

District No. 3, Hon. Carl Albert

Form 10-300  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Oklahoma</b>	
COUNTY: <b>Hughes</b>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
<b>MAY 16 1974</b>	

1. NAME

COMMON:  
**Levering Mission**

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
**Wetumka Boarding School - Creek National Boarding School**

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
~~2 n. ENE of~~ **NE of Wetumka**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Wetumka Vic. (SW/4 Sec. 18, T 9 N, R 11 E)**

STATE: **Oklahoma** CODE: **40** COUNTY: **Hughes** CODE: **063**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Ruth L. Sweet**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**c/o Paul Avenue**

CITY OR TOWN: **Mt. Vairo** STATE: **California** CODE: **94040**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
**Office of the County Clerk**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Hughes County Courthouse**

CITY OR TOWN: **Holdenville** STATE: **Oklahoma** CODE: **40**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

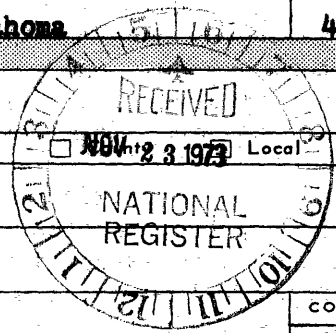
TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**Oklahoma Historic Sites Survey**

DATE OF SURVEY: **1958**  Federal  State  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Oklahoma Historical Society**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Historical Building**

CITY OR TOWN: **Oklahoma City** STATE: **Oklahoma** CODE: **40**



STATE: **Oklahoma**

COUNTY: **Hughes**

ENTRY NUMBER: **MAY 16 1974**

DATE: **MAY 16 1974**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Levering was established in 1880. To begin with it had only crude log buildings and meager equipment. Total start-up cost was around \$10,000, subscribed equally by the Baptists and the Creek Nation. School opened Sept. 1, 1881, with fifty boys and fifty girls. (The number stayed roughly the same throughout its history. Levering remained coeducational until its last few years.)

The school was gradually up-graded. It occupied a 20-acre campus. The rest of the 80 acres were devoted to fields, gardens, and orchards. Ten acres were cleared for a thousand apple trees and 400 to 500 peach trees. Frame buildings gradually replaced the log structures. And in 1885 the school's most pretentious building was erected - the only one still standing. Of cut native stone, the two-story hospital was built by D. Price of Eufaula at a cost of \$1400. It was 18 x 34 feet in size. An additional \$400 was spent to give it a basement for storage of fruits and vegetables.

By 1891 the campus was clean and comfortable, its buildings surrounded by roses, lilacs, and other flowering shrubs. There were hickories, catalpas, and other shade trees, a vine covered arbor, swings, and a croquet ground. A white picket fence divided the campus. The boys stayed on the south side of the fence, for the most part, the girls on the north. The youths were not segregated in classes, but they were at most other places, even in church. Discipline was strict. One common punishment for the girls at Levering: Rags were tied to their feet and they were forced to shuffle about to polish the wooden floors!

Frame buildings in 1891, in addition to the stone hospital, included a large two-story dormitory for the boys (which burned in 1909), an administration building, a doctor's home and office, several smaller dormitories, and such miscellaneous structures as commissary, meat house, smoke house, laundry, and ice house. Today all of these are gone but the hospital, dilapidated and windowless, but still structurally sound.

As well it might be, for the building -- measuring 18 x 34 feet on the outside -- has 18-inch-thick walls and 4 x 6-inch window sills, all of rock and skillfully laid. The original shingles were of wood. Today these are covered with asphaltic ones which, while not enhancing the looks of the old structure, have at least protected the wooden rafters.

The building once boasted a porch on its east front, outside stairways on both the north and south. These were of wood and all trace of them has now disappeared. Entrance to the basement is from the west. A half-stairway led down from the outside. The full basement was high enough to permit shallow, above-ground windows.

Only a partition or two remain inside the building. An interior stairway, too, has been removed. The structure was last used for make-shift housing during the Depression Thirties. It stands today starkly stripped and naked, its emptiness relieved only by vines clinging to its sturdy stone walls.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |  |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

1880 to 1910

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric         | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture         | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture        | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian            | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce            | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications      | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |   | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation        |   |   | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Levering Mission grew out of the desire of the Creek Indians to educate their children in schools near them so they would be more likely to retain the tribal philosophy of life. The Wewoka district of the Creek Nation had had, before Levering was established, only primary schools for the younger children. The more promising youths were then sent to eastern colleges for higher education, with sometimes unfortunate results. An early day traveler, Ethan Allen Hitchcock, on this point found among the Indians "but one sentiment, and that was a most decided opposition to establishment and continuance of Indian Schools beyond the limits of Indian Territory. The reason given is a general complaint of habits with which most of the young Indian lads return from these schools to their home. They are said to return with almost every bad habit that can be named -- gambling and drinking included, and yet not the worst in their estimation. The students get no knowledge that was of any use. The proper place, therefore, for expending Indian money for education is in my opinion in the Indian nation where the children are not removed from the observation of their parents." This judgment was confirmed years later by an old Creek chief, Roley Canard, who pointed out sadly: "There are no 'cuss' words in any of the Indian languages. Some educated Indians of late are becoming very proficient in the use of the white man's 'cuss' words. What a pity."

