1. Name of Property
Historic name: __Will Rogers Memorial Library___________________________
Other names/site number: _Will Rogers Library; Claremore Museum of History___
Name of related multiple property listing: _N/A____________
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location
Street & number: __121 North Weenonah Avenue_
City or town: _Claremore__ State: ____OK______ County: _Rogers____
Not For Publication: N/A _______ Vicinity: N/A _______

3. State/Federal Agency Certification
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this __X__ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets
the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic
Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property __X__ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria.
I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following
level(s) of significance:
___national ___ statewide _______ X___local
Applicable National Register Criteria:
_X_A ___B ___C ___D

Signature of certifying official/Title: __________________________ Date ____________
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official: __________________________ Date ____________
Title: __________________________ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government
4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) ___________________

Signature of the Keeper __________________________ Date of Action ____________

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private: [ ]

Public – Local [X]

Public – State [ ]

Public – Federal [ ]

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

Building(s) [X]

District [ ]

Site [ ]

Structure [ ]

Object [ ]
Will Rogers Memorial Library
Rogers County, Oklahoma

**Number of Resources within Property**
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributing</th>
<th>Noncontributing</th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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### 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- EDUCATION/library
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation

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**Current Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation
7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Located in Lynn Riggs Park (commonly known as Gazebo Park), Will Rogers Memorial Library consists of one contributing building and an associated stone fence wall that encompasses the entire park. Noncontributing park features include a gazebo, flagpole, fountain, and ancillary small objects and sidewalks. The library building, completed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1937, is one story with a flat roof, buff brick exterior, and stone ornamentation. The associated stone fence wall, also constructed by the WPA, was completed in 1936. The library retains a high degree of integrity of location and setting thanks to its place within Lynn Riggs Park and the associated stone fence wall. While there have been some changes to the building, notably the construction of a 1965 addition and replacement of the original windows, the library retains a high degree of integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to convey significance as among the few remaining great examples of WPA-constructed buildings in Claremore.
Narrative Description

Site and Setting

Will Rogers Memorial Library, now known as the Claremore Museum of History, is set on the southwest corner of the intersection of North Weenonah Avenue and West 4th Street in Claremore, Rogers County, Oklahoma.¹ The Union Pacific Railroad, which generally extends northwest-to-southeast through town, separates the nominated property from the Claremore Downtown Historic District (NRIS #16000623), which is one block west. The Belvidere (NRIS#82003696) is one block east at the intersection of North Chickasaw Avenue and West 4th Street. Completed in 1937, the library building is set in Lynn Riggs Park (commonly known as Gazebo Park). A contributing, half-height stone fence wall encompasses the entire park. One noncontributing structure and two noncontributing objects are set near the library building. The remainder of the library’s setting is characterized by a turf lawn, concrete sidewalks, and contemporary park benches, lamp posts, statuary, and playground equipment (Photographs 3 – 4).

The following is a description of major resources on the nominated property, starting with the library building. Names of contributing resources are indicated in **bold**.


   *General Building Description*

   Will Rogers Memorial Library is a one-story building (plus partial basement) with a flat roof and buff brick exterior with stone ornamentation. The building has a simple, square shape with a south “wing” comprised of an addition constructed in 1965. This one-story addition is slightly shorter than the rest of the building and has a flat roof with a wide eave. It has a brick exterior that closely matches the rest of the building. The addition is stepped back from the southeast-facing façade and does not detract significantly from the integrity of the building when viewed from the façade (Photograph 1).

   The library features a combination of eight-over-eight and six-over-six hung windows that are typically arranged in sets of three. In order to prevent sunlight from damaging any objects or documents on display, the window openings are covered on the interior and fiberglass mesh screens are fixed to the exterior. This alteration does not detract significantly from the building’s integrity, as the light configurations can still be discerned and all window openings retain their original dimensions.

¹ Primary sources consulted for this nomination most often referred to the property as the “Will Rogers Memorial Library.” The name of the property should not be confused with the Will Rogers Library at 1515 North Florence Avenue in Claremore, which was dedicated in 1994. See “About Us,” https://claremore.com/library/about-us/, accessed May 10, 2023.
Numerous plaques around the building commemorate different elements of Will Rogers Memorial Library and the surrounding park. The southeast-facing façade features three plaques and a cornerstone. Two stone plaques are located at the southernmost end of the elevation. The first plaque reads, “W.S. KEY, ADMINISTRATOR. MORTON R. HARRISON, DIRECTOR”, and the second plaque below reads, “WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION. PROJECT 1-403, 1936.” A granite plaque is located just to the left (south) of the main entrance. It reads, “CLAREMORE MUSEUM OF HISTORY, LYNN RIGGS MEMORIAL, Est 2011.”


