

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received JUN 28 1983  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Pre-Depression Muskogee Skyscrapers *Thematic Resources*

and/or common

2. Location

street & number (See Continuation sheets for individual addresses) N/A not for publication

city, town Muskogee N/A vicinity of

state Oklahoma code 40 county Muskogee code 101

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> thematic	N/A being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<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:

4. Owner of Property

name (See Continuation sheets for individual property owners)

street & number

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of County Clerk

street & number Muskogee County Courthouse

city, town Muskogee state Oklahoma 74401

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Severs Hotel (National Register of Historic Places, September 13, 1982)  
title Oklahoma Landmarks Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1982  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Oklahoma Historical Society - State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Oklahoma City state Oklahoma 73105

# 7. Description

**Condition**

excellent

good

~~other~~ **8 S ML**

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered

altered

**Check one**

original site

moved date \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Pre-Depression Skyscrapers of Muskogee are five tall commercial buildings, ranging from five to ten stories, which were completed during the peak of growth for the city when it became the second largest city of the new state of Oklahoma. Constructed between 1910 and 1912, the five buildings reflected the thriving commercial, political, and industrial functions of Muskogee when it was the major urban center in eastern Oklahoma. The city was headquarters for the Dawes Commission, Union Agency of the Five Civilized Tribes, United States District Court, and a Federal prison. In addition, petroleum had been discovered in the surrounding area in 1904 and Muskogee had become the node of eastern Oklahoma's railway network as six railroads passed through the city including fourteen passenger trains daily. The five buildings, located in the central business district and within walking distance of the two passenger depots (see sketch map), played a significant role in the economic history of the community by providing needed office space and lodging facilities for various government officials, petroleum companies, and professionals. All five buildings reflect the influence of the Chicago School of skyscraper architecture. They are rectangular in shape, flat roofed, possess two story bases with large display windows, and shafts punctuated with vertical bands of windows separated by pilaster-like mullions. Furthermore, construction materials are similar as red brick and masonry are used extensively throughout each building. The Baltimore Hotel follows the earlier Commercial style of the Chicago School, whereas the other four are more Sullivanesque in design. The Baltimore Hotel has straight facade and sides, ornamentation is subordinate to fenestration, and there is a noticeable lack of cornices. The other four buildings feature Sullivanesque styling which includes the extensive terra cotta ornamentation on lower two stories and the boldly projecting cornice at the roof level.

All five buildings retain their original character and architectural integrity as alterations have been minimal. (See Continuation sheets for individual descriptions).

