoma by convict labor, and workmanship, evident in masonry and cast concrete detailing, reflect both the goals of the WPA Building Program in Oklahoma and the practical considerations of using unskilled labor to construct large public buildings. The armory is one of six WPA structures remaining in Clinton, and it is the town's only example of military-style architecture. As it is essentially intact, the Clinton Armory is able to convey appropriate feeling and association within these three contexts.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

Oklahoma suffered severely during the initial years of the Great Depression, 1929-1933, but here, in a predominantly rural state, where in 1930, 65.7 percent of the population lived in rural areas, and twenty-seven of the state's seventy-seven counties had no "urban" areas, or towns of more than 2,500 persons, drought, general agricultural failure from 1932 through 1938, and a downturn in the petroleum industry exacerbated the general economic depression. Rural communities, towns, and cities, which functioned as agricultural or petroleum service centers, consequently foundered.

Oklahoma's state and local governments were unable to provide much help for citizens, whether urban or rural. Limited relief offered by counties did not alleviate the suffering, nor did meager annual appropriations by the state legislature. No public funding was available to maintain the existing infrastructure, and private charity failed to create or to support relief initiatives. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration, established in May of 1934 by the Roosevelt administration, provided some direct relief, in terms of food, clothing, and small stipends, but until the inception of the Works Progress Administration in 1935 only a few Oklahomans received adequate assistance. The urban unemployed and displaced farm families combined to

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create a situation in which 33 percent of all Oklahoma families were on the direct relief rolls by the time that Roosevelt created the WPA by executive order in May, 1935. By July 1935, there were 127,416 jobless men certified in Oklahoma.<sup>1</sup>

The inauguration of the Works Progress Administration in 1935 stands as one of the benchmarks of Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" for the United States. Administered nationally by Harry Hopkins, the program was designed to assist in lifting the nation from the depths of severe economic depression. Make-work projects provided work-relief for literally millions of individual citizens whose lives had been devastated by the near-collapse of the American economy. The infusion of cash into work-relief projects all over the state made a significant economic impact on hundreds of communities. During the seven-and-one-half-year life of the WPA, more than \$10.75 billion were expended, of which Oklahoma received more than \$185 million for projects ranging from school lunch programs, flood control, and archeological excavations, to major construction projects such as armories, highways, bridges, schools, stadiums, and museums.<sup>2</sup>

Localities competed for WPA funds from the outset. Chambers of Commerce and planning committees drew up specifications to meet three major criteria established by the administration: 1) projects must meet a well-defined community need; 2) each project must be sponsored by a public body, such as a city or county government or school district, which was required to provide from 10 to 25 percent of the project cost in cash and/or materials; and 3) 90 percent of those hired must be unemployed employable workers who were carried on the relief rolls. Compensation was to be based on 130 hours of work for \$21 (later \$23) per month for unskilled labor.<sup>3</sup> In June of 1935 Oklahoma WPA Director (Gen.) William S. Key estimated that there were already "70,000 employable unemployed" ready to work on his agency's projects throughout the state; by November of that year, 67,973 people were at work for the WPA, and by January of 1936, WPA rolls reached an all-time high of 94,281.<sup>4</sup>

Armory construction was the first major thrust of the WPA Building Program in Oklahoma. By mid-1937, 126 armories had been constructed throughout the United States, and 51 of these projects were located in Oklahoma. When the WPA ended its program in 1943, 54 armories had been built and 53 others "reconstructed" in the state. The new construction had infused \$3.5 million into local economies.<sup>5</sup>

Custer County, in western Oklahoma, was an agricultural region. The town of Clinton was founded by townsite developers in 1903 on the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Railroad. Several railroads intersected in Clinton, which

