1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: DANCING RABBIT CREEK TREATY SITE

Other Name/Site Number: *Chukfi Ahila Bok* (Choctaw for Dancing Rabbit Creek)

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: Not for publication: N/A

City/Town: Macon Vicinity: X

State: MS County: Noxubee Code: 103 Zip Code:

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:	X	Building(s):	___
Public-Local:	___	District:	___
Public-State:	X	Site:	X
Public-Federal:	___	Structure:	___
		Object:	___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
1	1	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	1	objects
1	2	Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ 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 ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ Entered in the National Register
___ Determined eligible for the National Register
___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
___ Removed from the National Register
___ Other (explain):

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	GOVERNMENT	Sub:	
Current:	LANDSCAPE	Sub:	Forest
	RECREATION		Monument/Marker
	FUNERARY		Cemetery

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: N/A

MATERIALS:
Foundation:
Walls:
Roof:
Other:

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

SITE TYPE

The Dancing Rabbit Creek Treaty Site is located on dissected upland and is adjacent to the floodplain of Dancing Rabbit Creek (in Choctaw--Chukfi Ahila Bok). A Choctaw council house, which served as a meeting place for the Northeast District, also known as the Lower Choctaw, for an unknown period before 1830, was built at the site prior to the treaty deliberations.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Most of the site is currently in pine timberland (see Figure 1). At the time of the treaty, the area around the council house, according to Henry S. Halbert (1837-1916), the noted historian of the Choctaw, was in

> ...open forest, with no underbrush, as was the case in all Indian countries in the olden time, owing to the periodical custom of firing the woods, so as to destroy the undergrowth and produce a luxuriant growth of native grasses. The council ground where the treaty made and signed was well shaded with pines, oaks, and mulberry trees [Halbert 1902:374].

Today there are no buildings extant at the site, only a granite historical marker and a Choctaw cemetery. The historical marker was erected by the Bernard Romans Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) in 1928 to commemorate the treaty. Within ten years of the erection of the marker, a small band of Choctaw who resided in the area under the leadership of Chief Cameron Wesley began to bury their dead adjacent to the marker, probably because of the meaning that the site held for them. During the 1930s and 1940s this group of Choctaw often gathered and camped together at the Dancing Rabbit Creek site. Today the monument is surrounded by the Choctaw cemetery which includes at least forty graves (see Photos 1 and 2).

Just 100 yards east of the historical marker is the natural spring associated with the treaty site. This spring was the natural feature Herbert S. Halbert used to locate the treaty site area (1902:373). Jack Elliot, Historical Archaeologist with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, reports that the spring is still flowing, but erosion has filled in part of the spring area (personal communication, 1995).

HISTORICAL SETTING

The location of the DAR historical marker is based upon documentation provided by Halbert, who taught at the Catholic Mission School (1884-85), and was from 1888 to 1899 Superintendent of Mississippi State Choctaw schools (Blitz 1985:24). In 1902, Halbert published an article entitled "Story of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit," which is the major historical description of the treaty. In this article, he described the location of the treaty site in reference to Dancing Rabbit spring which is still extant, basing his location upon oral sources who had either witnessed the treaty signing or who had known people who had witnessed it (Halbert 1902:373-374).

Undoubtedly the existence of Dancing Rabbit spring was an important factor in the Choctaws' decision to locate a council house and grounds here, making it an important ceremonial place for a people who lived in dispersed settlements at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Additionally, numerous trails converged on the site, most notably the Six Towns Trail, a major north-south route that passed immediately by the spring and connected the Choctaw with the Chickasaw nation. Halbert notes that this trail was used by Tecumseh and his Shawnee warriors in the early fall of 1811 when they passed through Choctaw lands (1902:374-375).

DAR MARKER AND CHOCTAW CEMETERY

In 1928, the Bernard Romans Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution erected a granite historical marker at the site of the treaty signing. At approximately this time, a small group of Choctaws moved into the area to work as sharecroppers on local cotton farms. Their association with the site, although far from being completely understood, provides an interesting epilogue to the site's history.