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01/11/2017  
LDP 12/17

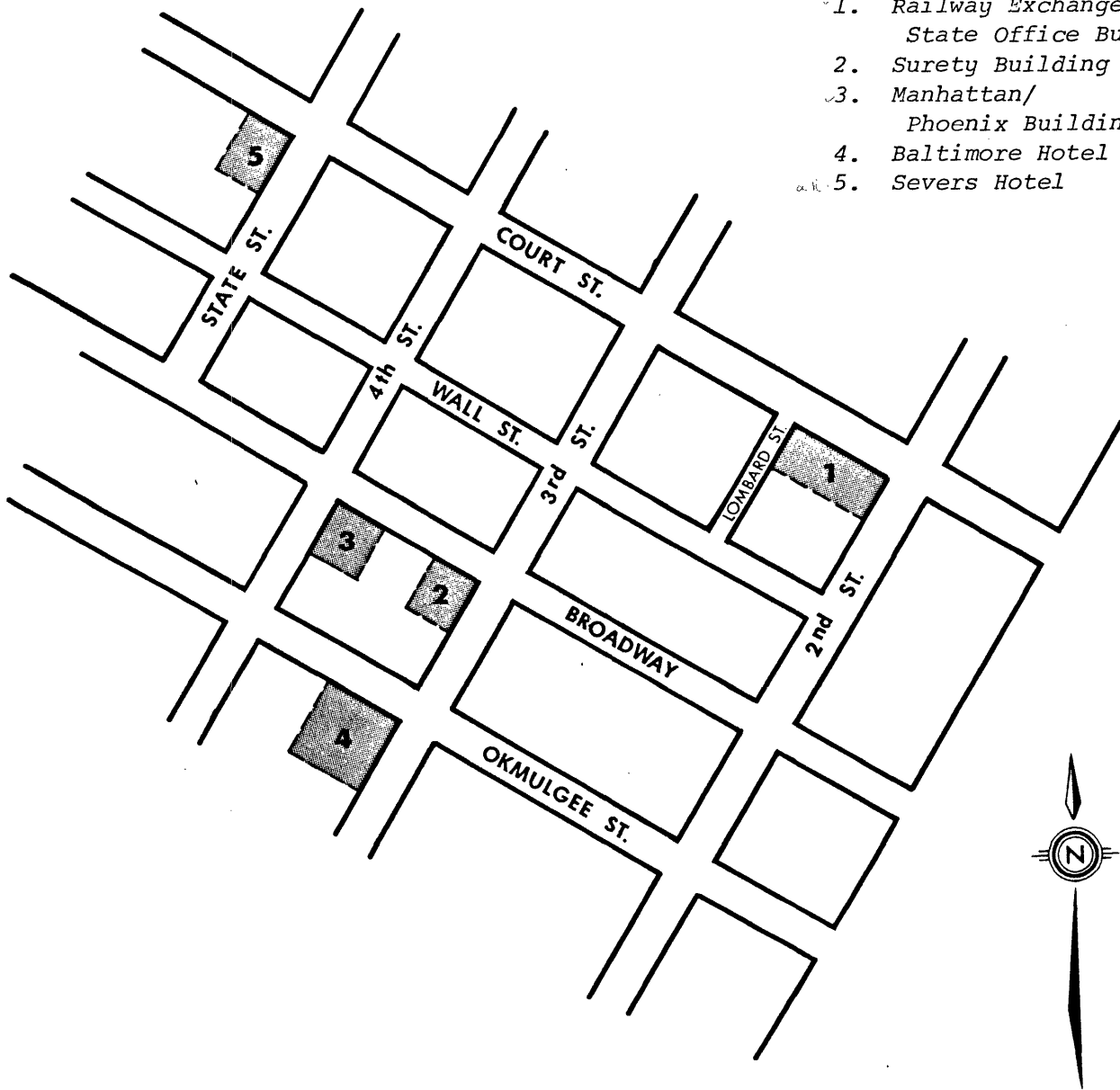
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Continuation sheet Description Item number 7 Page 4

PRE-DEPRESSION SKYSCRAPERS

— LEGEND —

- 1. Railway Exchange/  
State Office Building
- 2. Surety Building
- 3. Manhattan/  
Phoenix Building
- 4. Baltimore Hotel
- a.k.a. 5. Severs Hotel



# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** ca 1910-1930      **Builder/Architect** Numerous

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Pre-Depression Skyscrapers of Muskogee thematic nomination is both historically and architecturally significant because: (1) built during the period of 1910 to 1912, they represent five of the most important and oldest remaining commercial buildings that housed a variety of service-oriented functions for Muskogee when it was the second largest city in Oklahoma following statehood in 1907, and (2) they were the first skyscrapers constructed in eastern Oklahoma and provide as a group the best examples of the Chicago School of tall commercial buildings still intact in Oklahoma.

From the date of its founding in 1872, Muskogee quickly developed as the major urban center of Indian Territory. Because of suitable soil for cotton production, the town soon emerged as a principal trading, storage, and processing center for cotton producers. Muskogee also became a major rail center for eastern Oklahoma as three railroads laid tracks through the town in the period from 1872 to 1885.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Muskogee attained considerable growth and development because of political decisions. In 1874, all individual agencies of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indian Territory were combined into the Union Agency established in Muskogee. In 1889, the first United States District Court for Indian Territory was created in Muskogee. Federal legislation in 1893 formulated the Dawes Commission which maintained its offices in Muskogee for a twelve year period when all Native American lands in Indian Territory were surveyed and individual allotments were made by the United States government.

After the turn of the century, Muskogee continued to be a major center for Native American political activities. In 1905, the Sequoyah Convention was held to draft a constitution and seek separate statehood for Indian Territory to be known as the State of Sequoyah. The work of the Convention was to no avail as Oklahoma and Indian Territories were combined to join the Union as the single state of Oklahoma in 1907.

