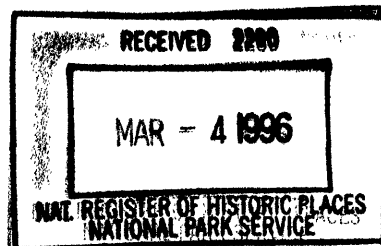


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form



☒ New Submission ☐ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.) Resources in Lincoln County, Oklahoma

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

The Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.) in Lincoln County, Oklahoma, 1935-1943

C. Form Prepared by

name/title William Bryans, Oklahoma Preservation Survey, Dept. of History
Cynthia Smelker, State Historic Preservation Office

street & number Oklahoma State University telephone (405) 744-8183

city or town Stillwater state OK zip code 74078-0611

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D. Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Blake Wade
Signature and title of certifying official

1 March 1996
Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO
State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

April 4, 1996
Date

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Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

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SECTION E: STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS

Summary

The "Great Depression" of the 1930s devastated economic and social conditions nationwide. Oklahoma, heavily dependent on agriculture and oil for economic survival, suffered bitterly through the decade-long depression. Particularly hard hit were Oklahoma's more rural counties, such as Lincoln County. Reliant on the devastated industries of agriculture and oil, these counties lost residents at a tremendous rate. Those who stayed were frequently in need of local, state and national relief efforts to subsist. To combat unprecedented national unemployment and widespread social devastation, the Roosevelt Administration enacted numerous social welfare programs. Many of these programs, such as the Works Progress Administration (WPA), sought to employ the jobless in meaningful work. Work relief was an important tool used by the New Deal Era government to meet the challenge of providing assistance to the millions in need without resorting to the "dole", which many felt degraded the morale of American workers and society. The WPA, aimed specifically at employing the jobless on worthwhile public work projects, was particularly effective in aiding the economy from its establishment in 1935 to its termination in 1943. WPA projects through the payment of wages and purchase of materials had the immediate effect of aiding destitute families, as well as bolstering the local, state and national economies through the latter half of the Great Depression. The WPA also contributed a major boost to Oklahoma's educational and local government efforts. The buildings constructed by the WPA provided necessary, improved facilities for thousands of children and many local governments. Furthermore, these buildings exhibit certain unifying architectural characteristics which make them uniquely identifiable.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Located in the north central part of the state, Lincoln County was originally part of the Creek Indian Nation. In 1866 due to their affiliation with the Confederacy during the Civil War, the Creeks were forced to surrender 3.25 million acres. The Sac and Fox, Kickapoo, Pottawatomie and Iowa tribes were then given title to the land. The majority of the county, comprised of portions of the Sac and Fox and Iowa Indian reservations, opened to non-Native American settlement on 22 September 1891 with a land run. The 1895 land run, opening the Kickapoo reservation to Euro-American settlement, completed the formation of the county.

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Growth within the county was fairly rapid. By Oklahoma statehood in 1907, Lincoln County boasted a population of 37,293. However, within three years, the county declined by over 2500 residents, falling to 34,779. The population expanded by 679 residents over the following decade, reaching a total of 35,406 residents in 1920. The population dropped by 1,668 over the next decade, bringing the 1930 county population to 33,738. At that time, approximately eighty-nine percent of the county population was Euro-American with African-Americans comprising ten percent. The number of county residents fell significantly during the ensuing decade to 29,529. For the first time, Lincoln County population was below thirty thousand. County population continued to fall until 1960, when the low of 18,783 was reached.¹

Predominately a rural county, Chandler, the county seat, served also as the primary town in Lincoln County. Due to inadequate transportation means in the early years, numerous small post offices were established throughout the county to provide mail service to rural residents. The majority of these did not survive the oncoming transportation revolution of the early twentieth century. However by the mid-1930s, the county consisted of a total of twenty-three communities with a population of ten or more persons and seventeen communities with no identified population base. Of the twenty-three communities with a recognized population base, only Chandler had more than two thousand residents with 2,717 inhabitants in 1930. Other Lincoln County towns with populations over one thousand included Stroud, Prague and Davenport. The towns of Wellston, Meeker, Sparks, and Carney boasted over three hundred but under seven hundred residents according to the 1930 US Census. The communities of Tryon, Kendrick, Agra, Avery, Warwick and Merrick all had populations of between two hundred and three hundred citizens during the early 1930s. Parkland and Payson had nearly the identical number of residents with 126 and 125 respectively. The remaining Lincoln County villages of Midlothian, Wright, Rossville, Arlington, Willzetta and Partridge all had populations of under one hundred residents. Those communities with no perceived populations were Baker, Clematis, Churckaho, Dudley, Emsey, Gow, Handley, Hibson, Hilton, Keywest, Lewiston, Lowe, Lydia, Mallen, Sac and Fox Agency, Winn and Yant.²

Agriculture was the economic foundation of Lincoln County. Best suited to pasturage and cattle raising, county farmers also grew crops of cotton, corn, oats, wheat and forage. Oil related activity occurred in the county as early as 1905. Several small oil and natural gas pools were developed in the county, most importantly the Davenport, Sac and Fox, Chandler and Prague fields.³ Although not the site of a major oil or gas boom, wells continued to be drilled in Lincoln County throughout the 1930s.