Two plaques are featured on the southwest side elevation. The first plaque, which is stone, reads: “1902 C.V.R. THIS CORNERSTONE WAS TAKEN FROM THE WALL OF THE OLD SEQUOYAH LIVERY STABLE, ERECTED BY CLEM VAN ROGERS, FATHER OF WILLIAM PENN ADAIR ROGERS.” A second, smaller bronze plaque is directly above the first. It reads, “Native Americans used the symbol depicted in our foundation stone to represent the sun, good luck, wind and migration. This carving predates World War II by 30 years and represented the Native American interpretation and does not support Nazi Germany in any way.”

Southeast-facing Façade

The one-story (with basement) brick library building, with basement, faces southeast toward North Weenonah Avenue (Photograph 12). The entry is accessed via four steps with metal railing on either side. An ADA ramp is located to the northeast of the steps. The two entry doors have ornamental glass windows covered by a copper ornamental awning. Above the awning is a seven-light transom window. A single row of soldier course bricks is located above the transom window. The stone nameplate above the brick reads “WILL ROGERS LIBRARY.”

The singular Art Deco detail on this simple building is in the stone entablature. Starting at the cornice and extending through the parapet is a stone entablature that includes stone canthus leaves as a base to a six sided column topped with canthus leaves urns at each end of the entablature as well as a folded dimensional stone panel in the center of the entablature. The entablature has a stone parapet that is level in height with the urn ornaments. The entablature is “supported” by stone engaged columns that resemble quoins which frame the entry to the building.

On either side of the entry are three windows: two six-over-six hung windows framing an eight-over-eight hung windows. The windows have stone sills and soldier course brick lintels. These windows have always had windows boxes through time, although they have changed in design through the years. Additionally, the façade has a stone watertable, a stone cornice and a stone coping.
Northeast Side Elevation

The northeast elevation has a continuation from the façade of the stone watertable, a stone cornice and a stone coping (Photographs 10 – 11). Located in the center of the elevation are three sets of three, six-over-six hung windows with brick header sills and brick soldier course lintels.

Northwest (Back) Elevation

The northwest (back) elevation has a painted, parge coating (Photograph 10). The stone watertable, cornice, and coping typical of other elevations are absent on this elevation. A painted, metal gutter extends the full width of the roofline, with one downspout located at the north end of the elevation and one other located near the center.

The elevation is arranged roughly into three bays. The center bay contains a set of three, six-over-six hung windows that share a masonry sill. The north bay contains three, six-over-six hung windows arranged with relatively equal spacing from each other. Each window has a masonry sill. The south bay contains two window openings. These openings are approximately half the dimension of the other windows on this elevation. Each has a masonry sill and is infilled with painted wood panels and outlined in painted wood trim. Directly below these windows is the exterior access point to the basement (Photograph 9). A set of stone steps extend parallel and adjacent to the building to the basement, the interior of which is accessible via a painted slab door. The steps are concealed behind a brick wall.

Southwest Side Elevation

Historic photographs indicate the southwest side elevation was identical in fenestration and stone detailing as the northeast elevation (Figures 6 – 7). The easternmost set of three, six-over-six windows remain visible, while the remainder of the elevation is characterized by the 1965 addition/wing (Photograph 2). The northwest (back) elevation of this wing has a door in the center accessed via a short flight of concrete steps with a metal railing on each side (Photograph 8). The southwest side elevation features a set of three, nine-over-nine hung windows with a brick header sill and a green fabric awning. The wing’s southeast-facing elevation has a center, panel door accessible via a set of concrete steps with metal railings (Photograph 1). A set of three, nine-over-nine hung windows with a brick header sill and green fabric awning is to the left (south) of the door.

Interior

While the building was originally configured as a library, some alterations have recently been made to accommodate the new use as a museum. Most notably, exhibit cases have been constructed along the exterior walls, covering the window openings from the inside to protect artifacts from sunlight. Many character-defining features and finishes remain intact, however, including the support columns through the center of the building, stepped masonry arches above those columns, and wood floors (Photograph 13).
2. **Fence Wall.** Works Progress Administration, builder. 1936.

