

AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF FIVE BUILDINGS
SELECTED AS OKLAHOMA LANDMARKS
AND LOCATED IN
POTTAWATOMIE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

By

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Stillwater, Oklahoma

1954

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
May, 1969

SEP 29 1969

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PREFACE

This study was initiated to gather and compile information pertaining to the history and interior design of five buildings chosen by the Oklahoma Landmarks Publication Committee and located in Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma. This topic was chosen as a tribute to the author's father, the late Lee P. Burnett, who was dedicated to this cause.

The writer wishes to thank Mrs. Christine Salmon, Associate Professor of Housing and Interior Design, Oklahoma State University, for her guidance, helpful suggestions, and criticisms. Indebtedness is also acknowledged to Miss Leevera Pepin, Assistant Professor of Housing and Interior Design; and Dr. Elizabeth Hillier, Professor of Home Economics Education, who also guided the study.

The writer also acknowledges indebtedness to The Benedictine Fathers of St. Gregory's College, Shawnee, Oklahoma, for the use of the material in the Archives and especially to Rev. Joseph Murphy and Rev. Denis Statham for their personal interviews; Mrs. Florence Drake Keller of the Pottawatomie County Historical Society, Shawnee, Oklahoma; and Mr. Lewis Quinnett of the Santa Fe Railway Company, Shawnee, Oklahoma.

Appreciation is expressed to Dr. J. M. Santino for the excellent photography and to Jay Sparks for the measured drawings. Gratitude is expressed also to Miss Velda Davis, who typed the manuscript, and for her help and guidance. The writer wishes to express sincere thanks to Inez Burnett, Jan Sparks, and Jeff Tully for their kindness, patience, and understanding.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Oklahomans are a proud people whose pride comes from frontier values of self-reliance, adaptability, and resourcefulness. Oklahoma has a history of variety, uniqueness and dramatic quality unmatched by any other state. Part of this fascinating past is due to the abundant exceptions to the general pattern of settlement as prescribed under the Northwest Ordinance.

Not too long ago Oklahoma was distinctively different from other states, but this is changing very rapidly. Communications and economic success are erasing most of those unique qualities and characteristics. State and local cultures are being augmented with national culture.

Local culture was very dominant in the early settlement periods because of the numerous agreements and treaties consummated by the United States Government and an extremely varied Indian population.

No period in Sooner State history can match the quarter-century between 1865 and 1889 for drastic social, economic, and political change. Oklahoma became a dumping ground for Indians as the federal government colonized tribes from all sections of the United States on lands taken from the Five Civilized Tribes by the Reconstruction Treaties. The Indian Territory became a kaleidoscope of tribal cultures. If one were to take a diagonal line as a rating

scale for indicating levels of tribal advance and mark it according to Indian cultures represented in Oklahoma following 1889 there would be graduation marks all along the line. On the upper end would be the Five Civilized Tribes, indicating their remarkable advance in the ways of western civilization. At the lower end of the scale would be the Kiowa, Comanches, Cheyennes, and Arapahos, their position indicating their relatively low level --Stone Age in most respects. On the cultural scale between the very high and the very low would be the advanced Caddos and Wichitas, followed in descending order by Delawares, Shawnees, Kickapoos, Poncas, Pawnee, Osages, Modocs, and others.¹

Some contemporary writers believe there is some justification for comparing the Citizen Band Potawatomi to the Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes. The Choctaw Academy, a Kentucky school instituted for the education of Indian youth, provided a common meeting ground and a mutual source of advanced culture. "It is interesting to note that in the latter days of the school the Potawatomi outlasted the Choctaws as regular attendants."

Perhaps the second greatest single influence on Oklahoma settlement and culture was the railroad.

In fewer than twenty-five years, a network of railroad lines laced the Indian nations. This brought the cattlemen, the boomer, then the homesteader; and by 1907, with Oklahoma statehood, the process of tribal dissolution begun in the 1830's was consummated.³

¹Arrell M. Gibson, Oklahoma - A History of Five Centuries (Norman, 1965), p. 215.

²Joseph Francis Murphy, Potawatomi Indians of the West: Origins of the Citizen Band (Norman, Oklahoma, 1961), p. 193.

³Gibson, p. 214.

