

Intensive Level
Historical/Architectural
Survey
of
New Cordell Courthouse Square

Prepared for
The City of New Cordell

by
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Table of Contents

Abstract of Report	1
Introduction	4
Research Design	6
Project Objectives	7
Areas Surveyed	9
Methodology	10
Results	12
Kinds of Historic Properties Present in Surveyed area. . .	14
Specific Properties Identified and Techniques of Information Collection	18
Individual Properties and Historic Districts that Meet the National Register Criteria for Eligibility and the Justification for that Evaluation	23
Areas Examined that do not meet the Eligibility Criteria and the Justification	28
Identification of the Properties and the Potential Districts that will Require Additional Research in Order to Assess National Register Eligibility. . .	29
Historic Context	30
Annotated Bibliography	47
Summary	51

List of Tables

Table 1: Contributing, Non-Contributing,
Individually Eligible, and Recommended
for Further Study 8

Table 2: Building Classification By Current Use.11

Table 3: Style Classification.12

Table 4: Approximate Dates of Construction
by Age Groups13

List of Figures

Figure 1: Map Showing Original Study Area.33

Figure 2: Sample Survey Form Used35

Figure 3: Map Showing New Cordell Courthouse Square
Historic District.38

Figure 4: Map Showing Areas not Warranting Further Study .61

ABSTRACT

The report for the "Architectural/Historic Intensive Level Survey of New Cordell Courthouse Square" project contains 15 sections as listed below.

1. Abstract of Report
2. Introduction
3. Research Design
4. Project Objectives
5. Areas Surveyed
6. Methodology
7. Results
8. Kinds of Historic Properties Present in Surveyed area
9. Specific Properties identified and techniques of information collection
10. Individual properties and historic districts that meet the National Register criteria for eligibility and the justification for that evaluation
11. Areas examined that do not meet the eligibility criteria and the justification
12. Identification of the properties and the potential districts that will require additional research in order to assess National Register eligibility
13. Historic Context
14. Annotated Bibliography
15. Summary

The report was completed as a part of the architectural survey and gives an analysis of the information gathered in the field, and the historical research of the project. Details on the types of buildings found in the survey area are listed in the Tables 1-4 in the text. The tables are:

Table 1: Contributing, Non-Contributing, Individually Eligible. This table gives the number of buildings by status within the district and the whole area.

Table 2: Building Classification By Current Use. This table gives the number of buildings by type of use for the study area, and the district

Table 3: Style Classification. This table give the number of buildings by style classification for the study area, and the district.

Table 4: Approximate Dates of Construction by Age Groups. This tables gives the number of buildings in age groups for the study area and the district

There were 100 buildings identified in this survey. Seventy-two of the buildings were included in the New Cordell Courthouse Historic District and a National Register Nomination was prepared as a part of this project. Eight of

the buildings, residential single family housing with one multiple family house, were part of one block on the periphery of the boundaries were recommended for further study for possible inclusion in a historic district associated with housing.

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office Comprehensive Historic Context Development, an "Architectural/Historic Intensive Level Survey of New Cordell Courthouse Square" was conducted. The project was carried out under the Certified Local Government program, designed to promote a partnership between the State Historic Preservation Office and the local government. This project emphasized the recording of structures at a minimum level of documentation, and was designed to provide a cost-effective approach for increasing the number of recorded properties inventoried within the state, and enable the Certified Local Government to make decisions within their community about actions concerning the identified properties. The results provide information useful for making management decisions about properties and districts potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Additionally, a nomination of the district was prepared as a part of this project. The district encompassed most of the originally surveyed area, which encompassed all of the original downtown business area already determined to have potential for listing based on a visual inspection of the square. The New Cordell Courthouse district possess a high degree of integrity in relation to its feeling, association,

and overall character. Since a courthouse square is a somewhat unique development feature in Oklahoma, this is an important resource.

RESEARCH DESIGN

An area chosen by the city of New Cordell, a Certified Local Government, and the SHPO was surveyed at an intensive level. The boundaries of the district encompassed all of the early development of the business district of the square, with a small percentage of original housing. Figure 1 is a map of the original surveyed area. This area had not been surveyed before, but was recommended for study and nomination by the SHPO, and the size of the project made the two tasks feasible to combine. The chronological limits of the project were 1900, the year that New Cordell was officially platted, and the cut-off date of fifty years from the present, which would be the latest year for inclusion on the National Register for any given property in the district.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the first phase of the project (intensive level survey) was as follows:

1. To identify, record, photograph, and evaluate through intensive level survey those individual properties and potential district(s) in the project area that, on the basis of age and integrity, meet the eligibility criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and to substantiate such assessments.
2. To identify, record, and photograph those individual properties and potential district(s) in the project area that, on the basis of age and integrity, warrant further study to determine eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and substantiate such assessments.
3. To identify and annotate all reference material necessary for completing National Register nomination(s) of properties and district(s) located in the study area.

The objective of the second phase of the project was to complete a National Register nomination of the New Cordell Courthouse Historic District, which is not included in the

body of this report. However, the context used in this report was used in the context created for the National Register nomination.

AREA SURVEYED

The area surveyed (Figure 1), encompassed all of the original downtown district. The area included in the survey was found on the Original Townsite of New Cordell plat, and included all of blocks 39, 40, 45, 46, 47, 52, 53, 54, and the Courthouse Square. The survey boundaries are as follows:

Beginning at the initial point: at the southeast corner of Second and College. East along the south curblineline of Second to Glen English. South along the west curblineline of Glen English to Clay. West along the north curblineline of Clay to Temple Street. North along the east curblineline of Temple Street to First. East along the south curblineline of First to College. North along the east curblineline of College to Initial Point.

METHODOLOGY

All buildings and structures within the study area were surveyed at an intensive level. The survey was conducted in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards and Guidelines for Planning, Identification, Evaluation, and Registration." Furthermore, the studies were compiled in accordance with the preservation planning process guidelines set by the Oklahoma Historic Preservation Office and guidelines set by subgrantees of the CLG program.

As part of the survey effort, all buildings were visited for the purpose of collecting information for the forms, and assessment of their architectural and historic integrity. The information collected was compiled onto survey forms, designed in accordance with the requirements of the SHPO, and is a standard form found in State Historic Office Guide entitled "Architectural/Historic Resource Survey: A Field Guide." These forms were computer generated on D-base IV, version 1.5. Figure Two is an example copy of the form generated. The dates of construction for the buildings in the study area were confirmed by use of Sanborn Maps, few of the miscellaneous phone directories available, and a photographic record of the buildings taken in 1910. Supplemental information was also collected for many of the

potentially eligible buildings from the Cordell Beacon
newspaper and other various sources.

RESULTS

The study revealed one district, the New Cordell Courthouse Historic District, eligible for listing on the National Register, and steps were prepared in order to complete that nomination, as the second phase of this project. Table 1 shows the number of properties in the district, separately listing the number of individually eligible properties.