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became a major agricultural shipping point and service center for the county. With a 1930 population of 7,512, Clinton still functioned as a major service center. During the early 1930s a severe drought compounded the problems associated with a generally depressed economy.<sup>6</sup> By September of 1934, 1,848 families, or 28.2 percent of the Custer County population were on direct relief. The WPA made a difference in Custer County, Oklahoma. By September of 1935, the number of families on relief had been reduced to 966, or 14.8 percent of the county population. In Clinton, Oklahoma, by November of 1935, all available unemployed workers in town were on work relief, and by September of 1936, 610 persons in Custer County were employed by the WPA.<sup>7</sup>

By mid-summer of 1935 Custer County municipalities had submitted more than \$250,000 in proposed WPA projects. The Clinton City Commission submitted three, one of which was a \$35,000 armory. After some debate, the city commission selected a site for the new building and deeded the property to the state; then, on the eve of groundbreaking, supervisors discovered that the contours of the property precluded construction according to the blueprints and specifications. A new site, five lots adjoining McClain-Rogers Park (park construction and improvements being a cooperative CWA, FERA, and WPA effort) in a new residential addition on the southwest side, was purchased for \$600, using money collected from local businessmen literally overnight. Thus, the city's share of the cost of the armory was provided in land.<sup>8</sup>

Groundbreaking for the Clinton Armory took place on October 30, 1935, and construction proceeded through the rest of the year, through 1936, and into 1937.<sup>9</sup> Local purchases of materials added to the project's importance for the local economy. Due to labor shortages, materials shortages, and weather-related shutdowns, a short project expanded into a long one. In January of 1936, WPA administrator Gen. William S. Key ordered project supervisors to rearrange the work schedule from one eight-hour shift to two six-hour shifts per day. This would accomplish two purposes: it would employ more workers, a bona-fide WPA goal, and it would bring the project back onto its original schedule. At this time, forty-five men were employed on the site.<sup>10</sup> The Guard unit moved into the new facility on January 1, more than a month before it was finished.<sup>11</sup> Finally completed in February, the Armory was dedicated on March 9, 1937. On that day, Clinton celebrated with an open house, banquet, and band concert. General Key, state WPA director, and other state and local dignitaries participated in the dedication, and the program concluded with a dance in the new armory.<sup>12</sup>

WPA projects in 1935-1937 propped up the sagging rural economy of Custer County. By the end of 1937, estimated WPA expenditures in Custer County totalled more than \$500,000 on projects ranging from a \$140,000 sanitarium, a \$100,000 fish hatchery, a \$20,000 park improvement, and bridge and road improvements totalling around \$80,000. More than one thousand individuals had compiled a total of one million hours. The WPA's cost on the armory project



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was \$50,000, with the city contributing the land.<sup>13</sup> In human terms, thousands of person-hours of labor went into the armory's construction. Most significantly, a monthly average of forty-five men were employed on the project. These figures testify to the labor-intensive nature of WPA projects, which were designed to provide as much work as possible for those on relief rolls. Most of the hours were consumed in hand labor--hod carrying, bricklaying, concrete-pouring, and in installing a wood-block floor in the 80' by 140' drill room (more than 200,000 pine blocks were cut, primed, set in asphalt, sanded, oiled, and polished, in sections). A concrete floor would have sufficed, but ample time and labor were available to create a complicated design.<sup>14</sup>

Upon completion, the Clinton Armory became the home of the Headquarters Battery and Combat Train, 1st Battalion, 45th Infantry Division, Oklahoma National Guard.<sup>15</sup> Reorganized under the National Defense Act of 1920, the Guard was an integral part of United States military preparedness. Since 1920, approximately five-sixths of America's military strength lay with "citizen soldiers"--National Guard divisions and Reserve divisions in nine corps areas across the nation. Each corps area had one Regular Army division, two National Guard Divisions, and three Reserve divisions. Oklahoma, along with New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado, formed one division of National Guard within the Eighth Corps. Despite inadequate training facilities, the Oklahoma National Guard, provided service during various natural disasters and civil disturbances in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>16</sup> Because the Guard paid its members a monthly fee, which they spent locally to feed and clothe their families, Oklahoma communities actively competed to secure local Guard units during these years. In Clinton, the local field artillery unit had been established in 1927. By 1937 the unit included three officers and thirty enlisted men.<sup>17</sup>