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Like the rest of the nation, Lincoln County was significantly affected by the economic depression of the 1930s. Although the recession had been developing throughout the 1920s, especially within agricultural communities such as Lincoln County, it manifested itself largely with the 1929 Wall Street stock market crash. The Great Depression lasted for over ten years, resulting in prolonged massive unemployment and the worst depression in American history. Following the Wall Street collapse, the recession steadily grew for three years, culminating in 1932. While conditions did not improve after 1932, they ceased the marked downward spiral of the preceding years. The economic stimulus provided by President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal policies and wartime industries finally brought the country out of the depression by about the early 1940s.⁴

During the depression, both rural and urban areas suffered. Unemployment in urban areas created an unprecedented dependence on public welfare which city and state governments were unable to maintain. This inability to sustain urban families resulted in significant homelessness and malnutrition across the nation. Rural areas in the South and Midwest were doubly burdened, enduring not only economic hard times but also a decade-long drought. The "Dust Bowl" of the 1930s, comprising a line of states from the Dakotas to Texas including Oklahoma, devastated farming conditions. Due to declining domestic and foreign markets, overproduction of crops continued to lower farm good prices. Many farmers unable to make a living took to the road, searching for a more profitable future.⁵

As a predominately agricultural state, the depression particularly devastated Oklahoma. During the three year period of 1936 to 1938, 500 to 600 hours each year of "sun-obscuring dust" ravaged the southern plains. By 1939 due to drought conditions and erosion, it was estimated that twenty-five percent of Oklahoma's soil was lost to production. Furthering Oklahoma's agriculture crisis were the large number of tenant farmers in the state. In 1930, sixty-two percent of Oklahoma farmers were tenant farmers, representing the highest rate of tenancy in the Midwest. With no tangible ties to the land, tenant farmers were essentially a dispossessed people searching for sufficient economic means to subsist. Thus, they moved frequently and often lived at below poverty standards. Their plight was compounded during the depression years by the drought conditions which reduced farm incomes even further, leaving them with little choice but to resort to the relief system or migration out of Oklahoma.⁶

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Agriculture, however, was not the only industry in the state greatly impacted by the depression. The oil market, another major economic force in Oklahoma, collapsed as factories and mines shut down. The price of oil fell from a \$1.30 a barrel in 1930 to about a \$.01 per barrel in 1932. This resulted in the closing of wells at an unprecedented rate, 21,603 wells in 1931 alone. Statewide, oil and natural gas production fell by about thirty percent, a significant economic drop. Unemployment in the state was at an all-time high. By May 1936, 242,000 workers statewide were without jobs. Due to the inclement economic conditions, migration out of Oklahoma became so intense the term "Okie" became a popular name for the dispossessed workers searching for work in other states, particularly California. With local and state relief agencies increasingly strained beyond capability, the majority of counties in Oklahoma and nationwide were in need of some type of federal relief to alleviate chronic unemployment and its results.⁷

Due to its reliance on agriculture for economic mainstay, Lincoln County felt the impact of the Depression slightly earlier than more diversified, urban centers. In 1930, fifty-seven percent of all farms in the county were already tenant operated. This was an increase of eleven percent from the preceding decade. Furthermore, farm income in the county fell forty-four percent from 1920. Combined, this resulted in depressed economic conditions and large scale unemployment, which in turn created a large, displaced population without means of economic survival. By 1934, on the average, twenty-seven percent of the county was receiving relief. In October 1934 alone, approximately forty percent of the county benefitted from a combination of local, state and federal relief programs. This included direct, work, drought and commodity relief. Total county population declined from 33,738 in 1930 to 29,529 by 1940, representing a population decrease of over four thousand people, thirteen percent, in one decade.⁸

In efforts to stimulate the national economy and assist citizens in distress, President Roosevelt legislated twenty-nine different acts between 1933 and 1939. The bills were structured to sustain various parts of the economy. The majority of acts sought to provide some type of relief for the unemployed. The Federal Emergency Relief Act (FERA) of 1933 was one of the first bills to aid the destitute. This act channeled federal money to state and local agencies, which then dispensed the funds to impoverished families. Other than direct money, relief was dispensed under the auspices of the FERA in the form of limited work relief projects. These projects

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sought to preserve the dignity of the unemployed by allowing them to work for their money rather than receive an abhorrent hand out from the government. The work relief program under the FERA went through several stages of development. Early projects were essentially state projects which happened to use available FERA funds.