TABLE 1
Contributing, Non-Contributing, Individually Significant
for the New Cordell Courthouse Historic District
and the Entire Study Area

	New Cordell	Total
contributing	42	48
non-contributing	25	42
individually significant and contributing	5	10
recommended for further study	0	0
Total	72	100

There were also potentially individually eligible buildings located within the district boundaries. The buildings are listed in Section 10. There was a small area of housing recommended for further study as part of historic district associated with

housing and is discussed further in Section 12. Only a small percentage of the original area was excluded from the boundaries of the potentially eligible district. The reason they were excluded was because they appeared to be mostly residential, and the character of both districts was defined by architecture used for commercial and civic purposes.

KINDS OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES PRESENT IN SURVEY AREA

There were 100 buildings found in the study area. The defining characteristic of the buildings in the study area was that they were mostly business buildings constructed in the Commercial Style between the years of 1900 to 1929. Most of the buildings were constructed of brick. There were three buildings that were originally constructed of stucco, two of the buildings are still eligible for listing, one has been altered in such a way that it no longer maintains its architectural integrity.

The following table shows the type of use classification for the entire study area and the proposed district. The term "Cordell" refers to the identified district, New Cordell Courthouse Historic District.

As stated before, most buildings in the area were used for non-residential functions. The housing only appeared on one half-block area at the edge of the study area, and was visually separated by a fence.

TABLE 2

Building Classification By Current Use

Type of Use	Cordell	Outside	Total area
single dwelling	0	7	7
multiple dwelling	0	1	1
business	54	9	63
financial institution	1	3	4
meeting hall	1	0	1
social	1	0	1
city hall	1	0	1
correctional	0	1	1
post office	0	1	1
fire station	1	0	1
government office	1	0	1
museum	0	1	1
religious	0	2	2
communication	1	0	1
medical business office	1	0	1
energy facility	0	1	1
courthouse	1	0	1
vacant	9	2	11
Totals	72	28	100

The dominate style of the area was the Commercial Style. There were two very good examples of the Mission Revival Style and some examples of the early modern styles used in the 1920s to mid-1940s. Table 3 contains all the different style classifications that the buildings were characterized by, and the number of buildings in each category.

TABLE 3
Style Classification

Style	Cordell	Outside Cordell	Total
No Style	15	9	24
Classical Revival	2	0	2
Mission/Spanish Revival	2	2	4
Commercial Style	49	0	49
Art Deco	0	1	1
Modern Movement	4	6	10
Moderne	0	1	1
Late Gothic Revival	0	1	1
Bungalow/Craftsman	0	4	4
National Folk	0	4	4
Total	72	28	100

Many of the buildings on the square facing the courthouse were built prior to 1915. The secondary streets of the districts were mostly built at later dates ranging from after 1915 to 1930.

TABLE 4

Approximate Dates of Construction by Age Groups

Age Group	Cordell	Outside Cordell	Total
1886-1919	26	8	34
1920-1929	32	2	34
1930-1945	5	6	14
1946-1950	6	5	8
after 1951	3	7	10
Total	72	28	100

SPECIFIC PROPERTIES IDENTIFIED AND TECHNIQUES OF INFORMATION COLLECTION

The information for the following buildings was gathered through the use of several sources. One of the primary sources used was the local newspaper, the Cordell Beacon, and miscellaneous information gathered in the vertical files at the library. A few of the buildings had stone insets with inscriptions and dates on the buildings which were also used. Some of the names for the buildings were on the Sanborn Maps, for example, the names of the city hall, the library, the courthouse, and the hospital. In many instances, the type of use of the building was on the Sanborn Maps, and this was used to locate the name of the original business in the building in the local newspapers. Another source used was a photograph collection taken of the downtown district in 1910.

All of the properties identified with the district area were associated with the original business district of New Cordell or related to civic needs of New Cordell. Many of the names for the buildings are associated with the original businesses that were located within the buildings.

In New Cordell Courthouse Historic District:

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------|
| 218 E. First | Commercial Building |
| 220 E. First | Commercial Building |

203 E Clay	New Cordell Fire and Police Department
106 N. College	Commercial Building
116 N. College	City National Bank
118 N. College	Southwestern Bell Telephone Exchange
100-102 S. College	Florence Hospital
104-108 S. College	Commercial Building
110-112 S. College	Commercial Building
114 S. College	Commercial Building
116 S. College	Commercial Building
118 S. College	Commercial Building
120 S. College	Commercial Building
108 N. Glen English	Commercial Building
114 N. Glen English	Commercial Building
116 N. Glen English	Commercial Building
114 N. Glen English (Behind)	Veterans of Foreign Wars Meeting Hall
100 E. Main	Washburn and Taylor Pharmacy
101-103 E. Main	City Hall
102 E. Main	C.T. Atkers Jewelry and Optometry
104 E. Main	Vawter & Company General Merchandise
106-108 E. Main	Commercial Building
109 E. Main	Commercial Building
110-112 E. Main	Commercial Building
113 E. Main	Commercial Building
114 E. Main	Commercial Building

115 E. Main	Cordell Beacon
116 E. Main	Commercial Building
117-119 E. Main	Commercial Building
118-120 E. Main	Calloway Building
121 E. Main	Commercial Building
123 E. Main	Commercial Building
125 E. Main	Steele Building
127 E. main	Fleming Abstract
200 E. Main	Oklahoma State Bank
201-203 E. Main	City National Bank
205-211 E. Main	Washita Hotel
213 E. Main	Commercial Building
214 E. Main	Commercial Building
216 E. Main	Commercial Building
217 E. Main	Commercial Building
218 E. Main	Commercial Building
219 E. Main	Commercial Building
220 E. Main	Cordell Hardware
222 E. Main	Commercial Building
224 E. Main	Clines Bakery
225 E. Main	Opera House Building
101 W. Main	Alexander Motor Company Building
111 W. Main	Commercial Building
113 W. Main	Gerlach Produce
115 W. Main	Commercial Building
118 W. Main	Commercial Building

120 W. Main	Commercial Building
125 W. Main	Commercial Building
103 N. Market	Commercial Building
105 N. Market	Commercial Building
107 N. Market	Commercial Building
109 N. Market	Commercial Building
110 N. Market	Commercial Building
111 N. Market	Commercial Building
117 N. Market	Commercial Building
121 N. Market	Commercial Building
123 N. Market	Drive Through Bankette
103-105 S. Market	Commercial Building
107-109 S. Market	Commercial Building
111 S. Market	Washita Theater
113 S. Market	Commercial Building
117 S. Market	Commercial Building
119 S. Market	Carol Building
121 S. Market	Commercial Building
115 S. Temple	Commercial Building
Courthouse Square	Washita County Courthouse

Outside New Cordell Courthouse Square Historic District:

100 E. First	Evetts Drug Store
101 E. First	First Baptist Church
105 E. First	Cordell Carnegie Public Library

106 E. First	Commercial Building
110 E. First	Midfirst Bank
121 E. First	Cordell Post Office
215 E. First	Washita County Jail
219 E. First	Commercial Building
221 E. First	Commercial Building
223 E. First	Cordell Steam Laundry
120 W. First	Kiwash Electric Cooperative
214 E. Second	Residence
216 E. Second	Residence
218 E. Second	Residence
119 E. Clay	Commercial Building
121 N. College	First Baptist Church
117 S. College	Commercial Building
202 N. Glen English	Commercial Building
112 N. Market	Commercial Building
116 N. Market	Commercial Building
118 N. Market	Anderson Clinic
211 N. Market	Residence
213 N. Market	Residence
215 N. Market	Residence
217 N. Market	Residence
219 N. Market	Residence
120 S. Market	Commercial Building
Corner of E. Clay and S. Glen English	Drive Through Bankette

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES AND HISTORIC DISTRICTS THAT MEET THE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY

One district and eleven individually significant buildings were identified as a result of this study, all of which fall in the district boundaries. The description of the individual eligible properties inside the district will follow the description of the district.