The fence wall encompasses the entire property and is constructed of natural rubble stone (Photographs 2 – 5, 7, 10 – 11). Matching stone pedestals with stone caps are set at regular intervals. Newspaper articles, architectural drawings, and historic photographs indicate that the fence wall was a planned site feature to accompany the library building and park site (Figures 3, 5 – 8). Historic photographs indicate that the north corner pedestal was originally double its current height at one time (compare Figure 5 with Photograph 11). This photograph also indicates that the pedestals and wall sections in vicinity of the library building had cast stone caps. The wall appears to have been modified to its current appearance by the time the library opened in 1937.

The fence wall is a contributing resource to the nominated property because of its association with the design of the building site and for its association with the Works Progress Administration.

The remainder of the nominated property is characterized by several modern-day park resources, including a turf lawn, concrete sidewalks, and contemporary park benches, small objects, and playground equipment. There are three noncontributing resources of note:

- **Gazebo**
  Erected in 1982 and located at the south end of Lynn Riggs Park, this eight-sided gazebo has a stone foundation, concrete floor, painted square wood columns and balustrade, and a conical-shaped roof clad in green asphalt shingles (Photographs 4 – 5). The gazebo is accessible via a set of two stone steps with wood railing. A bronze plaque that reads “G. WAIDE SIBLEY MEMORIAL GAZEBO” is to the right of the steps. This structure is noncontributing to the nominated property because it was built after the period of significance.

- **Flagpole**
  A metal flagpole is northwest of the gazebo (Photographs 3, 5). The flagpole is set in a concrete foundation that features a bronze memorial plaque indicating that the object was dedicated in 1986. This resource is noncontributing to the nominated property because it was erected after the period of significance.

- **Fountain**
  A three-tier concrete foundation is set near the center of the property, roughly equidistant between the library building and the gazebo (Photographs 3, 6). The fountain is bounded

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2 The 1982 date of construction is based off a conversation with Claremore’s city parks director.
by a partial height stone wall with eight sides. Although the workmanship and materials of the stone appears to be similar to the contributing stone wall, a bronze plaque set in the wall base states that the existing fountain was dedicated in 1989. Therefore, this resource is noncontributing due to alterations.

**Integrity**

Will Rogers Memorial Library maintains integrity of location and setting thanks to its place within Lynn Riggs Park and the associated stone fence wall. The 1965 addition was constructed in a manner that still allows the library to convey its modest, square-shape design. The property retains a high degree of integrity of materials and workmanship, as seen in the stone fence wall and the library building’s buff brick exterior and Art Deco-inspired ornamentation. The library’s original windows were replaced by reflective glass windows with simulated divided lights at an unknown date (see Figure 10). These units were replaced after 2011 when the building was converted to a museum. Although the existing windows are vinyl-framed, they were installed within the historic window openings and more closely match the original windows in configuration. Black fiberglass mesh sunscreens are fixed to the exterior of each window opening. These prevent sunlight from entering the interior while keeping the historic window openings visible from the exterior. This alteration has given Will Rogers Memorial Library new life as a local museum while still conveying sufficient integrity for it to convey its historic design.
8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark “x” in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes

- B. Removed from its original location

- C. A birthplace or grave

- D. A cemetery

- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure

- F. A commemorative property

- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years
Will Rogers Memorial Library
Rogers County, Oklahoma
Name of Property

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

ECONOMICS

Period of Significance
1937

Significant Dates

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION, BUILDER
Will Rogers Memorial Library
Name of Property

Rogers County, Oklahoma
County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Located at 121 North Weenonah Avenue in Claremore, Rogers County, Oklahoma, the Will Rogers Memorial Library is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the local level of significance for Economics. The property takes its name from the famous humorist William Penn Adair Rogers, who agreed to sell the property to the City of Claremore for the construction of a library. Named in honor Will Rogers, who died tragically in a plane crash in 1935, the property is significant for its association with the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA). Construction of the library building and an associated stone wall encompassing the property began in 1936 as part of a concerted effort by the WPA to put unemployed individuals to work on projects to enhance public amenities. The period of significance is 1937, which corresponds to the year that the property was placed into service. The library immediately met the community’s educational needs. The building remains among the few extant examples of WPA-constructed buildings in Claremore and continues to serve an education function as a local history museum.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Historic Context