In late 1933, the Roosevelt Administration established the Federal Civil Works Authority (CWA) in response to the large scale unemployment still incapacitating the nation. The CWA was considered a separate organization from the FERA although the same people administered both programs with much collaboration in activity. While the CWA was in operation, however, the FERA work relief program was discontinued. Solely a federal program, the CWA employed the jobless in building various public construction projects. At its peak in January 1934, over four million people were employed. Intended only as an interim program, Roosevelt discontinued the CWA in March 1934 due to excessive cost and the fear of creating a permanent relief class.

The FERA took over for the terminated CWA, establishing the Emergency Work Relief Program to continue the work of the CWA by finishing its projects and undertaking new public works projects. Under the Emergency Work Relief Program, work relief projects fell largely in the jurisdiction of the state but with limited federal regulations. These regulations mandated that employment was granted through local relief agencies who determined need and pay scale; projects had to fall within broad FERA categories; the work had to meet certain federal regulations; and, all projects had to have a sponsor. Although effective in assisting the destitute for two years, the FERA ceased operation in May 1935. Critically, the FERA served as a model for subsequent work relief programs.⁹

The Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935 replaced the 1933 Federal Emergency Relief Act. Believing that "work rather than direct relief should be the keystone of Federal policy with respect to needy employables", the new act again authorized a program of federal relief employment. Roosevelt legislated the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in May 1935 to provide jobs for the unemployed. In 1939, the Federal Works Agency incorporated the Works Progress Administration, renaming it the Work Projects Administration. The WPA continued in operation until 1943, at which time the economic stimulus provided by the war time industries lessened the need for the WPA and the federal monies allocated to the WPA were required elsewhere.¹⁰

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During its eight year existence, the WPA worked on two principal types of projects: service projects and engineering and construction projects. Numerous projects of both categories were undertaken in Oklahoma. Service projects employed clerical, technical and professional workers of both sexes. Types of programs undertaken by the WPA as service projects included adult education, nursery schools, library services, recreation programs, museum projects, music projects, art programs, writers' projects, theater programs, research and public records projects, sewing projects, school lunch projects, among various other social service projects.¹¹

Engineering and construction projects, however, comprised the majority of WPA employment, about seventy-five percent until the spring of 1940. Construction projects were selected on the basis that they provided "useful work to the unemployed at a given time and place," the end result was of functional use to the community and that a sponsor be available. The construction of public utilities, recreation facilities, and public buildings account for about a third of all engineering and construction projects. Public utility projects included water and sewer systems and sewage disposal plants. Recreation facility projects primarily consisted of work undertaken on city parks. Public building projects involved WPA labor on education and recreation buildings, hospitals, military and naval buildings, prisons and state, county and city government buildings. Nationwide, the WPA constructed and improved numerous airports and airways, city halls, courthouses, libraries, community buildings, highways and streets, parks, cemeteries, armories, schools and natural resource conservation facilities as a part of their engineering and construction projects.¹²

The WPA work force was drawn from the unemployed living within the project area. Workers were qualified to work on WPA projects by the local Public Welfare Department, working through the National Reemployment Service. WPA employment was restricted to only one family member, usually the head of the family. Initially, the age requirement for workers was set at sixteen years, however, this was raised to a minimum of eighteen years in 1938. Although there was not a maximum age limit, agencies generally did not hire persons over sixty-five years of age due to their eligibility for Social Security. Congress made no restriction on the employment of non-US citizens during the first year of the WPA's existence. Following several acts which progressively restricted the employment of aliens by the WPA, in 1939, Congress prohibited the employment of aliens on WPA projects and each worker was required to sign an affidavit affirming their US citizenship. A hiring preference was not instituted until the ERA Act of 1937 which gave preference to the employment of veterans, which was reinforced in 1941 with

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the added requirement that the spouse of unemployed veterans and unmarried widows of veterans be given the same preference as veterans. Due to conflicting reasoning, preferential employment based on need was not instituted until 1939. At that time, the WPA established two types of needs: those with no income and those with insufficient income to exist at a subsistence level.¹³

The WPA paid a flat "security wage," which was slightly higher than direct relief payments but lower than comparable private employment pay. By 1937, the average pay in Oklahoma was thirty-six dollars a month for unskilled labor. Skilled and semi-skilled workers received higher wages depending on the skill required and the experience of the workman. During its first four years, the WPA offered continuous employment as available within the region. Subsequently, the WPA enforced an eighteen month ceiling on employment. However, the worker was eligible for reemployment after thirty days and a recertification of need.¹⁴