New Cordell Courthouse Square Historic District

The Courthouse Square, which derives its name from the presence of the dominating feature of the Washita County Courthouse designed by Layton, Wemyss, Smith and Hawk and built in 1910, includes most of the original businesses of the New Cordell Townsite, established in 1900. The original square included 6 blocks that surrounded the courthouse, however, later development along First Street (north of the original square) is an extension of this business district. The square is characterized with brick commercial buildings mostly built between 1900 and 1925. The boundaries of the district include all of the original square, including the buildings that face Main Street within the study area. The buildings that face Main Street and the layout of the street around the square is an important feature of the district, due the size of the courthouse and the visual impact it makes the district in relation to the businesses surrounding the block. Another very important planning feature to the district is the layout of Main Street, and its relationship to the section

line through the middle of the courthouse. Main Street, which is on the east/west axis leading to the square is placed on the section line that defined the original boundaries of the homesteads. The courthouse, which is built on the middle of the section line can be seen from both east and west approaches, giving the courthouse approach a dramatic effect. Main Street splits in front and in back of the courthouse, wrapping around it, and is faced with business that cluster around the square. This street plan is pedestrian oriented, and is a very good example of a courthouse square, as well as an unusual design feature in Oklahoma, since the majority of the towns were planned on linear main streets and grid patterns.

The verbal description of the boundaries for the district is as follows:

Beginning Point: Corner of Temple and Clay, on the southeast corner. Following along the east curbline of Temple, north to the alleyway entrance on block 47. East on the alleyway to the junction of the alleys on block 47, north on the alleyway to the First Street on the south side curbline. East along the south curbline to College to the Southwest corner of First Street and College. North along the west curbline to the alley on block 46. East through the alleyway to the east curbline of Market. North along the east curbline of Market to the southeast corner of First and Market. East on the south curbline of First to the southwest corner of Glen English and First. South along the west

curbline of Glen English to the alley of block 54. West on the alley on 54 to the junction in the alley on the same block. South from that junction to Clay on the north curbline. West on the north curbline of east Clay to the southeast corner of Market and Clay. North on Market along the east curbline to the alley on block 53. West on the alley to the west curbline of College. South along the west curbline of College to the northwest corner of Clay and College. West on Clay along the north curbline to the beginning point.

Individually Eligible Buildings

Not all of the individually eligible buildings are within the district boundary limits. The individually eligible buildings and the justification for listing are as follows:

116 S. College

Built c. 1929, the building is a locally architecturally significant as an example of Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival buildings.

Florence Hospital

The building was original built as a furniture store and men's clothier in 1904 in the Commercial Style. However, it is locally significant for its role as the first full service hospital in Washita County.

104-108 S. College

Locally architecturally significant as a very good example of Commercial Style architecture demonstrating the use of contrasting brick laid in decorative patterns on the facade of the building. The building was constructed c. 1909.

Washita County Courthouse, Courthouse Square

Locally significant for its role in county government. Already listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Building was built in 1911 in the Classical Revival style.

Oklahoma State Bank, 200 E. Main

Locally significant for its role in commerce in New Cordell. Also is a good example of Classical Revival architecture as applied to commercial buildings. Built in 1909.

New Cordell Carnegie Library, 105 E. Main

Locally significant as the public library of New Cordell between 1911 and the mid-1960s. Also significant as an outstanding example of Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style of architecture. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places (1989).

Cordell Steam Laundry, 223 E. First

Locally significant as remaining example of National Folk architecture as applied to commercial buildings. The building was built c. 1918.

Washita County Jail

The jail was built in 1940 in the Art Deco style. Locally significant as one of three W.P.A. projects in New Cordell, and for its role in county government.

First Baptist Church, 101 E. First

Built in 1940, the building is locally architecturally significant as the only example of late Gothic Revival architecture in New Cordell.

Cordell Post Office, 121 E. First

Locally significant as the main post office of New Cordell, also significant as a W.P.A. project. It has a W.P.A. mural, designed by Ila McAfee Turner on the interior which was a unique feature of some of the W.P.A. post offices. The building was built in 1937 in a Modern Style.

AREAS EXAMINED THAT DO NOT MEET THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND THE JUSTIFICATION

A large portion of the survey area was included in the district. There were several areas that extended the original business area, but they did not meet the age criteria at the time of this report, or they were severely altered. The housing that was surveyed was eliminated from the district because of use, not because of integrity or age eligibility. (See Figure 5).

**IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROPERTIES AND THE POTENTIAL DISTRICTS THAT
WILL REQUIRE ADDITIONAL RESEARCH IN ORDER TO ASSESS NATIONAL
REGISTER ELIGIBILITY**

There were no buildings or districts that are recommended for further study to assess their potential to contribute to a district. However, housing on the periphery of the study area will need to be re-examined for inclusion in potential residential districts that may lie beyond the boundaries of the business districts and beyond the scope of this study.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Washita County was open for settlement by land run during the administration of Governor Seay, who was the second governor of Oklahoma Territory. It was known as Cheyenne and Arapaho Land Run, and took place April 19, 1892.¹ The eastern half of this area, where New Cordell is located, was promptly filled but the western half continued to be used for cattle grazing for many years after the run. The county where New Cordell is presently located was known as county "H" at the time of the run. Tacola, an established town before the run, was renamed Cloud Chief after the run and became the official county seat.² Cloud Chief was approximately 15 miles from the present location of New Cordell.

The present site of New Cordell is actually the second site of the town, which was moved to this location because of the lack of a good water supply at the original location. "Old Cordell," the original town, was located 1 and 1/2 miles from the courthouse square in a natural valley. It was founded Tom Jones, a homesteader, in 1892. Initially, Jones submitted names for the town to the United States Post Office, but all of the names he chose were already on file for Oklahoma Territory. He then

¹Murrell, C.T. "History of Cordell and Washita County," Who's Who in Washita County. A. Clarence Smith, ed. Cordell, OK: A Clarence Smith and Todd Tilton.