The Will Rogers Memorial Library is located at 121 N. Weenonah Avenue in Claremore, Rogers County, Oklahoma. Rogers County was initially designated as Cooweescoowee County during the 1906 Constitutional Convention, but after protests from county residents, the name was quickly changed to honor local politician and judge, and father of Will Rogers, Clement Rogers.3 Claremore is the county seat. The city spans roughly twelve square miles and is located at the intersection of historic U.S. Route 66 and Oklahoma Highways 20 and 88.4 Claremore’s early beginnings are traced back to Chief Glahma and his tribe of Osage Indians, who established a trading post along the Verdigris River. The post sat atop a 25-acre mound known by the French word for clear mountain, “Clermont”. By 1834, the United States had designated the eastern part of present-day Oklahoma as Indian Territory and assigned the area around Clermont for the Cherokee Nation after their forced removal during the Trail of Tears. By 1874, a Cherokee settlement around Clermont had established a post office, general store, and

blacksmith shop. However, the spelling of the town’s name changed to “Claremore” due to a clerical error in 1874.5

Oil fever hit Indian Territory at the beginning of the 20th century, but it was the discovery of an artesian mineral water well in 1903 that sent visitors to Claremore in search of its supposed healing powers. Claremore’s population increased from 855 in 1900 to 2,866 in 1910 and 3,720 by 1930, when the Will Rogers Memorial Library and the Rogers County Courthouse would take shape through the Works Progress Administration (WPA).6

Will Rogers Memorial Library takes its name from the famous humorist native to the area. William Penn Adair Rogers was born November 4, 1879, to Clement Vann Rogers and Mary America Schrimsher Rogers just outside of Oologah. After spending his childhood on the family ranch and various boarding schools in Indian Territory, Rogers at 17 would drop out of Kemper Military Institute to oversee work on the ranch while honing his riding and roping skills that he would later put to use as the “Cherokee Kid” in South Africa as part of the Wild West Show and later with the Wirth Brothers Circus. By 1919 Rogers and his wife Betty Blake had relocated to California to be nearer the movie industry. A move that would propel Rogers to stardom along with his weekly columns and syndicated daily “telegrams” depicting his homespun humor and common-sense political advice.7

Criterion A: Economics

Shortly before his untimely death on August 15, 1935, Rogers agreed to sell the site of his father’s livery and garage located across the Missouri Pacific Railroad from downtown Claremore. Rogers’ childhood friend W. E. Sunday listed the parcel, which was purchased by the federal government for $4,000. When notified of the sale, Rogers initially refused to commit the proceeds of the sale to further investments and requested the money be “given to the poor people or to buy an old lady a cow or something”.8 Morton Harrison, a local resident, suggested that the money be used to build a new library building. Rogers quickly agreed with this suggestion and went on to request that the facility be named the Sequoyah Memorial Library, as it was his belief that Sequoyah had done more than any other man.9 Even prior to Rogers’ death as a result of a plane crash in Point Barrow, Alaska, local citizens had proposed naming the new building in Rogers’ honor. One local resident is quoted as stating “Claremore needs one (library) bad enough” as the earlier library was too small and there would be nothing better than “building a stone structure and naming it the Will Rogers Memorial Library to honor the man while he is still alive”.10 After Rogers’ death, the family agreed that the library should bear Will’s name.

6 Bamburg.
8 Kim Keetch, Claremore Progress, August 17, 1986.
With the initial $4,000 from the sale of the property added to the $10,600 provided by the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) and $2,700 from the City of Claremore, construction on the new library began on February 10, 1936, at a cost of $18,000.11

The United States was entering the seventh year of the Great Depression when construction on the Will Rogers Library began, giving work to many local unemployed and unskilled workers through the WPA program. The WPA, created in May of 1935 as one of President Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal programs, was established to give work to employable persons facing destitution and the economic depression that had encompassed the nation. Initially named the Works Progress Administration before changing to the Works Projects Administration in 1939, Roosevelt’s WPA employed more than 8 million workers while providing relief to nearly one-quarter of American families.12

WPA projects across Oklahoma were implemented as direct measures to not only aid in unemployment recovery but also as an effort to enhance public amenities including public schools, recreational public parks, public swimming pools, and public libraries. Between 1935 and 1937, the WPA employed approximately 119,000 people with a total of $59 million spent in the state on WPA projects.13 Public libraries during the Depression suffered as much as everything else, but the WPA helped expand the reach of this institution in numerous communities across the country, including in nineteen (19) cities or towns in Oklahoma.14