Led by Chief Cameron Wesley, the group of about fifty Choctaws was organized as a separate sociopolitical entity with its own "Big Chief" (Wesley), "Little Chief," and "Queen." During the 1930s, and to an undetermined time into the 1940s, these Choctaw gathered periodically at the treaty site to camp, dance, and play stickball. Additionally, when one Frasier, a member of the group, died in the late 1930s, he was buried adjacent to the historical markers, as was Evein Tubbee, another member of the group who was killed by Wesley in 1940. As a result of the homocide, Chief Wesley was brought to trial in the Noxubee County (Mississippi) Courthouse and acquitted. However, according to Choctaw custom, he additionally had to stand trial under his own people. The trial was held on September 15, 1940, at the treaty site adjacent to the granite historical marker and Tubbee's grave, with Chief Wesley being acquitted (Hubert Wesley interview; Frost 1940a; 1940b).

Although the treaty site was apparently not used for long as a gathering place after 1940, it did continue to be used as a Choctaw cemetery. In 1972, Chief Wesley was buried there among the other members of his tribe. His son Barney later recalled that

> ...he told us he wanted to be buried here. He said he wanted to spend the rest of time at this treaty ground ...he wouldn't give up. He felt like it was Choctaw land anyway, even if the white people said they owned it [Wolfe 1987:11].

Furthermore, Barney elaborated that his father remained at Dancing Rabbit so that "other people would remember" (Wolfe 1987:11).

SITE INTEGRITY

In general, the site has preserved its integrity by virtue of its retaining a rural appearance. There are no surface remains of the Choctaw council house that once stood on the treaty site.

The only noncontributing resources are the DAR monument and the twentieth century Choctaw graves (see Photos 1 and 2).

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide:___ Locally:___

Applicable National Register Criteria: A X B___ C___ D___

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A___ B___ C___ D___ E___ F___ G___

NHL Criteria: 1

NHL Theme [1987]:

V. POLITICAL & MILITARY AFFAIRS, 1783-1860
G. Jacksonian Democracy

I. CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS: INDIGENOUS AMERICAN POPULATIONS
D. Ethnohistory of Indigenous American Populations
3. Varieties of Early Conflict, Conquest, or Accommodation
b. Forced and Voluntary Populations Movements
1. The Establishment of Indian Territory

NHL Theme [1994]:

I. PEOPLING PLACES
5. Ethnic Homelands
6. Encounters, Conflicts, & Colonization

Areas of Significance: Ethnic Heritage↳Native American
Politics/Government

Period(s) of Significance: N/A

Significant Dates: 1830

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: Choctaw

Architect/Builder: N/A

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

SUMMARY

At Dancing Rabbit Creek, a traditional gathering place of the Choctaw people, on September 27, 1830, an infamous treaty was signed for the removal of the Choctaw people from their homeland. This treaty was the most important of the pacts between the United States and the Choctaw as it resulted in the removal of a large part of the tribe from their traditional Southeastern homeland in present-day Mississippi. The significance of the site arises from its association with the signing of the Dancing Rabbit Creek Treaty, which served as a model for treaties of removal with the Chickasaw, Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole tribes. The treaty led to the extinguishing of all Choctaw title to land east of the Mississippi River owned by the Choctaw nation. It also led to the opening of a vast territory to American settlement that is now occupied by more than twenty-four Mississippi counties and by portions of counties in Alabama.

BACKGROUND TO THE DANCING RABBIT CREEK TREATY

So little archeological field work has been accomplished in the east-central and southeastern part of Mississippi, the traditional homeland of the Choctaw (see Figure 1), that it is difficult to assign a prehistoric ancestry to the Choctaw. However, in the winter of 1540, when the De Soto expedition traversed the Tombigbee region of present day Mississippi,

> ...the expedition encountered late Mississippian societies living in fortified villages. Recognizably Choctaw words are mentioned in the [De Soto expedition] narratives. In particular, one native group is referred to as Paffallaya or Apafalay, a corruption of "long hair" in Choctaw. The Choctaw were referred to by this name as late at the 1720s because the custom of wearing their hair long distinguished them from other groups [Blitz 1985:23].