Although a federal work program, the WPA only facilitated public works projects nationwide. The WPA did not initiate or undertake projects by itself. WPA guidelines required that a "tax-supported public body" sponsor the project which had to result in a permanent and useful addition to the community. The sponsors could be federal, state or local agencies. The majority of projects were developed by county, city, town and village governments and agencies. The project sponsor provided partial monetary support, usually in the form of land and materials, as well as engineering and architectural plans and specifications. The WPA had no fixed percentage of the project cost which the individual sponsor was required to pay. On the average, the cost to the sponsoring agency fluctuated between twenty and thirty percent of the total cost. In addition, the sponsor completed the project if the WPA was unable to and maintained and operated the finished project. Ownership of the project belonged to the sponsor upon completion.¹⁵

The WPA handled the administration of the project and provided the majority of funds to meet wages. WPA regulations capped federal funds for any one project at about 52,000 dollars to avoid competition with other Depression era programs, especially the Public Works Administration (PWA). Another New Deal public works program, the PWA did not concern itself primarily with aiding the jobless as the WPA did; rather, the PWA's goal was to stimulate business. In order to circumvent this monetary restriction, WPA projects often received several rounds of funding under the guise of additions to the original project. Other projects, for a variety of reasons, also exceeded the WPA allowance. For example, Chandler High

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School in Lincoln County initially received a WPA allocation of nearly fifty thousand dollars. However, due to modifications to the original plan and a miscalculation by the architect on project costs, the high school required an additional WPA appropriation of nearly twenty thousand dollars in 1942 and nearly five thousand dollars the following year, bringing the total WPA allocation to almost seventy-five thousand dollars.¹⁶

WPA projects were designed to maximize the number of laborers and the length of employment. Thus, the maximum amount of relief was obtained through every project. To facilitate this goal, WPA workers labored continuously on every aspect of the project from clearing the site to manufacturing furnishings. In Oklahoma, the use of native stone for WPA buildings kept project costs low and employed many quarrying and dressing the stone for use. Other materials necessary, such as wood bracing and roof material, were usually obtained locally so as to stimulate the local economy as much as possible.

Nationally from its inauguration in 1935 to its termination in 1943, the WPA expended more than 10.75 billion dollars on a diversity of projects. An additional 2.8 billion dollars was provided by various sponsors on WPA projects. Almost eighty-nine percent of the WPA expenditure was used for wages, with seventeen percent of the sponsors' funds spent on labor costs. Approximately 8.5 million individuals nationwide benefitted from WPA employment at one time or another. At the peak of WPA employment in Oklahoma, January 1936, 94,821 persons were toiling on approved projects. By March 1937, 2,971 projects had been approved with 2,581 of those projects being undertaken by the WPA. Total, Oklahoma received over 185 million dollars from the WPA for a multitude of projects statewide. Sponsors statewide expended almost another sixty million dollars. Combined, the Oklahoma economy was boosted by over 232 million dollars in eight years. The projects represent an investment of more than 415 million hours of manpower earning a total of over 140 million dollars in wages for the state of Oklahoma.¹⁷

The infusion of this much-needed work and money into hard pressed communities relieved the pressure of the unemployed on local, state and national economies. The WPA undertook a number of projects in Lincoln County, including many service projects and about seventy-one engineering and construction projects. By 1937, the WPA expended over six hundred thousand dollars in Lincoln County with sponsors supplying over a hundred thousand dollars. In April 1937 alone, more than 694 men were employed on

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over twelve county-wide projects. Approximately 1550 needy county residents benefitted from WPA employment equaling over 1.6 million hours of work. In January 1940, there remained five hundred men eligible and registered for WPA work, evidence of the continuing need in the county. The WPA built and improved a profusion of farm-to-market roads, Tilghman Park in Chandler and several city sanitary systems. Working throughout the county, the WPA constructed over fifty-three school buildings, one town hall, the Chandler Armory and assorted warehouses.¹⁸

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The majority of WPA buildings in Oklahoma reflect a common identity unique to this New Deal era program. Through a similarity in certain, modest stylistic and structural characteristics, WPA buildings are easily distinguishable. WPA buildings usually exhibit a high level of craftsmanship, similarity in design and restrained use of stylistic features. Additionally, WPA buildings reflect an enduring rustic, functional fortitude compatible with the trying times of the Great Depression. These varied unifying characteristics can be loosely categorized as the WPA Standardized style.