In addition to construction work, the WPA aided in establishing youth employment programs to assist young men in gaining useful skills for future jobs. This program provided part-time employment and funds so that the recipients could also attend school. One project in Claremore employed young men in the city clerk’s office to make a survey of city records and various improvement plans for the city. Several thousand dollars were appropriated through the WPA, and this project employed up to one hundred boys.15

No skilled or professional workers were used in the construction of the Will Rogers Library. All men who worked on the library or neighboring site features such as the stone wall were farmers who came directly from WPA relief rolls. Material used in the construction of the buff-brick building came mostly from the old garage that formerly stood on the site.16 Work on the library

15 Seek City Youth Employment Project, Claremore Daily Progress, Friday, January 24, 1936. Volume XXVI – No. 171, 5.
Will Rogers Memorial Library  
Name of Property  
Rogers County, Oklahoma  
County and State

and other buildings such as an armory employed a large number of local men.\textsuperscript{17} Pay that workers received differed depending on where they lived, as the \textit{Claremore Daily Progress} noted that men in Claremore received less pay than those in nearby Tulsa.\textsuperscript{18}

WPA workers took part in laying the library’s cornerstone during a city-sponsored ceremony on April 8, 1936. The stone was obtained from Clement Rogers’ livery stable. It contained, among other items, a copy of the program from Will Rogers’ memorial service, an architect’s drawing of the new library, Rogers’ souvenir key to the city, a coin of the realm, a roster of Masonic Lodge officers, Rogers’ petition for Masonic degrees, and the poem “Traveler” by Thomas G. Andrews.\textsuperscript{19}

Although the Will Rogers Library is significant for its association with the WPA, the City of Claremore originally appears to have had a grander idea for the building’s design. Architect Joseph Koberling of Fleming & Koberling in nearby Tulsa was first hired to design the library in 1934. A native of Budapest, Hungary, Koberling first established a firm in Tulsa in 1925 and went on to design a number of notable commercial and public buildings in Tulsa, including the Tulsa County Library (built 1965, contributing to Tulsa Civic Center Historic District, NRIS #11000641), the Chamber of Commerce Building (built 1951, contributing to Oil Capital Historic District, NRIS #10001013) and Will Rogers High School (built 1939, NRIS #07000918).\textsuperscript{20}

Koberling and structural engineer W. C. Roads submitted the design of a two-story, Art Deco-style building to the city in October 1934. Estimated construction costs were between $18,000 and $20,000, with plans to add a community auditorium at a later date.\textsuperscript{21} A rendering of Koberling’s design was featured on the front page of the \textit{Claremore Progress} on November 15, 1934 (see Figure 4). Featuring an Art Deco-inspired stone frontispiece with pedimented top, flanking engaged columns, and bas relief detailing, the proposed building is notable for its extravagance amid the depths of the Great Depression. The newspaper noted that Claremore’s mayor was working with the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) to arrange the labor necessary to build the library at the cost of $25,000.\textsuperscript{22, 23}

By March 1935, Koberling’s proposed design was shelved for unknown reasons. A statement issued by the architect and engineer in \textit{Claremore Daily Progress} on March 15, 1935, suggests that there was a disagreement over fees between the involved parties, but it is unclear exactly when or why the City of Claremore transitioned to a simpler, one-story building designed by

\begin{footnotes}
\item[17] The Claremore Armory stood at the northeast corner of State Highway 66 (Lynn Riggs Boulevard) and West Patti Page Boulevard. It was demolished in 2005.
\item[21] \textit{Claremore Daily Progress}, Friday, October 5, 1934.
\item[22] \textit{The Claremore Progress}, Thursday, November 15\textsuperscript{th}, 1934……
\item[23] Original drawings available through the Tulsa Foundation for Architecture, \url{https://tulsaarchitecture.org/}.
\end{footnotes}
local WPA engineer R. K. Hughes. The stone wall that currently encompasses Lynn Riggs Park appears to be one of the only features retained from Koberling’s original design (Figure 3).