By ca. A.D. 1700, the complex Mississippian chiefdoms that once controlled this area had "collapsed and formed the more egalitarian social systems of historically known groups such as the Choctaw" (Blitz 1985:23). According to John Blitz,

> Most explanations of this case of "de-evolution" stress the introduction of European diseases, which precipitated a drastic decline in native populations. This may have been the catalyst that aggravated destabilizing weaknesses inherent in complex chiefdoms and forced a shift in the economic system upon which the society was based [Blitz 1985:23].

This lack of a paramount chief, or confederacy of chiefs, made it difficult for European colonial governments to deal with the Choctaw as a whole. Power was held by a "number of simple [village] chiefdoms, known in Choctaw as *okla* ("people") (Blitz 1985:8). The *okla* chief, called *mingo*, was assisted in governing by a council of chiefs,

honored men, and warriors, and the *okla mingo* was in most cases actually chosen by the council, so he could only direct policy by persuasion rather than by force, as the *okla mingo's* decisions were non-binding on tribal members (Blitz 1985:9).

In 1702, the French established their first town site near the Gulf Coast at Old Mobile. Their primary security concern were the English colonists out of South Carolina who had already begun arming the tribes neighboring the Choctaw. Governor Iberville requested Henri de Tonti to undertake a mission to secure peace between the Choctaws and Chickasaws and ally them to the French. By the time Iberville arrived at Mobile in March of 1702, de Tonti had achieved the goal of negotiating a peace between these two powerful southeastern tribes. Unfortunately for the French, the loose organization of the Choctaw defeated their imperial designs.

> The French found it difficult to deal with the Choctaw because of their lack of a centralized government. They attempted to impose a hierarchical structure on a native political system that they did not fully comprehend. The French selected existing pro-French *okla* leaders as recipients of large silver medals.... The leadership status of these individuals was further reinforced by the French practice of awarding them trade goods and presents for redistribuition. This practice of co-opting native leaders was initiated in lieu of an attempt to subjugate the Choctaw political system entirely, for the French were not capable of doing this... the French were generally unsuccessful in forcing the Choctaw to act in unison. The French failed to consistently provide the Choctaw with adequate trade goods and to check the influence of the English, but their inability to understand the autonomous and decentralized nature of the *okla* system was perhaps their greatest weakness [Blitz 1985:15-16].

During the eighteenth century, the Choctaws, like many other Southeastern tribes, became closely affiliated with the market economies of the French, Spanish, and English colonies leading to changes in their society.

> One of the basic causes of this change was participation in a market economy through the deer hide trade. In exchange for hides the Choctaw gained access to trade goods upon which they became increasingly dependent. Many aspects of the traditional material culture were discarded. The musket was adopted so rapidly that after one generation the young men no longer knew how to hunt with the bow [Blitz 1985:18].

The Choctaw also raised European domesticated plants and animals to trade with the colonists, and were noted for their "excellence in agriculture and trade" (Clark & Guice 1989:19).

By the beginning of the fourth quarter of the eighteenth century, the French and English colonial empires in the Southeast were eliminated leaving only the Spanish in Florida, Louisiana, and the Gulf Coast and the newly created United States as trading partners to the Southeastern tribes.

...the Spanish licensed a British trading firm-Panton, Leslie, and Company-to operate out of Pensacola after Spain reoccupied West Florida during the American Revolution. Panton, Leslie, and Company dominated trade with the Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole Indians until the establishment of United States

> Government trading posts among the Creeks in 1795 and the Choctaw in 1802 [Clark & Guice 1989:11].

Initial relations between the United States and the Choctaw were cordial, as many of the village *mingos* were already pro-French and Spanish. Therefore, as a result of French and Spanish assistance to the United States in the American Revolution, Americans enjoyed the good will of many of the Choctaw *okla mingos* (Clark & Guice 1989:23).

After the war, the United States adopted a policy of establishing peaceful relations and trading alliances with the Southeastern tribes through treaties. The first treaty between the United States and the Choctaw was the Hopewell Treaty, negotiated on the Keowee River in South Carolina, in early 1786. Under the provisions of the Hopewell Treaty "the Choctaw relinquished three plots six miles square ...for future American trading posts" (Clark & Guice 1989:24). The United States Choctaw trading post, or factory, was created at Fort St. Stephens in 1802 (Clark & Guice 1989:24).