By 1910 Muskogee was experiencing commercial and industrial as well as political growth. In 1904, oil and gas fields were opened in the surrounding area and one of the state's earliest refineries was completed shortly thereafter. The city had six banks with a capital structure of over \$1.2 million and a United States government depository. There were six railroads with fourteen passenger trains daily and Muskogee has become division headquarters for the Katy, Missouri Southern, Muskogee Union, and the Pullman Company. Muskogee could boast of three cotton gins, a vitrified brick plant, a concrete block plant, a cotton compress, two daily newspapers, and four weekly papers. Professional personnel numbered 50 attorneys, 20 physicians, and 100 stenographers.

All of these events, institutions, and transportation facilities brought increased population to Muskogee. Its population grew from an estimated 1,200 in 1890 to 25,275 in 1910, and by 1920 had passed the 30,000 figure. The city was the second largest in Oklahoma, exceeded only by Oklahoma City.

The five commercial buildings comprising this thematic nomination were all constructed during the peak of Muskogee's growth era of 1910 to 1915. They reflected the needs of the community for additional office space for professionals (e.g. attorneys, physicians, and stenographers), petroleum-related companies and lease operators, and personnel of the Dawes Commission and other Native American business related to the Union Agency and the Indian Inspector's office. Furthermore, the city's development as a major urban center stimulated a need for lodging facilities to house visiting businessmen in petroleum,

(continued)

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Continuation sheet    Significance    Item number 8    Page 1

government officials, and personnel involved in the railroad business. Muskogee's fourteen daily passenger trains provided impetus for additional hotels and service-oriented businesses.

The five nominated properties are all characteristic of the Chicago School of skyscraper architecture which was prevalent in America during the period before the 1920s. Ranging in height from five to ten stories, the five Muskogee skyscrapers are skeleton-framed structures which are rectangular in shape and topped with flat roofs. Their exteriors are grids of intersecting piers and horizontal spandrels with windows filling a great proportion of their wall space. The Baltimore Hotel, constructed in 1910, employs the earliest Chicago style influence known as Commercial. It lacks the boldly projecting cornice and ornate two-story base characteristic of the Louis Sullivan design of the Chicago School. The Phoenix/Manhattan, Railway Exchange/State Office, Surety, and Severs Buildings all reflect the profound impact of a ~~Sullivan~~ Sullivanesque treatment. Each have the elaborate cornices, linteled windows organized into vertical bands, and base consisting of the lower two stories.

The Surety Building was constructed in 1910 at an approximate cost of \$325,000 by the Southern Surety Company. Located at Third and Broadway in the central business district of Muskogee, it was the first skyscraper to be completed in eastern Oklahoma. Because of its central location, the eight-story structure was used as office space for government officials, attorneys, petroleum companies, and land developers.

The Baltimore Hotel was built in 1910 at an estimated cost of \$115,000. Located only two blocks from Muskogee's two passenger depots, it provided lodging for visiting businessmen and government personnel.

The Phoenix/Manhattan Building was constructed in 1911 by the Manhattan Construction Company at a cost of \$165,000. The first and second floors housed the Phoenix Clothing Company and the Manhattan Construction Company made the upper stories their corporate headquarters. Founded by James J. Rooney, the first contractor to locate in Muskogee in 1890, the Manhattan Company still uses the building as their main office approximately 72 years later. The firm presently ranks as the twentieth largest building contractor in the United States having constructed numerous educational, commercial, and medical buildings throughout the Southwest including the entire campus of Oral Roberts University, the Oklahoma State University Library, the University of Arkansas Student Union, Will Rogers International Airport in Oklahoma City, First National Bank of Tulsa, St. John's Medical Center of Tulsa, Phillips Petroleum Building in Bartlesville, and the Southwestern Bell Telephone Building in Houston.

The Railway Exchange/State Office Building, erected in 1912, has served the community in a variety of ways. Used originally to house railway company offices, it also served as the Muskogee County Court House and currently is owned by the State of Oklahoma which uses it for office space.