Construction of the library began in February 1936 and work was completed by the fall. A dedication ceremony was held on August 15, 1936, the first anniversary of Will Rogers’ death. The building originally featured a modest buff brick exterior with minimal detailing and no stone trim (Figure 5). A WPA-built fence wall made of locally quarried sandstone further contributed “to the appearances of the property.” In January 1937, the library’s exterior was remodeled to accommodate the Art Deco-inspired frontispiece, watertable, cornice, and coping. The stone for these features was contracted out to the Harter Marble Crete Company of Oklahoma City. Two six-feet-tall wrought iron lamp posts provided by the Chandler Fixture Company of Sand Springs were placed in front of the main entrance (Figures 6–7).

Conclusion

With the loss of the Claremore Armory building in 2005, the Will Rogers Memorial Library remains one of the few great examples of extant WPA buildings in Claremore. The construction of the building and associated stone fence wall provided jobs to unemployed, and unskilled laborers, and the facility provided much-needed educational opportunities to the local populace upon completion. The building’s modest design and reuse of materials stand out as a reminder of how cities across the country combated unemployment and the economic travesty of the Great Depression. With a beginning salary of $21 a month for unskilled labor, workers could earn their way to a higher pay of $30 a month after being re-classified as semi-skilled, and eventually $38 a month as an advanced skilled laborer.

The new library provided a boost to the community’s educational needs and stood in stark contrast to the facility’s previous locations, which included a dentist’s office. Prior to the Crash of 1929, the City of Claremore appropriated two rooms within city hall to house 600 volumes that had been acquired through contributions solicited by the Claremore Federation of Women’s Clubs. By the time Will Rogers Memorial Library opened in 1937, the city owned 3,400 volumes that were moved to the new building along with $845 worth of new furniture. The property retains sufficient integrity to convey significance for its association with federal work relief programs designed to provide employment and construct much-needed facilities for the public.

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25 Claremore Daily Progress, May 18, 1936, 2.
26 Material Purchased for Remodeling Will Rogers Library, Oologah Oozings, Thursday, January 14, 1937. Volume 2, 4. The original lamp posts are no longer extant. The current lamp posts that currently frame the main entrance were installed in 2012 as part of the building’s conversion to a museum.
27 The Living New Deal lists the following still extant WPA buildings in Claremore: Lake Claremore Boathouse located at Claremore Lake; Claremore Post Office (currently the Claremore Sheriff's Office) located at 114 S. Missouri Ave.; Public Information Building located at 103 S. Jim Davis Blvd. https://livingnewdeal.org/us-ok/claremore/.
28 Keetch.
benefit. In Claremore, no building reflects this effort more than the building named in memory of “Oklahoma’s favorite son”, whose humble life is reflected in its design.
9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)


Claremore Daily Progress, May 18, 1936.

Claremore Daily Progress, August 17, 1986.


Muskogee Daily Phoenix, Friday, February 7, 1936.


“Seek City Youth Employment Project,” *Claremore Daily Progress*, Friday, January 24, 1936. Volume XXVI – No. 171.

*The Daily Ardmoreite*, September 2, 1934.


Will Rogers Memorial Library
Name of Property

Rogers County, Oklahoma
County and State

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
____ previously listed in the National Register
____ previously determined eligible by the National Register
____ designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #___________
____ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # __________
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # ___________

Primary location of additional data:
_ X __ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
   Name of repository: _____________________________________

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _N/A________

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property  1.5 acres MOL

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84: ______________
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 36.311495  Longitude: -95.611297

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Will Rogers Memorial Library is set in Lynn Riggs Park (Gazebo Park). The property is bounded by a stone fence wall and comprises roughly 1.5 acres. The official legal description
recorded by the Rogers County Assessor is as follows: All of Block 104 in the Claremore Original Townsite.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This is the extent of the property historically associated with the Will Rogers Memorial Library and is based on information provided by the Rogers County Assessor. The property is owned by the City of Claremore.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: _Steve Robinson, Chairman (edits by OK/SHPO)_
organization: _Claremore Museum of History_
street & number: _121 North Weenonah Avenue_
city or town: _Claremore_ state: _Oklahoma_ zip code: _74017_
e-mail: _robinsonsteve74@gmail.com_
telephone: _ (918) 510-9070_
date: _March 2023; revised May 2023_

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to
the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn’t need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photo Log**