> The purposes of the factory system were multifold: diplomatic in the elimination of foreign influence over the Indians; economic in the wresting of profitable trade from British merchants; military as a mechanism of control of the native population; and humane in the provision of goods that had become vitally necessary to the greatly altered Indian life style. Depending on priorities and conditions, various administrations emphasized different goals. The trade and intercourse acts provided a welcome relief from the abuses of private traders, but they never created a government monopoly. Throughout the twenty-seven-year life of the factory system it suffered from its temporary character and a rather limited capital structure. Generally, the factories were fairly and frugally managed [Clark & Guice 1989:26].

By 1800, trade and peaceful co-existence with the Southeastern tribes became less of a factor to the United States government. Under the Jeffersonian administration, the government began to negotiate treaties with these tribes to achieve cessions of land for land-hungry American frontiersmen. In December of 1801, at Fort Adams, in Natchez, Mississippi Territory,

> ...commissioners signed with Choctaw the second treaty of the Jefferson Administration by which the tribe ceded to the United States over 2.5 million acres in the southwestern corner of the Mississippi Territory. Rather than a diminution of their domain, however, this 1801 treaty merely formalized the lines of demarcation earlier agreed upon by the Choctaw and the British-lines forming the area long known as the Natchez District. In addition, the Treaty of Fort Adams granted the United States the right to open the southern portion of the Natchez Trace through the Choctaw nation. For these concessions Indian signatories received gifts valued at $2,000 [Clark & Guice:1989:31].

Another consideration of the Jefferson Administration was to acquire land cessions from the Southeastern tribes that would physically separate them from Spanish colonial

and British trading influences in Louisiana, Florida and the Gulf Coast. As a result, in 1802, 1803, and 1805, treaties were signed between the Choctaw and the United States at Fort Confederation, Fort St. Stephens, and Mount Dexter, respectively, to achieve this separation. The Mount Dexter Treaty diminished the southern Choctaw domain by over 5 million acres (Clark & Guice 1989:32, 36).

The next round of treaties with the Choctaw occurred ten years later as the tide of American immigration into the Alabama and Mississippi Territory raised demands for further land concessions from the Southeastern tribes. At that time,

> Immigrants settling in Mississippi during the years 1815-1819 could legally settle only in three areas: (1) on a strip of land in the southern part of the state, (2) east of the Tombigbee along the Alabama line, and (3) in the Natchez District [Clark & Guice 1989:165].

The area "east of the Tombigbee along the Alabama line" was part of a land concession negotiated by Andrew Jackson and John Coffee in the fall of 1816 with the Choctaw, Cherokee, and Chickasaw (see Figure 2) (Clark & Guice 1989:237). These concessions were negotiated shortly after the defeat of the Creeks at Horseshoe Bend (1814), and the signing of the Fort Jackson Treaty by which the Creeks had conceded most of their homeland to the United States, so Jackson and Coffee had little difficulty convincing "the Choctaws to cede the balance of their lands east of the Tombigbee" (Clark & Guice 1989:238).

By 1820, pressure from American settlers to open up more Choctaw lands was mounting once again. Andrew Jackson returned as the chief negotiator for the United States, along with General Thomas Hinds. This time interest was in the strip of land along the eastern side of the Mississippi River owned by the Choctaw (see Figure 2). Jackson and Hinds proposed to trade this Choctaw land for land to the west along the Red River, in present day Oklahoma and Arkansas (Clark & Guice 1989:241).

> The Choctaw, however, opposed both cession and/or exchange of land. Two of the elder chiefs, Mushulatubbee and Pushmataha, eloquently explained their predicament. "If a man should give one-half his garment, the remainder would be of no use; and take two fingers from the hand, the remainder would be of little use. When we had land to spare, we gave it, with very little talk." Now they had no land to spare [Clark & Guice 1989:241].

In the end, Jackson "threatened their nation with military destruction" and the Choctaw signed the Treaty of Doak's Stand on October 18, 1820 (Clark & Guice 1989:242). The 1820 concession amounted to 5 million acres, or about one-third of the Choctaw lands to the east of the Mississippi (see Figure 2). The Arkansas portion of their new land west of the Mississippi was already settled by American frontiersmen, making that land worthless to the Choctaw. The Doak's Stand Treaty set the stage for the next treaty, which would see the removal of most of the Choctaw from their ancestral home (Clark & Guice 1989:243).