²"County H is Divided," The Cordell Beacon. Section D, Page 1, Wednesday, April 30, 1992.

decided to allow the Postal Service to suggest a name for the town, which was common practice at the time. Therefore, the name of the town selected was Cordell, after Wayne Cordell, the General Postmaster assigned to the new town. After the townsite was abandoned and the post office moved to New Cordell in 1897 at the request of the founders, Old Cordell only had thirty-five to fifty residents, with a total of ten families. The town had two general stores, a post office, a hotel, and a blacksmith shop. After the removal of the post office, the original townsite declined.³

The location of New Cordell, was founded on two homestead allotments owned by J.C. Harrel and A.J. Johnson. By the time that the town was moved, the homestead sites were already known as resting stops with good clear water. The two homesteaders hired an engineer, E.G. Ross to plat the townsite. While plans were being made to move Old Cordell to the New Cordell site in 1897, it was known that Cloud Chief also did not have a good water source, and had to have most of the water hauled in from other places, and there was a possibility that the county seat would be moved. They platted a space for the courthouse in the center of the townsite, surrounded by business lots, to create a town square. The courthouse site was donated to the city by the owners of the land, exactly half on Harrel's homestead, and half

³"Old Cordell Abandoned for New Site as Town Founded in Exact Center of County." Custer County/Washita County Progress, Clinton, OK: Clinton Daily News, 1937.

on Johnson's homestead.⁴ The section line that bounded the edge of their properties runs in the middle of the present courthouse and is the location of highway 152 running east/west to the courthouse at the front and the rear.

The businesses at Old Cordell were given the opportunity to move into the new site. As an incentive to create business starts and a population in New Cordell, all residents of Cloud Chief were also given lots by the original homesteaders if they chose to relocate.⁵ One of the original stores of Old Cordell, a general store owned and operated by H.D. Young, moved to New Cordell, and was given choice business lots. Young was given credit in several sources as the official starter of New Cordell, because his store was known throughout the county for fairness in prices, and good quality merchandise. Therefore he was able to attract people to the town to trade, which in turn attracted merchants.⁶ Another source gave the Cordell Beacon credit for drawing new people into town. The paper, originally started in Cloud Chief, was one of the original and more reputable papers in the county.⁷

⁴"Three Horses Swapped for New Cordell's Site," Custer County/Washita County Progress, Clinton, OK: Clinton Daily News, 1937.

⁵Ibid.

⁶"Old Cordell Abandoned for New Site as Town Founded in Exact Center of County." Custer County/Washita County Progress, Clinton, OK: Clinton Daily News, 1937.

⁷Murrell, C.T. "History of Cordell and Washita County," Who's Who in Washita County. A. Clarence Smith, ed. Cordell, OK: A Clarence Smith and Todd Tilton.

Although the town is commonly referred to as simply "Cordell," the original chartered name, which has never been changed, is "New Cordell."

New Cordell and Cloud Chief battled for the county seat for several years, ending with a special act signed by Theodore Roosevelt legalizing the move of the county seat to New Cordell in 1904. Originally, the location of the county seat was decided by an act of Congress when the county was opened in the land run in 1892. The founders of New Cordell petitioned to have the location changed based on the fact that they were in the center of the county, therefore creating less hardship for residents to do legal business at the courthouse. New Cordell also claimed that Cloud Chief had not made sufficient improvements to the water supply system to support the population expected at a county seat. The residents at Cloud Chief, not wanting the county seat to be changed, held firm to their right to be recognized as the county seat because of their original recognition from Congress. The removal of the county courthouse from Cloud Chief would also cause the town to decline, and many of the established business did not want to move to, or lose businesses to New Cordell.⁸

The battle between the two cities escalated when the residents in

⁸"Removal of County Seat of Washita County, Oklahoma." Report No. 1065, House of Representatives, 59th Congress, First Session, February 7, 1906.

central and western Washita County petitioned the three county commissioners to move the county seat to New Cordell. Cloud Chief residents interested in keeping the county seat responded by securing an injunction prohibiting the commissioners from considering the petition on the grounds that it was illegal to move the county seat without a change in the federal law that originally gave the designation to Cloud Chief. They also called for a new election of county commissioners for each of the three districts.⁹

After the new commissioners were in office, the petition for a vote to move the courthouse was submitted again. Legal sparring from Cloud Chief resulted in delays, but the election was called by two commissioners, with one commissioner dissenting. Although the plans for an election seemed to violate the original injunction, the legality of the action was unclear due to a number of legal actions filed by parties on both sides of the controversy. Cloud Chief attorneys decided that an appeal was necessary to block the board's order for an election, at least until after statehood. The appeal papers were given to a Mr. Baker, a young lawyer in Cloud Chief who was the son of the county attorney, for timely delivery in El Reno. The lawyer decided instead of making the long trip to deliver the papers that he would mail them, causing the injunction to die because

⁹"Cordell-Cloud Chief Courthouse Wrangle Raged for Years," Custer County/Washita County Progress, Clinton, OK: Clinton Daily News, 1937.

the papers arrived past the filing date.¹⁰

After the loss of the injunction, the election was held, and the county commissioners declared New Cordell the new county seat by popular vote. Cloud Chief supporters still maintained that the election was held illegally, but the county seat offices moved to New Cordell. The sheriff and county clerk maintained offices in both cities, but the records and courthouse property were moved to New Cordell by the commissioners. To complicate matters, two district judges were appointed by different entities to serve the county, and both of them recognized different county seats.

Judge McAtee, appointed by the Chief Justice of the territorial supreme court, recognized Cloud Chief as the county seat. Judge Irwin, elected by vote, recognized New Cordell as the county seat and set up court there. Under territorial law, however, there could be only one district court in a county. This created more legal entanglement for the lawyers and judges, because no one knew which court was legal.¹¹

Early in 1904, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in another case that county seats in the territory were located by an act of Congress and could not be changed by any law of the territorial legislature. Cloud Chief attorneys filed suit in the Territorial

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

Supreme Court to force the county officers to return to their offices in Cloud Chief. The court ruled in favor of Cloud Chief, giving the officers thirty days to return. In response to the suit, the county commissioners went to Washington to rush a special bill through congress legalizing the county seat election.¹²

After the loss of the county seat, Cloud Chief began to decline. The population dropped from 700 at its peak in 1900 to 100 in 1937, until the town was no longer inhabited. Several of the businesses moved to New Cordell after it was organized and gained the county seat, some also relocated to surrounding towns. Eight years after the run in Washita County, Cloud Chief was the largest town in the county. The removal of the county seat and the lack of railroads running through the town caused the eventual decline.¹³

New Cordell's development is directly connected with the county seat status and the railroad. Many businesses moved to New Cordell because of the activity connected with the courthouse. In 1902 the Bes Line Railroad (now known as the Frisco) was constructed through New Cordell coming from Enid and going to

¹²Ibid.

¹³"Cloud Chief Held in Washita County Land in Early Days." Cordell Beacon. April 19, 1979, Page 9-B.