Name of Property: Will Rogers Library

City or Vicinity: Claremore

County: Rogers  State: Oklahoma

Photographer: S. Werneke, OK/SHPO

Date Photographed: March 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photo #</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Direction</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0001</td>
<td>Will Rogers Memorial Library, southeast-facing façade. Contributing stone fence wall in foreground.</td>
<td>West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0002</td>
<td>Will Rogers Memorial Library, 1965 addition (left) and 1937 building (right). Contributing stone fence wall (foreground).</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0003</td>
<td>General view of contributing stone fence wall. Noncontributing gazebo, flagpole, and fountain in background.</td>
<td>Southwest</td>
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<tr>
<td>0004</td>
<td>Noncontributing gazebo (left). Will Rogers Memorial Library (right). Contributing stone fence wall (foreground).</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
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<tr>
<td>0005</td>
<td>Close up of contributing stone fence wall.</td>
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<td>0006</td>
<td>Close up of noncontributing fountain.</td>
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<td>0007</td>
<td>General view of contributing stone fence wall.</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
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<tr>
<td>0008</td>
<td>Northwest (back) elevation, Will Rogers Memorial Library.</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
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<td>0009</td>
<td>Close up of basement access, Will Rogers Memorial Library.</td>
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<tr>
<td>0010</td>
<td>Northeast side elevation (left) and northwest elevation (right), Will Rogers Memorial Library. Contributing stone fence wall in foreground.</td>
<td>South</td>
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<td>0011</td>
<td>Southeast façade (left) and northeast side elevation (right), Will Rogers Memorial Library. Contributing stone fence wall in foreground.</td>
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<td>0012</td>
<td>Main entrance, Will Rogers Memorial Library.</td>
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<tr>
<td>0013</td>
<td>Interior, Will Rogers Memorial Library.</td>
<td>West</td>
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</table>
Will Rogers Memorial Library  Rogers County, Oklahoma
Name of Property  County and State

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.
Will Rogers Memorial Library is located at 121 North Weenonah Avenue in Claremore, Rogers County, Oklahoma. The Union Pacific (formerly, Missouri Pacific) Railroad, which generally extends northwest-to-southeast through town, separates the nominated property from the Claremore Downtown Historic District (NRIS #16000623), which is one block west.
Will Rogers Memorial Library is set in Lynn Riggs Park (Gazebo Park). The property is bounded by a stone fence wall and comprises roughly 1.5 acres. The official legal description recorded by the Rogers County Assessor is as follows: All of Block 104 in the Claremore Original Townsite.
Will Rogers Memorial Library
Rogers County, Oklahoma

Resource Map

1. Will Rogers Memorial Library (1937, contributing)
2. Fence Wall (1936, contributing)
4. Flagpole (1986, noncontributing)
5. Fountain (1989, noncontributing)
Will Rogers Memorial Library
Name of Property: Rogers County, Oklahoma
County and State: N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable):
Will Rogers Memorial Library
Name of Property  Rogers County, Oklahoma
County and State  N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 1: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Claremore, Rogers County, Oklahoma (Sanborn Map Company, 1933, Sheet 3), Sanborn Maps Collection, Library of Congress.

This 1933 Sanborn map of Claremore shows the future location of the Will Rogers Memorial Library northeast of downtown. Block 104 (outlined in red) is indicated as undeveloped.
Figure 2: Close up of Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Claremore, Rogers County, Oklahoma (Sanborn Map Company, 1940, Sheet 3) Sanborn Maps Collection, Library of Congress.

The Will Rogers Memorial Library is depicted in this close up of the 1940 Sanborn map of Claremore. It is indicated as a 16-foot-tall, 1-story brick building with 12-inch-thick walls. Wood posts support a composition roof with a 12-inch parapet.
Figure 3: Site Plan, Plans for a Will Rogers Library for the City of Claremore, Joseph R. Koberling, Architect, 1935, Joseph R. Koberling Collection, Tulsa Foundation for Architecture.

A stone wall was always intended to encompass the Will Rogers Library, as indicated in this site plan from the original drawings prepared by architect Joseph R. Koberling. The architect envisioned other site features that were not included in the final project, notably flagstone walkways.
Proposed Newcomer Among Claremore Public Buildings

This is the architect’s conception of what the new public library in Claremore will look like when completed, as designed by Joseph R. Koberling, Tulsa architect in charge.

The erection of the building has been made possible by the gift to Claremore, by Humorist Will Rogers, of all the cash proceeds from the sale of a piece of his property there and all materials salvaged from the building now upon it. The property was the site of the old livery stable operated by Rogers’ father.