The National Guard received only one-tenth of the War Department's budget in the interwar years, and equipment was surplus from World War I. Many units needed permanent training, drilling, and storage facilities, as Guard members were required to meet 48 drills per year. Units without permanent armories usually rented space in warehouses that often lacked proper security. Four hundred new armories created by the cooperative effort of the federal and local governments helped correct this serious deficiency.<sup>18</sup>

The new Clinton Armory provided permanent housing for the unit, which formerly had been housed in a building at the stock pavilion (fair grounds).<sup>19</sup> The new facility was more than adequate for the detachment's needs. The building was divided into areas serving specific functions. The entire north section housed the drill hall, comprising the stage and the drill floor. The front, or south, section, housed the arms vault, supply room, dressing room, classroom, offices, storage rooms, locker room, and garage. Underground, on the east side, beneath the stage, is a rifle range. Thus the building provided for virtually every training need, except for field training exercises.

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Due in large measure to the WPA armory-building program, the 45th Infantry Division was able to achieve a level of military efficiency and readiness that prepared it to be among the first four National Guard divisions federalized in late 1940 by President Roosevelt. After the United States entered World War II, the 45th saw action in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy.<sup>20</sup>

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The Clinton Armory exemplifies WPA military architecture in Oklahoma. In the mid-1930s two armory plans were developed by Major Bryan W. Nolen, an Oklahoma City architect and National Guard officer selected in 1935 to serve on the staff of WPA administrator Gen. William S. Key. Nolen's exterior design indicates the building's functions. He planned for every armory to have a drill hall section, usually having a high ceiling and either a barrel or a flat roof, and also a flat-roofed, single-story extension (office, garage, and arms storage section) on one or both sides, the number depending on the number of guard units (one, two, or four) to be housed in the building.<sup>21</sup> Design was flexible, allowing for the orientation of the building to various avenues of egress or size of property. The WPA preferred to use locally purchased building materials, and therefore armories were constructed of native stone, usually quarried locally, or brick, manufactured within the state, as was the case with the Clinton Armory.

WPA architectural philosophy prohibited ornate features, intricate structure, and elaborate trim; therefore, WPA armories tend to be straightforwardly utilitarian. They have a strong horizontal massing which is often relieved only by vertical Art Deco detailing or by virtue of being a provincial interpretation of a romantic high style, such as Tudor.<sup>22</sup> The massive pilasters topped with cast-concrete, pediment-shaped caps, the concrete panels over the windows, and the stepped parapet and stepped panel over the entrance, are vertical Art Deco touches that lighten the otherwise military, medieval appearance of the Clinton Armory. Overall appearance and detailing reflect the skills of designers and the minimal funding for and materials, as well as the use of unskilled and skilled labor. The WPA armories, as exemplified by the Clinton facility, may not be architectural masterpieces, but they served the WPA's purpose--to make work, and to provide secure space for national defense units. WPA armories exemplify the New Deal's practical determination to "do something--and do something now." As David Baird notes in his survey of WPA structures of Oklahoma, WPA buildings are "the architecture of the poor," "mute reminders of the emotional distress and physical pain many Oklahomans suffered during the 1930s and of the enlightened relief effort by the federal government that alleviated much of the suffering."<sup>23</sup> The armory is one of six WPA structures remaining in Clinton, and it is the town's only example of military-style architecture. In type, style, scale, materials, and workmanship, WPA armories, of which the Clinton Armory is a fine example, are unique when compared to the rest of the built environment.