DANCING RABBIT CREEK TREATY

Following his victory in the election of 1828, President Andrew Jackson moved quickly to redeem his campaign pledge to remove the southeastern tribes to lands beyond the Mississippi. To achieve this purpose, he appointed two Commissioners John H. Eaton, former Secretary of War, and Colonel John Coffee, who had negotiated, with Jackson, the 1816 land concession, and instructed them simply to "fail not to make a treaty" for the remaining Choctaw lands in Mississippi (see Figure 2) (Halbert 1902:375).

In rapidly adopting an Anglo-American lifestyle, the Choctaw had come to be known as a "civilized" tribe. However, their hope of surviving by adapting to a new culture was about to be dashed. Following the examples set by the states of Georgia and Alabama, the Mississippi Legislature passed an Indian confiscatory act and by an act of January 11, 1830, attempted to extend state jurisdiction over Choctaw lands, abolish tribal government, and made it a criminal offense to excercise any authority as a tribal official. This legislation presented a real hardship for the Choctaw since they had evolved their own system of law and moral codes, having adopted their own western style constitution in 1826.

From three to six thousand Choctaw assembled and encamped, mostly along the Big Rabbit branch of Dancing Rabbit Creek. They were led by their Chiefs Greenwood LeFlore, Mushulatubbee, and Nittakechi. Another prominent Choctaw, Hopaii Iskitini ("Little Leader"), a friend of Gaines, was present, along with the interpreter, John Pitchlynn, who was married to a Choctaw (Halbert 1902:375-376).

The commissioners arrived at Dancing Rabbit Creek on September 15, 1830, and took up headquarters at the house of Hartwell Hardaway. General George S. Gaines, the appointed contractor for provisions, had already set up his tent and installed the beef pen and supply depot. Every day cattle were butchered and rations issued to the Choctaw (Halbert 1902:375).

The whites were encamped at random, mostly below the spring. Many rowdies, gamblers, and barkeepers, ready for easy pickings, invaded the arena. They set up gambling tables and encouraged betting among the Choctaws and whites (Halbert 1902:377). One observer noted the dangerous elements at the treaty site,

> ...two noted desperadoes, Red-headed Bill and Black-headed Bill McGrew, were there and bullied all on ground by kicking over the tables [Halbert 1902:377].

The dissipation was not conducive to the calm deliberation needed in negotiations. Additionally, Indian dances were protracted throughout the night. Mixed strangely with the revelry and amusement were the solemn imprecations of the Christian Choctaw under David Folsom. They matched the hoopla with a continuous round of religious services, preaching, praying, and hymn-singing deep into the night. The missionaries from Mayhew Mission attempted to attend the gathering to represent the Choctaw interests, but were turned down by the treaty commissioners who claimed that only the Choctaw were allowed to attend the treaty. This claim was made despite

the various elements that attended for no purpose other than personal gain (Halbert 1902:377-378).

The journal of the Treaty Commissioners noted that the treaty deliberations took place "at the council house," suggesting a location either inside or in the immediate proximity of the building. Halbert, however, describes the deliberations as taking place outside with the participants sitting on logs. Since there were seventy or more participants and an unknown number of onlookers, it was probably impossible to hold such deliberations inside, so presumably they took place outside but in close proximity to the council house. It is conceivable that meetings with a smaller attendance may in fact have been held inside the council house (Halbert 1902:378).

During negotiations on the proposed treaty, it was pointed out by the Choctaw that the Treaty of Doak's Stand (1820) had promised the continuing integrity of their land. Now, however,

> ...the Commissioners at Dancing Rabbit, in their opening talk very imperatively told them that they must give up one country or the other. And that if they refused to remove from Mississippi, the government would give away their western country to some other tribe that wanted it [Halbert 1902:380].

This was another case of the Federal government failing to adhere to its Indian policy as expressed in previous treaties. The Choctaw had thought themselves secure in their remaining land and were overwhelmingly against removal.