Vernon, Texas.¹⁴ The railroad was a vital form of transportation at the turn of the century, offering means of shipping agricultural goods from New Cordell to other markets. Since the economy of Washita County was heavily connected to agriculture, the presence of a railroad made the city an important shipping point, which attracted new industries such as cotton gins and granaries. These industries were located outside the town square, but the business located on the square benefited indirectly from the farmers coming into town to sell agricultural products, do business at the courthouse, or secure farm loans from the many lending agencies in town.

The town grew at a steady and rapid rate during the first ten years. By 1908, the population of New Cordell was 2000. The city petitioned the governor of Oklahoma to become a city with first class designation. This was awarded in 1908, and the town elected J.A. Julian the first mayor of New Cordell, who resigned at the end of the month and was replaced by Robert Steele, who served for two years.¹⁵ Initially, the courthouse square consisted of wood buildings that were later replaced by stone or brick buildings. By 1910, there were offices for lawyers, abstractors, physicians, general and dry good stores, hardware stores, and other types of specialty businesses. Many of the

¹⁴Murrell, C.T. "History of Cordell and Washita County," Who's Who in Washita County. A. Clarence Smith, ed. Cordell, OK: A Clarence Smith and Todd Tilton.

¹⁵Ibid.

brick buildings facing the courthouse were built between 1900 and 1915. The first block to be entirely built of brick faced the south side of the courthouse on Main Street.¹⁶

The most important feature of the square is the Washita County Courthouse. The Courthouse is the third courthouse built on the square. The first courthouse on the site, a wood framed building, was moved to New Cordell in 1900 from Cloud Chief. The second building, also a wood framed building, was built to replace the original Courthouse in 1902, but was burned in a fire in 1909. The present courthouse was designed by Layton, Weymiss, Smith and Hawk in 1910.¹⁷ The courthouse is the largest building in the district and is prominently situated in the center of the square. It is constructed of brick with a stone foundation and has classical features. The front and rear entries appear to be identical, and face east and west. The main roads to the square also line up with the doors to the courthouse, making it visible from a distance, adding to the grandeur of the building. The dome on the courthouse has clocks built in which are visible from the streets on the square and most of the secondary streets.

The square features many prominent buildings that were built

¹⁶Comparisons between Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps dated 1904, 1909, and 1915 show the pattern of development around the square. (Sanborn Map Company, New York)

¹⁷"Washita County Courthouse." National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form. Prepared August 24, 1984.

between 1897 and 1943, with a large number of buildings constructed before 1920. These included three large bank buildings, a city hall, a hospital, an opera house, and several other buildings that were used for businesses that are highly decorative, or associated with pioneers that became prominent residents of New Cordell before 1920. First Street, which was a secondary area to develop in the square's business district, has a Carnegie Library, which was built in 1911, and two other significant structures that played a major role in the history of New Cordell, the U.S. Post Office (1937), and the Washita County Jail (1943), both products of the Works Projects Administration.

There were three banks operating by 1910 in New Cordell. The first bank, the Bank of F.C. Finerty, built by F.C. Finerty, also specialized in farm loans. This bank was organized in 1898, shortly after New Cordell was platted for settlement.¹⁸ The bank was operated by Finerty until 1911, when he sold his shares in the bank and it was reorganized as the Farmers National Bank.¹⁹ Finerty remained in New Cordell, opening a smaller farm loan office at 102 E. Main.²⁰ The original bank building, constructed of brick with stone detailing, was demolished in the late 1980's.

¹⁸Since this bank was privately owned, it is often not credited as the oldest in Cordell. Many articles credit the First National Bank as the oldest.

¹⁹"The Farmers National Bank, Cordell, Oklahoma," 17th Anniversary Edition of the Cordell Beacon, 1914.

²⁰"F.C. Finerty and Company, First in Farm Loans." 17th Anniversary Edition of the Cordell Beacon, 1914.

The location of the bank was the corner lot of block 53 in the Original Townsite of New Cordell, next to 118 E. Main, facing the south elevation of the Courthouse.

The second bank to organize in New Cordell was the First National Bank. The first building for the bank was constructed of wood and built in 1900. It was located at the present site of 127 E. Main.²¹ In April of 1910, the bank changed its name to Oklahoma State Bank and constructed a brick building at 200 E. Main,²² which is still extant. The bank reorganized as the State National Bank in 1911 (taking on its national charter), then reorganized again in 1920 as Oklahoma State Bank when it gave up its national charter. Before 1939, the charter was reinstated and it became National State Bank, which has since moved from this building.²³ The original bank building is now occupied by an abstract company and several offices.

The third bank to locate in New Cordell was the City National Bank. The City National Bank Building, known as Cordell National for most of its existence, was constructed in 1903 of brick with stone insets on a corner lot and is located across Main street

²¹Full Page Advertisement for the First National Bank, The Cordell Beacon. Page 3-B, April 19, 1979.

²²"Opening of Oklahoma State Bank Building," Cordell Beacon. Thursday, April 7, 1910.

²³"The First National Bank in Cordell," Custer County/Washita County Progress. Clinton, OK: Clinton Daily News, 1937.

from the First National Bank at 201-203 E. Main.²⁴ This building also was the first location of the telephone service, known as Pioneer Telephone Company which serviced New Cordell.²⁵

Florence Hospital, was in the upper story of a large commercial building constructed c. 1907 on 100 S. College. The hospital was owned and operated by Dr. A.H. Bernhardt, who moved to New Cordell after completing his medical degree in Missouri. The hospital, named after his wife, was the first hospital in Washita County, and was still the only hospital in 1914.²⁶ The hospital operated until the early 1940s. The first floor of the building was originally Patton's Mens Clothing and Furnishings. The store was in operation until 1909 when it was purchased by Hunter's Dry Goods.²⁷ Also, the building originally had a side opening which was the location of the Post Office.

The Opera House Building at 225 E. Main, was built in 1907. The building had an auditorium on the second floor, with a general store on the first floor originally called the People's Store.

²⁴"Cordell National Bank," Custer County/Washita County Progress. Clinton, OK: Clinton Daily News, 1937.

²⁵Photographs dated 1910 of the building show the Pioneer Telephone Company signs. Also, 1909 Sanborn Maps show the location inside the building.

²⁶"A Worthy Institution, The Florence Hospital." 17th Anniversary Edition of the Cordell Beacon, 1914.

²⁷"Hunters, The Dependon Store." 17th Anniversary Edition of the Cordell Beacon, 1914.

The building was built by the Miller brothers, Johnson and Page, who were local businessmen in the area.²⁸

The Cordell Carnegie Public Library at 105 E. First (listed on the National Register of Historic Places, 1989) was completed in 1911. The public library was moved from 108 E. Main and housed in this building until the mid-60's, when a new building was built, and the library moved again. The building now serves as a museum. It was designed by A.A. Crowell.²⁹

The Dixie Store Building was built in 1914 and is located at 118-120 E. Main. It was the second location of the Dixie Store, owned and operated by William Flaxman who started the store in a wood building on the west side of the square in 1911.³⁰

The City Hall Building, built in 1922, has been serving as an office and auditorium for New Cordell continuously since it was built. It is located on the northwest corner of the square at 101-103 E. Main.³¹

²⁸"The Opera House," in weekly column called "A Note from Uncle Dudley, Cordell Beacon, N.D.