Oklahoma WPA buildings frequently utilized native sandstone or limestone for construction material. The use of the native stone fulfilled two primary requirements of the WPA: critically, the stone was readily available at an affordable cost; and, use of the stone was highly labor intensive, thus elongating the length of employment available on the project and the number of workers needed. WPA workers procured the normally polychromatic stone from local quarries often opened especially for WPA projects. The native stone was used in both uncut and cut form. If utilized in cut form, the stone blocks were usually rusticated. If WPA crews could not readily obtain the native stone or sponsors were able to pay for other types of materials, construction materials of wood, brick or concrete were utilized. These types of building material, however, were relatively infrequently used in Oklahoma.¹⁹

Although the majority of workmen on WPA projects were unskilled, a high level of craftsmanship was frequently apparent. The use of native stone for construction material often required an intricate ability of stone masonry. The level of skill apparent in many buildings can be attributed to the underlying premise of the WPA -- extended employment. The WPA

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program, generally not hampered by oppressive deadlines, allowed the workmen time to improve their skill as the building took shape. Additionally, many WPA workmen developed a previously unrecognized aptitude for the work following employment on one or more buildings.

WPA buildings favored simplification in architectural style. This is partly due to the limited construction experience of many of the project laborers. Nonetheless, the simplification in stylistic features resulted in a rustic, functional style of building loosely categorized as the WPA Standardized style. Elimination of intricate structural designs, ornate architectural features and elaborate decoration were common attributes of WPA buildings.²⁰ Also identifiable were certain decorative details, such as round arched entrances, stone or red brick chimneys, ribbon windows, extended eaves, exposed rafters, chimney pots and quoins. In the WPA Standardized style, however, utilization of only one or more features was common.

Allusions to various architectural styles were evident in many of the buildings. Most predominate of these styles were Art Deco and Moderne. These styles, popular nationwide, added a modern aspect to the WPA buildings. Characteristics of these styles visible in Oklahoma WPA buildings include an horizontal or vertical emphasis often accentuated with the use of architectural detailing such as coping, belt courses and vertical projections. The use of stylized applied wall decoration also added a modern touch to the otherwise rustic buildings. As project sponsors were allowed to retain architectural firms, some buildings, such as Chandler High School in Lincoln County, present a more stylized design, devoid of many characteristic WPA features. Other buildings, out of economic necessity or limited construction time, also eliminated certain characteristics.

Monetary restrictions often limited the design and scale of WPA buildings. Thus, the more prevalent type of building constructed by the WPA in Oklahoma, armories and schools, frequently utilized standardized plans. The standard armory plans were largely developed by Major Bryan W. Nolan of the Oklahoma National Guard and supervising architect for Oklahoma's WPA armory building program. The Schoolhouse Planning Division of the Oklahoma State Department of Public Instruction provided a catalog of free construction plans and specifications from which sponsors selected school buildings of four rooms or less costing under ten thousand dollars. Education buildings constructed in Oklahoma, therefore, were often similar in design. They tended to be vernacular, one-story, rectangular buildings

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with gable or hipped roofs. Depending on the number of rooms, the entryways were usually centrally or laterally situated. Larger buildings generally necessitated the hiring of an architectural firm to ensure the quality and viability of the building's design. Thus, they frequently reflected only the surface characteristics of the WPA Standardized style.²¹

The buildings constructed by the WPA remain as architectural testimony to the social ills and remedies of the 1930s. Overwhelmingly functional and utilitarian in nature, the buildings nonetheless represent the local and national efforts to resist the debilitating effects of the worst depression in American history with a certain fortitude and style. Although each building was constructed by workmen of differing skill levels utilizing standard plans often only slightly modified to fit the site, the buildings reflect an overall identifiable character not evident in other New Deal era or subsequent building programs.

EDUCATION SIGNIFICANCE

As part of its basic criteria, the WPA restricted construction projects to those that served a useful community function and had a sponsor. Prominent among these, was the construction of schools. Schools easily fit the criteria as they provided expanded educational and social opportunities for the community for a limitless amount of time, as well as generally had the sponsorship of the district Board of Education or county superintendent of schools. In Oklahoma, an unprecedented number of schools were constructed or improved. By 1937, one-fifth of all schools constructed nationwide by the WPA were in Oklahoma. Total, 825 new school buildings were built with an additional 2,123 being improved or added on to. The construction of 28 auditoriums, 150 gymnasiums and 259 school storm cellars further expanded the educational facilities of the state.²²

The WPA's participation in the construction of these schools was critical. Without the economic assistance provided by the WPA, the majority of school districts could not raise the money necessary to build a new building. By the mid-1930s, most Oklahoma school districts were at the limit of their bonded indebtedness and the assessed values of their property had dropped due to the depression.²³

Within Lincoln County, over fifty-three new schools were constructed. Due to the overall rural character of the county, the majority of these schools were located in the country. However, WPA schools were also constructed in the towns of Carney, Chandler, Kendrick, Meeker, Stroud, Warwick and

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Wellston. The school buildings were predominately one- to two-rooms, following standardized plans established by the Schoolhouse Planning Division of the Oklahoma State Department of Public Instruction. However, several multi-room schools were built by the WPA in the county. These include Chandler High School, Stroud Grade School, Meeker Junior/Senior High School and White Rock School located in the Meeker vicinity.