On September 22, the Commissioners presented the articles of the treaty for consideration by the Choctaws. Only one Choctaw present, Killihota, spoke in favor of accepting the articles (Halbert 1902:384). The majority opinion was presented by Little Leader, who stated,

> ...he would neither sell nor leave the home of his fathers and that he would go away and gather his warriors for the protection of the homes of his people. The white man had neither justice nor gratitude, but wanted to strip the red man of all his lands and move him across the Mississippi to strange hunting grounds where wood and water were both scarce. The Choctaws had already sold all their lands on the east side of the Tombigbee to the white man, but now he wanted to get possession of all their other lands, and to move them to a strange country unknown to their fathers. And even should the Choctaws consent to sell the hunting grounds of their fathers, the time would come, when the white man would want to get hold of their new hunting grounds and to move the Choctaws once more. Our fathers and our children are buried in our present hunting grounds, and the graves of their fathers are dear to the heats of the Choctaws; we love our hunting grounds more than the white man loves his country, and we do not wish to be driven away from them. Any chief who may sign a treaty selling our country is a traitor and should suffer death. I go home to prepare my people to fight for our

> homes and the graves of our fathers [Halbert 1902:385].

On the next day, September 23rd, only Killihota voted for acceptance of the treaty. The Commissioners then said, as the Choctaws had refused the terms of the United States, "they could remain where they were and live under the laws of Mississippi" and with this threat and threatened military action closed the council for the day (Halbert 1902:388).

From September 24th to September 26th, the majority of the Choctaws, including those *okla mingos* most opposed to the treaty, had left the council grounds and returned to their homes (Halbert 1902:390). During this time the Commissioners turned to three district chiefs who were in favor of the treaty, Greenwood LeFlore, Nittakechi, and Mushulatubbee. The Commissioners met with these men on September 25th, and amended the treaty to give each of them four sections of land and an annuity of $250 a year (Clark & Guice 1989:247). Following a reading of the treaty,

> ...the three chiefs and others of the principal men addressed the council, and urged the acceptance of the terms which were offered. The council then broke up [Halbert 1902:393].

On September 27, most of the Indians, having declared their intentions not to accept the terms, left the treaty grounds and headed for home. Accounts vary as to what happened next. Most of the chiefs and warriors had departed when Greenwood LeFlore, one of the principal chiefs, and his followers who had remained, signed the treaty after the addition of article fourteen, which gave the Choctaw an option of remaining as citizens of the United States and owning land as individuals rather than collectively as in the tribal system. News of this act reached those Indians who had started for home, and they returned in a violent mood, calling Leflore and his followers traitors. They were convinced to sign, however, when the terms of article fourteen were adequately explained to them. Another account, given by Gen. George Gaines, simply states that the principal chiefs and a few of the interior chiefs were prevailed upon by Maj. John Eaton, one of the commissioners, to stay, while the main force of Indians left for home. Somehow those who stayed were persuaded to sign. General Gaines felt that they were probably corrupted with various bribes, including special considerations in land allotments (Halbert 1902:395-398).

At any rate, the treaty was finally signed by a majority of the Indian leaders present, although this was probably accomplished through trickery, bribery, and threats. Few would have signed but for the inclusion of article fourteen, which clearly gave the Choctaw the right to remain if they so chose. This was not to be, however, since the agent assigned the task of legally recording the names of those who desired to stay, Col. William Ward, was unsympathetic, negligent, and a drunkard. In many cases, he simply refused to register the applicants. In other instances, he would loan the book, containing the signatures of those he did allow to register, to those known to be hostile to the provisions of article fourteen. As a result of Ward's outrageous behavior, only sixty-nine names were submitted of the thousands who wanted to stay. Many of those who did stay were soon homeless, driven from their homes by land-hungry settlers (Clark & Guice 1989).

Those who elected to emigrate experienced great hardships and disappointments. Another major article of the treaty, article sixteen, promising, in effect, a safe and pleasant journey, was not much better adhered to than article fourteen, although in this case at least part of the problem was simple inefficiency and lack of planning. The United States government had had no previous experience in such large scale removals.