²⁹"Carnegie Library," National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form. Prepared 1989.

³⁰"The Dixie Store," 17th Anniversary Edition of the Cordell Beacon, 1914.

³¹Murrell, C.T. "History of Cordell and Washita County," Who's Who in Washita County. A. Clarence Smith, ed. Cordell, OK: A Clarence Smith and Todd Tilton.

The Steele Building, built in 1929, was built by Robert Steele, who became the first mayor of New Cordell after the elected mayor resigned after two months.³² Robert Steele arrived shortly after New Cordell was opened for settlement, and built a wood frame structure for his abstracting business. The present building on 125 E. Main, replaced the first wooden structure.³³

The Cordell Post Office at 121 E. First was built in 1937 with Works Projects Administration funds.³⁴ The post office also has a mural on the interior that was painted shortly after the building was constructed by Ila McAfee Turner, an artist employed by the Works Project Administration.

The First Baptist Church at 101 E. First was the fourth building built by the congregation on the same site. This building replaced two wood frame building, and one brick building and was built in 1939. The congregation was the first to organize in New Cordell and has been on the site since before the turn of the century.³⁵

³²Ibid.

³³1910 Photographs show the previous wood building.

³⁴1937 photographs taken as part of the progress report to the Federal Government. Original copies located at the Cordell Post Office.

³⁵First Baptist Church, 1901-1986. (Booklet). Cordell, Oklahoma: First Baptist Church, 1986.

The Washita County Jail is the second building to be built on this site for use for the county jail. The building, built in the Art Moderne style in 1943, was a W.P.A. project in New Cordell.³⁶

The Cordell Fire and Police Station, located at 123 S. Market, was built by 1943. The building was also a W.P.A. project, built of a mix of native sandstone and stucco.³⁷

The majority of the buildings on the square are one and two story commercial style business buildings constructed of brick. Many of the buildings were constructed before 1910 and appear in a set of photographs taken of the square around 1910. The square served a variety of needs in New Cordell, and attracted people into town from surrounding farms and communities. Some of the businesses located on the square were the Washburn and Taylor Drug Store, at 100 E. Main, which later became the first Rexall Drug Store in New Cordell; The Wright Place, owned and operated by C. H. Wright which sold dry goods and shoes; C. E. Thorton and Undertaking; C.T. Atkers Jewelry and Optometry; one of the earliest proprietors in New Cordell; Vawter and Company General Merchandise; the Cordell Beacon newspaper, which moved to New Cordell in 1907 and has been continuously publishing since; the Palace Barber; C.R. Thorton Drugs; The English Kitchen; Bell

³⁶Dedication Plaques on exterior are still extant.

³⁷Ibid.

Grocery Store; several hardware stores, including the still existing Cordell Hardware Store on 220 E. Main, and larger buildings on the periphery of the district associated with car dealerships as the automobile became an important part of daily life.

From the time that New Cordell had an active business center to World War II, the city also had several hotels for visitors that stayed to do business at the county seat. Two hotels, present before 1910, were large wooden structures that were eventually replaced by brick business development.³⁸ One of the brick buildings located at 207-211 E. Main Street, however, originally used for business on the bottom story and offices at the second story was converted into the Washita Hotel in the late 1920s and is best remembered by people in New Cordell as the hotel. The owners of the Washita Hotel converted two buildings into the hotel, the main entrance faced Main Street, and the secondary entrance faced Market Street on the same block. These buildings were connected by a corridor inside the buildings which still exists, although the buildings are used for a different purpose.

The courthouse square is a locally important resource in the understanding of New Cordell's early development. Although the buildings built after World War II are different in style to the

³⁸These Hotels appear in the 1910 photographs and on Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.

early commercial buildings on the square, the overall visual character remains as it always was, making them a very vital and important part of the business activity of New Cordell.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1910 Photographs of the New Cordell. Privately owned. Copy negatives available at the First National Bank in New Cordell.

These photographs were taken of all the businesses in New Cordell, and also show an unfinished view of the Washita Courthouse. It is possible from these photographs to determine where some of the early business were located, and the original appearance of many of the buildings. The photographs are available at the First National Bank in New Cordell, and in several other private collections in New Cordell. Also, the photographs have been widely reproduced in the Cordell Beacon, in several different Articles.

Carnegie Library," National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form. Prepared 1989.

The National Register of Historic Places nomination form has specific historical information concerning the Carnegie Library.

Cordell Beacon, daily newspaper, 1897-present.

The Cordell Beacon is an excellent source for information relating to the history of the business structures in the square. The Cordell Beacon was originally started as the Cloud Chief Beacon in 1897. When it moved in 1907 the name changed to the Cordell Beacon. This newspaper publishes special issues relating to the pioneer history of New Cordell. The newspaper can be found on microfilm at the Oklahoma Historical Society, and at the Cordell Public Library.

Cordell Beacon, 17th anniversary edition, 1914, entire issue.

The paper was produced as a historical account of Cordell, and promoted the success of the businesses. The paper is an excellent source for historical narratives relating to the early history of New Cordell, including some historical accounts of several of the businesses in New Cordell.

Cordell Beacon, entire issue, April 19, 1979.

Cordell Beacon, entire issue, April 18, 1984.

Cordell Beacon, entire issue, April 29, 1992.

The Cordell Beacon publishes a "Pioneer Addition" of the newspaper which celebrates the history of New Cordell. Although

Many of the articles are reprints of previous years, the paper varies in the articles it produces about the history of New Cordell. These special editions also reprint historical photographs that have been borrowed from private collections.

Cordell Vertical Files, Cordell Public Library, Cordell, Oklahoma.

This is an excellent collection of historical information relating to the development of New Cordell and the business in the downtown area, as well as some personal accounts of the pioneers that lived in New Cordell.

Debo, Angie. The W.P.A. Guide to the 1930s in Oklahoma Introduction by Ann Hodges Morgan. (Restored essay by Angie Debo.) Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1986. Original Copyright held by the University of Oklahoma in Norman, 1941.

The book was originally published as Oklahoma: A Guide to the Sooner State. Has information about most of the major landmarks in Oklahoma, and a short biography of cities, towns, Native American tribes and non-indian settlers.

First Baptist Church, 1901-1986. (Booklet). Cordell, Oklahoma: First Baptist Church, 1986.

The booklet contains a detailed history of the First Baptist Church on first street.

Herald Sentinel, daily newspaper, 1887-1912, Cordell, Oklahoma

This newspaper was one of the earliest to start in New Cordell and is very useful as a source of information relating to the history of the downtown area and the controversy between Cloud Chief and New Cordell. The newspaper can be found at the Oklahoma Historical Society on microfilm.

"History of Custer and Washita Counties, 1883-1937," Custer County/Washita County Progress, Clinton, OK: Clinton Daily News, 1937.

This historical account gives information about the downtown courthouse and accounts relating to the run of 1892 and the establishment of towns in Custer and Washita counties, including New Cordell. Several full page advertisement from businesses in New Cordell are also in this publication. Original copy available at Cordell Beacon Office.