J. M. Davis, Claremore mayor, completed arrangements this week with the FERA authorities for all labor required to erect the building. It will be of fireproof construction, built of re-enforced concrete and brick, faced with light buff brick trimmed in stone and will cost $25,000. W. C. Roads, of Tulsa is the consulting engineer.

Figure 4: Proposed Will Rogers Library Building, Claremore Progress, November 15, 1934.

Architect Joseph R. Koberling’s proposed design for the library was a two-story building with an Art Deco-inspired stone frontispiece with pedimented top, flanking engaged columns, and bas relief detailing. This proposed design was shelved for unknown reasons.
Figure 5: Will Rogers Memorial Library, c. 1936. Photograph courtesy of the Claremore Museum of History.

This c. 1936 photograph shows that the Will Rogers Memorial Library originally featured a modest exterior with corbeled brick and no stone trim. Note the height of the stone pedestal in the foreground, which was subsequently modified to its current height.
Figure 6 (top): Will Rogers Memorial Library, *Claremore Daily Progress*, August 4, 1937. Figure 7 (bottom): Will Rogers Memorial Library postcard, c. 1942, Chester R. Cowen Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society.

The library’s exterior was remodeled in 1937 to accommodate a stone frontispiece, cornice, and coping. The WPA-built stone wall, completed in 1936, added to the building’s appearance.
Will Rogers Memorial Library
Name of Property
Rogers County, Oklahoma
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 8: Aerial Photograph of Claremore, Rogers, County, Oklahoma, 1941.

This close up of a 1941 aerial photograph of Claremore shows the associated stone wall encompassing the property (outlined in red).
Will Rogers Memorial Library

Name of Property: Rogers County, Oklahoma

County and State: N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable):

Figure 9: Will Rogers Memorial Library, 1953. Photograph courtesy of the Claremore Museum of History.

Students gather during the noon hour break at Will Rogers Library, near the High School - Thurs. Feb. 5, 1953

The Will Rogers Memorial Library successfully met Claremore’s educational needs. The above photograph shows students outside of the library in 1953. Claremore High School was originally one block northeast of the library.
Will Rogers Memorial Library
Name of Property
Rogers County, Oklahoma
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 10: Will Rogers Library, 2011, Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office

The library’s original windows were replaced at an unknown date by window units containing reflective glass and simulated divided lights, pictured above. These units were replaced after 2011, when the building was converted to a museum.
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<td>Will Rogers Memorial Library, southeast-facing façade. Contributing stone fence wall in foreground.</td>
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Name of Property: Will Rogers Memorial Library, 1965 addition (left) and 1937 building (right). Contributing stone fence wall (foreground).
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- **General view of contributing stone fence wall. Noncontributing gazebo, flagpole, and fountain in background.**

- **Southwest**
Will Rogers Memorial Library
Name of Property
Rogers County, Oklahoma
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number  Photographs  Page  13

Noncontributing gazebo (left). Will Rogers Memorial Library (right). Contributing stone fence wall (foreground).  Northwest
Will Rogers Memorial Library
Name of Property
Rogers County, Oklahoma
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 14

0005 Close up of contributing stone fence wall. East
Will Rogers Memorial Library
Name of Property
Rogers County, Oklahoma
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

0006 Close up of noncontributing fountain. Southeast
Will Rogers Memorial Library
Name of Property
Rogers County, Oklahoma
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

0007  General view of contributing stone fence wall.  Northwest
Will Rogers Memorial Library
Name of Property
Rogers County, Oklahoma
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 17

0008 Northwest (back) elevation, Will Rogers Memorial Library. Northeast
Name of Property: Will Rogers Memorial Library
County and State: Rogers County, Oklahoma
Name of multiple listing (if applicable): N/A

0009 | Close up of basement access, Will Rogers Memorial Library. | North
Will Rogers Memorial Library
Name of Property
Rogers County, Oklahoma
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

0010  Northeast side elevation (left) and northwest elevation (right), Will Rogers Memorial Library. Contributing stone fence wall in foreground.  South
Will Rogers Memorial Library
Name of Property
Rogers County, Oklahoma
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

0011 Southeast façade (left) and northeast side elevation (right), Will Rogers Memorial Library. Contributing stone fence wall in foreground. Southwest
Will Rogers Memorial Library
Name of Property
Rogers County, Oklahoma
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

0012 Main entrance, Will Rogers Memorial Library. West
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Will Rogers Memorial Library
Name of Property
Rogers County, Oklahoma
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)