The Severs Hotel was financed by Captain F.B. Severs, pioneer merchant and landholder of eastern Oklahoma. Severs died in April of 1912 before seeing the completion of what he considered "the final monument of his business life". The Severs Hotel was considered the most luxurious hotel in eastern Oklahoma. (Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, September 13, 1982).

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Benedict, John O., Muskogee and Northeastern Oklahoma, Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1922.  
 Foreman, Grant, Muskogee: The Biography of an Oklahoma Town. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1943  
 (continued)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property Each property is less than one acre

Quadrangle name see continuation sheet

Quadrangle scale 7.5"

### UMT References

A 15 | 285740 | 3958580  
 Zone Easting Northing  
 Railroad Exchange Bldg.

B 15 | 285540 | 3958540  
 Zone Easting Northing  
 Phoenix/Manhattan Bldg.

C 15 | 285580 | 3958520  
 Surety Bldg.

D 15 | 285520 | 3958420  
 Baltimore Hotel

E 15 | 285380 | 3958680 Severs Hotel

F    |    |   

G    |    |   

H    |    |   

### Verbal boundary description and justification

(See continuation sheet)

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			
state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Claudia Craig supervised by Dr. George Carney  
 organization Northeast Oklahoma Counties Survey date February, 1983  
 street & number Oklahoma State University telephone 405-624-6250  
 city or town Stillwater state Oklahoma

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

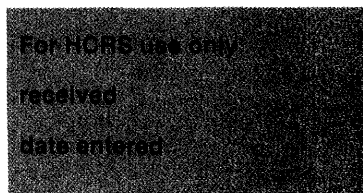
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature C. E. Metcalf date 6-16-83

title	date
For HCERS use only I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register. <u>See Continuation Sheet for details</u>	date
Keeper of the National Register	date
Attest	date
Chief of Registration	date

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Continuation sheet

Bibliography

Item number 9

Page 1

West, C.W., Muskogee: From Statehood to Pearl Harbor. Muskogee: Muskogee Publishing Co., 1976, pp. 33, 39, 51, 66, 125, 201, and 206.

"Metropolitan Muskogee: A Modern City of Today", Muskogee Daily Phoenix, September 30, 1923, p. 5.

Morris, John W. (ed.), Cities of Oklahoma. Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1979, pp. 55-66.

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National Register of Historic Places  
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Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 1 of 1

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Pre-Depression Muskogee Skyscrapers Thematic Resources  
State Oklahoma

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- |     |                                     |  |                                  |   |
|-----|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|---|
| 1.  | Baltimore Hotel                     | <del>Substantive Review</del><br>DOE/OWNER OBJECTION | <del>Unfurnished</del><br>Keeper | <u>Eligible - Beth Groves</u><br><u>8/11/83</u>                         |
|     |                                     |  | Attest                           | _____   |
| 2.  | Manhattan Building                  | Entered in 722<br>National Register                  | Keeper                           | <u>Delores Byers</u><br><u>8/11/83</u>                                  |
|     |                                     |  | Attest                           | _____   |
| 3.  | Railroad Exchange Building          | <del>Substantive Review</del>                        | Keeper                           | <u>Beth Groves</u><br><u>8/11/83</u>                                    |
|     |                                     |  | Attest                           | _____   |
| 4.  | Surety Building                     | <del>Substantive Review</del><br>DOE/OWNER OBJECTION | <del>Unfurnished</del><br>Keeper | <u>Eligible - Beth Groves</u><br><u>8/11/83</u>                         |
|     |                                     |  | Attest                           | <u>own objection withdrawn</u><br><u>Delores Byers</u><br><u>9/4/86</u> |
| 5.  | Severs Hotel<br>(Previously listed) |  | Keeper                           | _____   |
|     |                                     |  | Attest                           | _____   |
| 6.  |                                     |  | Keeper                           | _____   |
|     |                                     |  | Attest                           | _____   |
| 7.  |                                     |  | Keeper                           | _____   |
|     |                                     |  | Attest                           | _____   |
| 8.  |                                     |  | Keeper                           | _____   |
|     |                                     |  | Attest                           | _____   |
| 9.  |                                     |  | Keeper                           | _____   |
|     |                                     |  | Attest                           | _____   |
| 10. |                                     |  | Keeper                           | _____   |
|     |                                     |  | Attest                           | _____   |