Morris, John W.; Goins, Charles R., and McReynolds, Edwin C. Historical Atlas of Oklahoma. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986.

Has information about the area, pre-non-indian settlement and after.

"Removal of County Seat of Washita County, Oklahoma." Report No. 1065, House of Representatives, 59th Congress, First Session, February 7, 1906.

Official document giving the right to New Cordell to be the county seat of Washita County. Copy of original document available at the Cordell Public Library.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1905-1932, New York, New York.

The Sanborn Maps are a very good resource for dating buildings in the Courthouse Square, and obtaining information about the original use of some of the buildings, and some of the original names of the buildings.

Washita County Courthouse." National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form. Prepared August 24, 1984.

The National Register of Historic Places nomination form has specific historical information concerning the Washita County Courthouse.

Who's Who in Washita County, Clarence Smith, ed. Cordell, Oklahoma: The Beacon Publishing Company, 1926.

The short book is a valuable source of information relating to the history of New Cordell. It has a history of the County, and of New Cordell, which gives specific dates and facts about New Cordell. Also it has a short history of many of the pioneers of the town listed in alphabetical order for New Cordell and many of the other towns in Washita County. A reprint of this book is available in New Cordell at the public library.

W.P.A. Construction Files, Cordell Post Office, Cordell, Oklahoma. 1937.

The post office has saved records and has original photographs of the construction of the Post Office in New Cordell, dating from 1936-1937, and is a good source for historical information

relating to the construction of the post office. The information is kept in a vertical file in the postmaster's office and is available by request.

SUMMARY

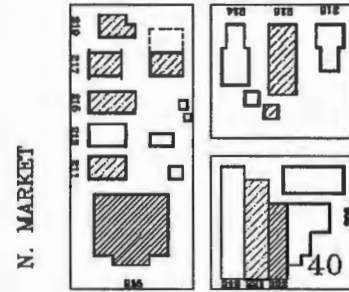
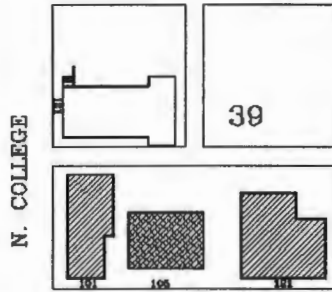
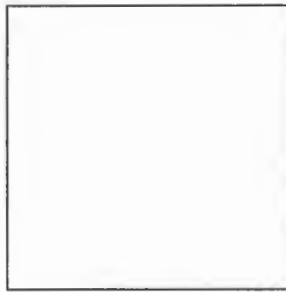
The New Cordell Courthouse Square Intensive Level Survey revealed that there was one commercial district associated with the development of the area which was eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The period of significance begins at the settlement of New Cordell in 1897 to 1945, the fifty year cut-off date for inclusion in the National Register for the purposes of this report. Although the percentage of contributing buildings is low, the visual character of the area, feeling, setting and association are very strong. The configuration of the square is a strong feature of the district, and is still present. Many of the buildings studied were not beyond reversing alterations, for example, a frequent alteration was metal siding placed over the face of the building above the storefront. This alteration could be easily remedied, and the building would contribute to the district.

Figures

Figure 1

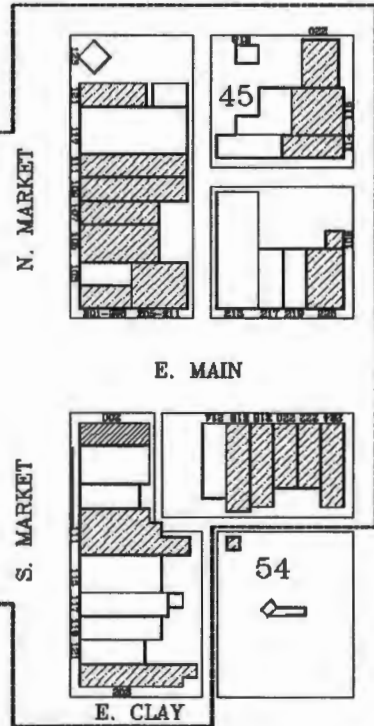
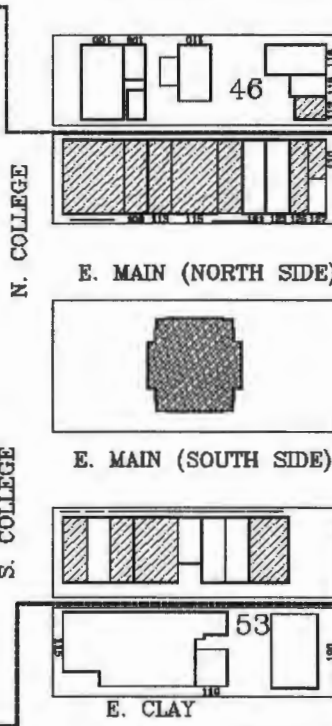
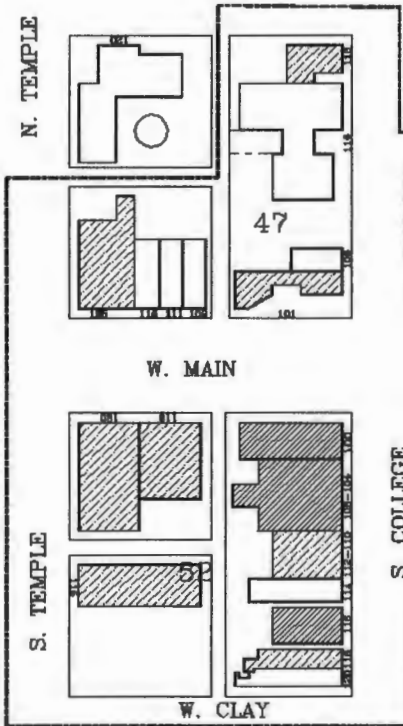
Map of Study Area

E. SECOND



N. GLEN ENGLISH

E. FIRST



S. GLEN ENGLISH

S. GLEN ENGLISH

CITY OF NEW CORDELL, OKLAHOMA
 HISTORIC/ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY
 FOR ORIGINAL DOWNTOWN AREA OF NEW CORDELL

PREPARED BY
 SUSAN ROTH & ASSOCIATES
 AUGUST 30, 1993

LEGEND

- ALREADY LISTED
- INDIVIDUALLY ELIGIBLE
- CONTRIBUTING
- NON-CONTRIBUTING

NORTH
 100'

Figure 2

Sample Survey Form

HISTORIC PRESERVATION RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION FORM