In addition to the new schools, the WPA constructed three education-related buildings in Lincoln County: the Agriculture Building in Chandler; Home Economics Building at Chandler; and, the Industrial Building at Dunbar. These buildings served to facilitate the expansion of "practical" skills by the local school children. The WPA also did not neglect the non-academic side of the American educational experience. Supporting the contention that although "Athletic competition may not be much aid to teaching . . . it has a vast influence on (the) formation of character and has helped to make the US the grandest nation on the face of the globe today," the WPA constructed an athletic field wall at the Stroud High School and a large gymnasium in Wellston.²⁴

In their advancement of educational facilities, the WPA did not ignore the African-American community in the county. The Oklahoma state constitution required school districts to maintain separate schools for Blacks and Euro-Americans or transport the minority students to other districts in which separate schools were established. Under Oklahoma law, the "separate" or minority school was supervised by the county superintendent. Critically, separate schools were restricted in the amount of financial support from the community at large. Separate schools could levy only two mills for support of their school compared to the fifteen mills the majority schools could levy. In 1940, 22 of the total 117 districts in Lincoln County had separate schools for Blacks. Statewide, 501 segregated schools were in operation for the 1939-1940 school year. Due to their inability to raise sufficient bonds, many of the African-American schools were unable to sponsor projects with the WPA. However, by 1940 the WPA had constructed a minimum of 23 new Black schools statewide, with repairs made to 72 others and additions to 10 more. Within Lincoln County, of the 17 school projects initiated by 1938, 6 dealt with Black schools.²⁵

All of the new WPA facilities served to enhance the educational opportunities available in Lincoln County and Oklahoma. In 1938, Lincoln County contained more rural school districts than any other county in Oklahoma. At that time, approximately 108 rural one- and two-room school districts were located throughout the county, with additional schools in

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the urban areas. Many of the school buildings were over forty years of age and, in many cases, in dilapidated and hazardous condition. Such was the case of the Midlothian School which the County Superintendent "noticed personally, on a windy day, that the building would sway at least a foot." Other school buildings, such as Old Stroud, Fairview and Concord, were victims of fire. The construction of numerous new education-related buildings county-wide served to modernize the education system in the county by providing a safe, learning environment for the children.²⁶

The new school buildings further inspired community interest in education and the teaching process in the county. This resulted in an increase in school attendance and patron support. Additionally, the new buildings aided the district in attracting and retaining quality instructors. The construction of a new building for District 36 served to "weld the patrons of that community together and they (became) very cooperative with the school officials and the county superintendent."²⁷

An additional change influenced by the WPA's construction of new school buildings was the consolidation of many of the districts abounding in the county. Such was the case of separate Districts No. 72 and 68. The districts were located within two miles of each other, with District 72 having a two-room frame school building and 68 a one-room frame building. With the assistance of the WPA, a new native stone two-room building was constructed at District 72 and District 68 was then consolidated with 72. The building of new school buildings also served to consolidate schools within the same district. The construction of a new, larger Chandler High School resulted in the consolidation of two schools and the abandonment of a third condemned as a fire hazard within the Chandler School District.²⁸

The public schools in Lincoln County "played an important part in community activities and in developing the resources of the county." Like many other rural areas, the schools were the focus of community life in Lincoln County. Social and political events, as well as education-related activities, were commonly held in the school building. The school provided not only a central location but also the necessary facilities for large crowds. This consideration was frequently taken into account when constructing the WPA schools, as at the Avery School. The previous two-room Avery School building had been constructed thirty years before and had become too small to accommodate the community. In cooperation with the WPA, a new two-room building with an auditorium was constructed in 1936-1937 which was "large enough to care for any of their crowds."²⁹

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The WPA's construction of numerous education-related resources served to further the educational means of the county. The new buildings created a structurally safe environment for the children, while also rousing the local interest in the schools. The construction of the new school buildings further caused a reevaluation of school districts in the county, resulting in the consolidation of several. Additionally, as community centers the new WPA schools provided the necessary, improved facilities for community events.