> The Choctaw, who had signed the model removal treaties of Doak's Stand and Dancing Rabbit Creek, were the first to vacate their ancestral lands. Though most of them emigrated with government supervision and assistance, approximately one thousand members of the tribe made their way independently to the Indian Territory. The first official Choctaw emigration was organized under the direction of George Gibson, commissary general of the U.S. Army. His careful logistical preparation was negated by the bickering and incompetence of civilian agents and army officers in the field. The resulting delays caused the first group of emigres to suffer terribly from the unusually harsh winter of 1831-32. Gibson kept out civilian agents from the two subsequent removals, which proceeded more smoothly, but disruptive bureaucratic bungling and the 1832 cholera epidemic in Mississippi created much panic and pain. When the dreadful process ended, some 12,500 Choctaw were settled in the Indian Territory. Approximately 600 of the tribe remained in Mississippi [Clark & Guice 1989:248].

The major removals of Choctaws occurred in 1831-1833. Some idea of the total effect of this removal may be gained from the fact that the Choctaw population had decreased from around 20,000 in 1831 before the removal began to 12,690 in 1843.

The impact of the opening of the Choctaw lands to American settlement was dramatic. Soon after the treaty signing, government surveyors appeared and began to lay out the lines of townships and sections. With the establishment of the survey system, land could be conveniently sold in government land offices. There was a subsequent boom in land sales, for the area was grabbed up by both land speculators and freeholders alike. Thousands of people moved into the area to establish farms and plantations. To organize this new population politically, the Mississippi Legislature created fifteen new counties in December 1833. The county governments were soon in the process of establishing county seat towns and networks of new roads. By the end of the decade following the signing of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, the settlement landscape had been completely transformed.

Dancing Rabbit Creek was one of the five major treaties, all signed during the 1830s, that ceded the last land claims east of the Mississippi River of the five "civilized tribes" -- Chickasaw, Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole (see Figure 4). All of the treaties precipitated similar ambivalent results in the form of the cheating and the removal of the Indians followed by land surveys, sales, immigration, and the birth of new settlements and local governments, so that by the end of the decade Andrew Jackson's goal of removal had largely been fulfilled.

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1987 Something Tells Me This Feeling About the Land is the Old Choctaw Religion: The Persistence of Choctaw Culture in Mississippi Since 1830. In: *Persistence of Pattern in Mississippi Choctaw Culture*, P.C. Black (editor), Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi, pp. 10-27.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
X Previously Listed in the National Register: April 3, 1973
___ 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:

X State Historic Preservation Office: Mississippi
X Other State Agency: State of Mississippi
Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks
P.O. Box 451, Jackson, Mississippi 39205
___ Federal Agency
___ Local Government
___ University
X Other (Specify Repository): Rex Timber Company
P.O. Box 659
Belk, Alabama 35443

Georgia-Pacific Corporation
P.O. Box 309
Louisville, Mississippi 39339
(601) 773-9211

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 40 Acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing
A 16 336140 3653750
B 16 336140 3653340
C 16 335750 3653340
D 16 335750 3653750

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundaries of the property are a square with each side being 1320 feet in length and

oriented to the cardinal directions. The center of the square is the Daughters of the American Revolution historical marker.

Boundary Justification:

If one considers all of the sites of the camps of the whites and the Indians and the livestock corrals as being part of the Dancing Rabbit Creek Treaty site, then the total area would be approximately a square mile. This nomination, however, includes only the central part of the site, that is the site of the treaty deliberations and signing, the council house, and Dancing Rabbit spring. The spring is, as noted, visible today. For the treaty itself, the Daughters of the American Revolution marker, which was located on the basis of Halbert's identification, is the best site indicator. The council house location has not been established but was certainly very close by, as noted above in the discussion of significance. The 1320 feet square boundary with the marker at the center is sufficiently large that one can say with a high degree of confidence that all three major components of the site have been enclosed within the boundaries.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Jack D. Elliot, Jr.
Historical Archeologist
Mississippi Department of Archives and History
Cobb Institute of Archaeology
P.O. Drawer AR
Mississippi State, Mississippi 39762
Telephone: 601/325-7892
Date: April 1994

Revised by: Mark R. Barnes, Ph.D.
Senior Archeologist
National Park Service, SERO
75 Spring Street, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
Telephone: 404/331-2638