\* \* \*

Levering Manual Labor School began as a joint project of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Creek Nation in 1880, in some crude log buildings and with meager equipment. Each agency had contributed \$5,000. A manual labor school, of course, is one in which the students work at useful chores that contribute to the maintenance and well being of the school as well as to the vocational training of the boys and/or girls. In addition, students are also given a full schedule of formal, academic class work. In the school operated by a church a certain amount of religious instruction was also included in the day-to-day routine. Under a variety of sponsors, and names, Levering operated from 1880 to 1910, exerting a strong, consistently sound influence for good on a generation of Creek youth as it prepared for the responsibilities of statehood.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Foreman, Carolyn Thomas, "Israel G. Vore and Levering Manual Labor School," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. 25 (1947), pp. 198-217  
Old Wetunka Creek Indian Mission 1880-1910 by Irwin Anderson Watson, Tulsa (privately printed), 1972

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

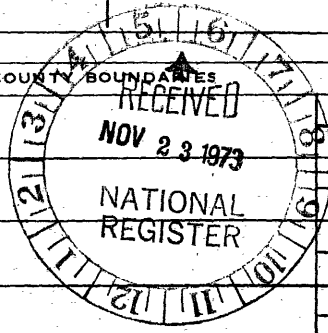
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		35° 14' 55"	96° 11' 34"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

NO UTM  
HL

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **One acre**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: **Kent Ruth, Deputy**

ORGANIZATION: **Oklahoma Historical Society** DATE: **November 1973**

STREET AND NUMBER: **Historical building**

CITY OR TOWN: **Oklahoma City** STATE: **Oklahoma** CODE: **40**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: [Signature]  
 Title: SHO for other  
 Date: 20 June 1973

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

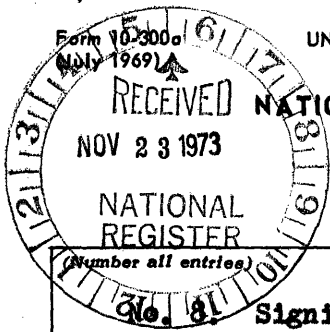
[Signature]  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 5/16/74

ATTEST:

[Signature]  
 Acting Keeper of The National Register

Date: 5.15.74



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Oklahoma	
COUNTY	
Hughes	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
MAY 16 1974	

No. 81 Significance

Levering Mission

In the spring of 1891 the Baptists turned the school over to the Creeks and the name was changed to Wetumka Boarding School. Israel G. Vore had served as superintendent from 1883 until he died in 1887. He was the first of at least four educators whose leadership was unusually capable and beneficial. The second, Col. William Robison took over in 1891 and proved to be one of the finest educators of old Indian Territory. He and his wife were both of Indian extraction. They were deeply interested in the welfare of the students and understood their problems. But for one two-year period, Robison served as superintendent until he died in November 1899.

Alexander Posey, greatly admired political leader of the Creeks and one of the finest poets the American Indians have yet produced, served as superintendent from 1900 to 1901, when the federal government took over the school and changed the name to Creek National Boarding School. The fourth figure to exert an influence for good on the school, if somewhat more indirectly, as Alice Robertson. She served for a number of years during this period as superintendent of all Creek Nation schools ... and later became Oklahoma's first Congresswoman.

With statehood in 1907 the girls at Levering were sent to a similar facility at Eufaula and the school's name was again changed, this time to Wetumka National Boarding School for Boys. With the Creek Nation dissolved public schools began to appear and as Indian children started drifting into these the need for separate schools diminished. When the boys dormitory burned in the fall of 1909 the decision not to rebuild was made and Levering, after three decades of service to the tribe, closed for good at the end of that school term, in 1910.

\* \* \*

Levering Mission played an important role in the lives, not only of the Creek youth who attended, but in the people of the Wetumka area as well. As such it symbolizes the dedication and genius of many great teachers, doctors, and missionaries who cheerfully devoted their lives, labor -- and love -- to the task of educating and Christianizing the North American Indians. As Chief Canard told one researcher, while urging her to work up a complete history of the old school: "I would like for the younger generation to know of our experiences out there. Probably they would appreciate their school more." Levering's influence has remained strong to this day, which is perhaps the best possible testimonial to its importance.

Long.: 96° 11' 34"  
Lat.: 35° 14' 55"

ADVANCE PROOF  
SUBJECT TO CORRECTION  
SCALE 1:24,000

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