TYPE ALL ENTRIES

1. PROPERTY NAME: NEW CORDELL COURTHOUSE SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT

2. RESOURCE NAME: CORDELL FIRE AND POLICE DEPARTMENT

3. ADDRESS: 203 E CLAY

7. CITY: NEW CORDELL

5. VICINITY:

6. COUNTY: GARFIELD

7. COUNTY CODE: 149

8. LOT: 20

9. BLOCK: 54

10. PLAT NAME: ORIGINAL TOWNSITE OF NEW CORDELL

11. SECTION: SEC 33

12. TOWNSHIP: T10N

13. RANGE: R17W

=====

14. RESOURCE TYPE: B BUILDING

15. HISTORIC FUNCTION: 04D FIRE STATION

16. CURRENT FUNCTION: 04D FIRE STATION

17. PRIMARY SIGNIFICANCE: 050 COMMERCE

18. SECONDARY SIGNIFICANCE: 280 SOCIAL HISTORY

19. DESCRIPTION OF SIGNIFICANCE: CONTRIBUTING TO DISTRICT

20. DOCUMENTATION SOURCES: SANBORN MAPS, 1904-1932

=====

21. NAME OF PREPARER: ROTH AND ASSOCIATES

22. THEMATIC: YES

PROJECT NAME: INTENSIVE LEVEL SURVEY OF NEW CORDELL COURTHOUSE SQUARE

23. PREPARATION DATE: 08/30/93

24. PHOTOGRAPHS: YES YEAR: 1994

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION DESCRIPTION (203 E CLAY)

25. ARCHITECT/BUILDER: W.P.A.
26. YEAR BUILT: 1941
27. ORIGINAL SITE? YES DATE MOVED
FROM WHERE?
28. ACCESSIBLE? YES
29. ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: 70 MODERN MOVEMENT
30. FOUNDATION MATERIAL: 99 UNCOLLECTED
31. ROOF TYPE: SLIGHT GABLE
32. ROOF MATERIAL: 50 METAL
33. WALL MATERIAL, PRIMARY: 42 SANDSTONE
34. WALL MATERIAL, SECONDARY: 61 STUCCO
35. WINDOW TYPE: 2/2 HUNG
36. WINDOW MATERIAL: 20 WOOD
37. DOOR TYPE: GLAZED PANEL
38. DOOR MATERIAL: 20 WOOD
39. EXTERIOR FEATURES: ENTRY ON SIDE OF BUILDING, CARPORT ON FRONT OF BUILDING, ADDITIONS FOR SERVICE VEHICLES ON BACK, STUCCO BAND ABOVE SECOND STORY WINDOWS, REPLACEMENT METAL ROOF
40. INTERIOR FEATURES: 99 UNCOLLECTED
41. DECORATIVE DETAILS: STUCCO BAND ABOVE SECOND STORY WINDOWS
42. CONDITION OF RESOURCE: 02 GOOD
43. DESCRIPTION OF RESOURCE: TWO STORY FIRE AND POLICE STATION
44. COMMENTS:
45. PLACEMENT: REFER TO MAP

Figure 3

Map of New Cordell Courthouse Square Historic District

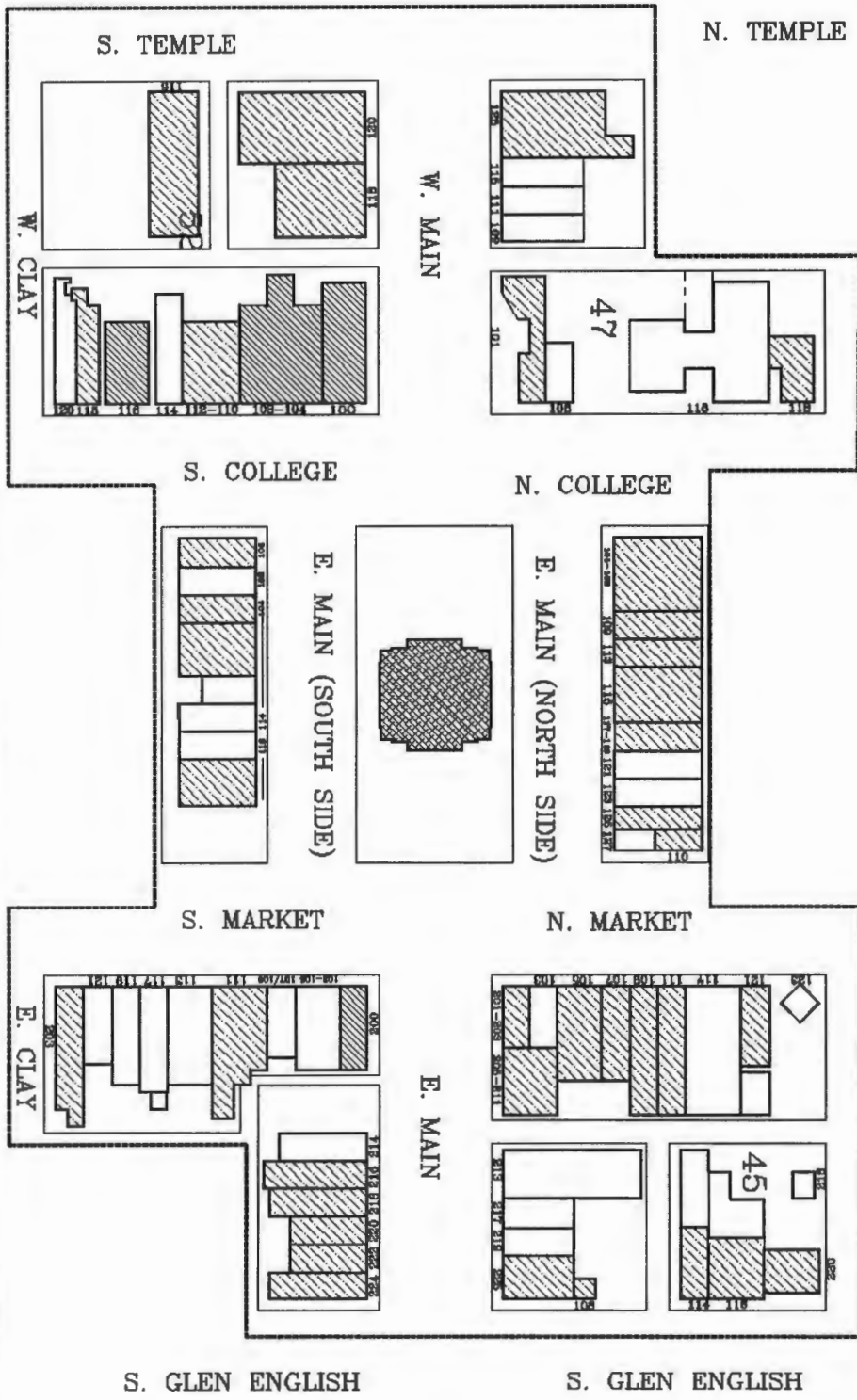
CITY OF NEW CORDELL, OKLAHOMA
 NEW CORDELL COURTHOUSE SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT

PREPARED BY
 SUSAN ROTH & ASSOCIATES
 AUGUST 30, 1993

LEGEND

ALREADY LISTED
 INDIVIDUALLY ELIGIBLE
 CONTRIBUTING
 NON-CONTRIBUTING

NORTH
 100'



E. FIRST

Figure 4

Map Showing Areas Not Warranting Further Study

MAP MISSING