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ENDNOTES

1. C. Roger Lambert, "Dust, Farmers, and the Federal Government," Hard Times in Oklahoma: The Depression Years, ed. K. E. Hendrickson, Jr. (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1983), 71-72, 78-79, 81; W. David Baird, "Final Report: WPA Structures Thematic Survey (Phase III)," Stillwater, Okla: Oklahoma State University, 1987), 5; Guthrie (Oklahoma) Daily Leader, July 9, 1935.
2. Baird, "Final Report," 10; "Final Report of the Oklahoma Work Projects Administration, February 27, 1943," Archives of the Work Projects Administration and Predecessors, 1933-1943. Series One: The Final State Reports, 1943 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives, 1987), 1; "Building Construction Report, February, 1943," *ibid.*, 5-6; Daily Oklahoman, March 12, 1943.
3. "Questions and Answers on the WPA [brochure]," (Washington, D.C.: Work Projects Administration, December 1, 1939), Vertical File, Oklahoma Historical Society; Baird, "Final Report," 11; Kingfisher (Oklahoma) Times, July 9, 1936.
4. Guthrie (Oklahoma) Daily Leader, June 23, 1935; *ibid.*, November 13, 1935; Daily Oklahoman, September 12, 1937.
5. "Accomplishments: Works Progress Administration for Oklahoma, July 1, 1935-March 1, 1937," (Oklahoma City: Works Progress Administration, 1937), 38; "Building Construction Report," 5-6.
6. John W. Morris, "The Smaller Towns," Cities of Oklahoma, ed. John W. Morris (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1979), 11, 16; "History of Custer and Washita Counties, 1883-1937," (Clinton, Okla.: Clinton Daily News, 1937), 6, 13.
7. Daily Oklahoman, September 29, 1935; Clinton Daily News, November 10, 1935; Daily Oklahoman, September 12, 1937.
8. Clinton Daily News, July 28, 1935; *ibid.*, July 31, 1935; *ibid.*, September 19, 1935; *ibid.*, October 30, 1935; *ibid.*, February 14, 1937.
9. *Ibid.*, October 30, 1935-September 15, 1936; WPA Project No. 154, "Index to Reference Cards for Work Projects Administration Project Files, 1935-1942," (Washington, D.C.: WPA, c. 1942), Micro T-935, reel 54.
10. Clinton Daily News, January 23, 1936; *ibid.*, September 15, 1936.
11. *Ibid.*, February 14, 1937.

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12. Ibid., March 8, 1937.
13. Ibid., September 6, 1935; *ibid.*, October 17, 1935; *ibid.*, December 2, 1935; *ibid.*, January 7, 1936; January 14, 1936; *ibid.*, March 8, 1937; Arapaho (Oklahoma) Bee, June 3, 1937; WPA Project No. 154, "Index to Reference Cards."
14. Clinton Daily News, June 14, 1936.
15. "Accomplishments," 44; Historical Annual: National Guard of the State of Oklahoma, 1938 (Baton Rouge, La.: Army and Navy Publishing Company, 1938), 176-77.
16. Guy Nelson, Thunderbirds: A History of the 45th Infantry Division (Oklahoma City: 45th Infantry Division Association, 1970), 6-9; Kenny Franks, Citizen Soldiers: Oklahoma's National Guard (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 38, 40, 49.
17. Historical Annual, 176-77; Clinton Daily News, August 5, 1936.
18. Nelson, Thunderbirds, 6-9; Franks, Citizen Soldiers, 38, 40.
19. Clinton Daily News, March 14, 1937.
20. Nelson, Thunderbirds, 12.
21. "Accomplishments," 38, 40; Historical Annual, 18.
22. Final Report on the WPA Program, 1935-43 (Washington, D.C.: G. P. O., c. 1943), 52; Baird, "Final Report," 15, 21, 23.
23. *Ibid.*, 17; *ibid.*, 2.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

This property consists of Lots 17 (seventeen), 18 (eighteen), 19 (nineteen), 20 (twenty), and 21 (twenty-one) of Block 8 (eight), Lancaster's Addition to the City of Clinton, Custer County, a property measuring approximately 165 north-south by 155 east-west.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

These are the boundaries of the property as legally recorded in Book 58, page 179, Deed Records, Custer County.