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3. Herring, "History of Lincoln County", 3, 5-6. See also Duncan, Rural Relief, 25.
4. Richard N. Current et al, American History: A Survey, 2 vols. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 2:703-705.
5. Ibid., 708.
6. Richard W. Fossey, "'Talkin' Dust Bowl Blues" A Study of Oklahoma's Cultural Identity During the Great Depression," The Chronicles of Oklahoma LV:1 (Spring 1977), 14, 22. See also W. David Baird. "Final Report: WPA Structures Thematic Survey (Phase III), (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1987): 5
7. Arrell Morgan Gibson, Oklahoma: A History of Five Centuries (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981), 220. See also James Ware, "The Sooner NRA: New Deal Recovery in Oklahoma," The Chronicles of Oklahoma LIV:3 (Fall 1976): 341; and Baird, "Final Report," 5.
8. Duncan, Rural Relief, 5, 7-8. See also Herring, "Lincoln County History", 108; The Daily Oklahoman, (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma), 29 September 1935.
9. Final Report on The WPA Program, 1935-43 (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1946), 2-7. See also William E. Leuchtenburg, Franklin D. Roosevelt and The New Deal (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 120-123.
10. Final Report, 7.
11. Ibid., 59-71.
12. Ibid., 47-48, 50-52.
13. Final Report, 17-21,
14. Ibid, 21. See also The Farmer's Weekly Stroud (Oklahoma) Democrat, 19 February 1937.

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15. "Questions and Answers on the WPA," (Vertical files, Oklahoma Historical Society, December 1939), 6-7, 16. See also Final Report, 9-10.
 16. Final Report, 9-10. See also "Questions and Answers on the WPA," 10-12; and, Index to Reference Cards for Works Project Administration Project Files, 1935-1942, (National Archives, (Microcopy T-935 Roll 55; T-936 Roll 13), Washington, D.C.).
 17. Final Report, 101, 115, 124.
 18. Duncan, Rural Relief, 25. See also Herring, "Lincoln County History", 39-40; Lincoln County Republican (Chandler, Oklahoma) 16 June 1937 and 17 January 1940; and, The Farmer's Weekly Stroud Democrat, 14 May 1937.
 19. Baird, "Final Report," 14-15.
 20. Ibid., 16-17.
 21. National Register Nomination, "WPA Public Buildings, Recreational Facilities, and Cemetery Improvements in Southeastern Oklahoma, 1935-1943" (Copy on file at Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, OK), 7:2-3.
 22. Final Report of Activities and Accomplishments: Oklahoma, (U.S. Work Projects Administration, 1943), 1-2. See also Lincoln County Republican, 31 March 1937.
 23. Baird, "Final Report," 19-20.
 24. The Wellston (Oklahoma) News, 1 December 1938.
 25. The 18th Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the 15th Biennial Report of the State Board of Education Oklahoma (Oklahoma Board of Education, 1940), 79, 83, 85-86. See also Nathaniel Jason Washington, Historical Development of the Negro in Oklahoma (Tulsa, OK: Dexter Publishing Company, 1948), 60; and, United States Community Improvement Appraisal Report: Lincoln County, Oklahoma (Okmulgee, OK: State of Oklahoma, Department of Government, 1938).
 26. United States Community Improvement Appraisal Report: Lincoln County, Oklahoma.
 27. Ibid. See also Baird, "Final Report," 20.
 28. Ibid. See also Lincoln County Republican, 6 September 1940.

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29. Herring, 102. See also United States Community Improvement Appraisal Report: Lincoln County, Oklahoma.

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SECTION F: ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

Name of Property Type: WPA Resources

In order to qualify for listing, these resources must have been constructed by the Works Progress Administration between 1935 and 1943 as part of its work relief program to combat the Great Depression. As local physical manifestations of this significant New Deal program of the 1930s, they merit listing under Criterion A. Buildings constructed by the WPA also exhibit a similar and simplified architectural style, which is defined in the historic context as the WPA Standardized Style. Its characteristics include: the absence of intricate structural designs, ornate architectural features and elaborate constructions; minimal decorative details consisting of round arched entrances, stone or brick chimneys, ribbon windows, open eaves, exposed rafters, chimney pots and quoins; and, the use of native materials. Properties exhibiting a combination of these characteristics warrant listing under Criterion C.

Subtype: Education-Related Buildings

Education-related buildings constructed by the WPA in Oklahoma include school buildings, auditoriums and gymnasiums. WPA schools varied in size from one-room to multi-room. The Schoolhouse Planning Division of the Oklahoma State Department of Public Instruction, in cooperation with the WPA, provided a catalog of free construction plans and specifications which were commonly used to erect school buildings of four rooms or less. These buildings tended to be vernacular, one-story, rectangular buildings with gable or hipped roofs. Most incorporated themes of the WPA Standardized style, including use of native stone, a high level of craftsmanship, similarity in design and restrained use of stylistic features. The majority of schools feature ribbon windows and arched entryways which, depending on the number of rooms, were either centrally or laterally situated. Some sponsors of school projects, especially in incorporated towns and cities which required multi-room schools, utilized architectural firms. Consequently, these schools are more stylized and often reflect the influence of popular styles such as Art Deco or Moderne.

To be eligible for listing, WPA education-related buildings must exhibit a combination of these architectural characteristics sufficiently to maintain their integrity to be listed under Criterion C. They must also clearly have been built by the WPA, as this gives the property its historic significance, and thus its eligibility under Criterion A.

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Subtype: Structures

In addition to buildings, the WPA in Oklahoma constructed a variety of structures. These structures include water and sewer systems, and in the case of the Stroud High School, a wall surrounding its stadium. This wall serves to define the geographic limits of the stadium and control access to and from it. It does so, moreover, in an aesthetically pleasing way.

To be eligible for listing under Criterion C, WPA structures such as the Stroud High School Wall must exhibit the general architectural characteristics of the WPA Standardized style, most notably its emphasis on function, minimal decorative detail and the use of native materials, especially stone. Such structures must also have been built by the WPA as part of its work relief efforts to be eligible for listing under Criterion A.

Subtype: Government Buildings

As part of its engineering and construction component, the WPA erected numerous government related buildings throughout Oklahoma. These included city halls, government office buildings and public libraries. These buildings reflect the WPA's policy of putting the unemployed back to work by constructing buildings of an enduring social value. An example of this subtype within this multiple property nomination is the Meeker Town Hall.

To be eligible under Criterion A, government buildings must have been constructed as part of the WPA effort. This gives them historic significance in accordance with Criterion A. They must also exhibit the characteristics of the WPA Standardized style outlined above, especially in emphasis on simplicity of design and the use of native materials to be listed under Criterion C.

Subtype: Recreation Sites

In an effort to develop the social as well as economic well-being of the community, the WPA undertook several engineering and construction projects with the purpose of improving local recreational sites. The predominate benefactor of this type of WPA projects were city parks. Numerous city parks in Oklahoma were improved with the addition of paved roads, stone sidewalks, stone picnic tables and benches, bridges, pools and bandstands. These amenities allowed expansive use of the park by the public. At this time, there are no identified WPA parks in Lincoln County which retain sufficient integrity to warrant National Register listing.

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To be eligible under Criterion A, recreation sites must exhibit improvements undertaken by the WPA. These improvements include construction of sidewalks, roads, picnic tables, bandstands, bridges, fountains or pools. The improvements must also exhibit attributes of the WPA Standardized style to be considered under Criterion C, primarily including the use of native stone and functional design.

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SECTION G: GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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SECTION H: SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

The multiple property nomination of WPA-related properties in Lincoln County is based on the "WPA Structures Thematic Survey (Phase III)" conducted by the Department of History at Oklahoma State University in 1986 and 1987. This project produced a list of extant Works Progress Administration properties in the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office's Management Regions #1, #6, and #7. Region #6 includes Lincoln County, which is the focus of this multiple property nomination. That survey identified a total of twenty-two such properties in the county that warranted further study for National Register eligibility. The National Guard Armory in Chandler was listed on the National Register in 1991. Seventeen of the remaining twenty-one are included in this nomination. The four properties not included -- Meeker Junior/Senior High School, Stroud Grade School, Wellston Gymnasium and Tilghman Park in Chandler -- were determined not eligible for the National Register due to lack of integrity.

During the preparation of this nomination, each property was visited and redocumented for purposes of completing the necessary forms. This resulted in a re-evaluation of the integrity of each. Also, a separate historic context for the WPA in Lincoln County was prepared, building on the more general context developed during the original survey. This better enabled an accurate evaluation of how these properties serve as physical links between the national work relief program instituted to combat the Great Depression and the local past.

All but one of the seventeen properties are education-related, reflecting the WPA's goal to erect public works of lasting social value to their communities. Most are rural school buildings which replaced smaller wooden buildings with larger and more permanent quarters for learning. The property not related to education -- Meeker Town Hall -- illustrates the WPA's impact on improving local governmental facilities.

The properties, therefore, were evaluated in terms of the WPA's impact on Lincoln County, as defined in the historic context. Important specific areas of significance include: the economics of Lincoln County, given that all these properties were constructed by local labor as part of a national relief program aimed at assuaging the human toll of America's greatest economic crisis to date; the history of education in the county, given the dominance of schools; and the history of government in Meeker, given the erection of a new town hall. They also derive significance architecturally as examples of what is termed in this nomination as the "WPA Standardized Style", characterized by simple and functional design, the use of native materials and minimal architectural detail.

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