Oklahoma's strong appreciation for its unique heritage is expressed by the number of museums that have been established for its preservation. During the term of Governor Henry Bellmon, Oklahoma took another step forward in trying to unite and perpetuate her culture. The Governor's Committee on Arts and Humanities was formed, and leaders from throughout the State began to lay the framework for a new era of appreciation in Oklahoma. One of the results of this committee's work was the formation of the Oklahoma Landmarks project, prepared and published under the direction of the Oklahoma State University School of Architecture. The objective of this project was to:

List in this publication those structures that seem noteworthy because they typify a phase of the development of this state of the nation, because they are of historical significance, or because they are of architectural interest and excellence. At the time they were selected all the buildings and other structures were sufficiently authentic and complete to provide the visitor with a reasonably accurate impression of the past, the present or the future of Oklahoma's architecture.⁴

As a member of the Pottawatomie tribe, the writer has been very closely related to their activities, and it is her desire to carry the Oklahoma Landmarks project one step further and investigate the interiors of those buildings that are either located in Pottawatomie County

⁴F. C. Salmon, C. D. Elliott, and C. V. Howard, Oklahoma Landmarks (Stillwater, 1967), p. 1.

or of special significance to the relocation of the Citizen Band Pottawatomie in Oklahoma.

In order to more clearly understand and appreciate many of the historic buildings that were a part of the settlement of this State, the writer feels that it is necessary to look into the movements and nature of the people who were involved. Four of the five buildings in this study are either school or church affiliated and served a direct need of the Potawatomi tribe after its arrival in Oklahoma from sad experiences on the Kansas Reservation.

CHAPTER II

POTAWATOMI HERITAGE

Indian history points to the original unity of the Potawatomi, Chippewa and Ottawa people as one tribe. These early Algonquian groups were closely related by blood and language. By 1671 some parts of the Mascoutens had joined the union, which was known to explorers as The Nation du Feu or "Fire Nation". The Mascoutens are believed to be the progenitors of some portion of the Prairie Band Potawatomi.

The early home of this Algonquian unit was the northern shores of Lake Huron and the southern Michigan peninsula. As the migrations began, the groups became more or less separate tribal units although they were continually moving in the same direction and in the same area. During the southward movement, the Potawatomi were divided into two separate bands with distinct characteristics. These psuedo-moieties are known as the Prairie Band and the Citizen Band Pottawatomie. The separate traits and characteristics of each group caused a permanent split in the tribe during their Kansas residency and resulted in the Citizen Band accepting citizenship and settling in Indian Territory, which eventually became Oklahoma.

Because of their unfavorable location between the Iroquois in the east and the Sioux in the west, the Potawatomi began a series of migrations southward from the Green Bay area. Between the 1680's and the 1700's the movement was concentrated between Green Bay and the St. Joseph River in Michigan, with settlements located near the present sites of Kewaunee and Manitowac, Wisconsin. This early period is often referred to by many writers as the French era.

French observers of the seventeenth century commented both upon the warlike nature of the Potawatomi and their disposition to welcome white visitors. Father Gabriel Dreuilletes, in 1657, referring to the large concentration of three thousand Indians at the village of St. Michel on the western shore of Lake Michigan, remarked the generous reception which the Potawatomi accorded to traders and missionaries.⁴

The Potawatomi not only welcomed the French but generally remained very loyal to them. They cooperated energetically in keeping the peace among the tribes of the Great Lakes area. The French regarded them as a dependable, stabilizing influence. In the colonial wars with the English, even through the last and decisive one, the Potawatomi remained steadfastly attached to the French. These Indians had a long tradition of receptivity to Frenchmen and French wares. They freely welcomed French missionaries and French traders and were particularly attracted to French trader's goods. It is little wonder that the French language was familiar to them many decades later in Iowa, Kansas, and even Oklahoma.⁵

The Potawatomi of the Lake Michigan era were

⁴Murphy, p. 8.

⁵Ibid., pp. 9-10.

hunters and fishermen, but used agriculture to supplement their food supply. They cultivated considerable quantities of corn. The women of the tribe did the labor of the fields. In addition to corn, they also produced beans, peas, squash, and tobacco.

According to an account of 1718, the Potawatomi lived in cabins of reed mats, the coverings consisting of a framework of saplings. During spring and summer, they set up agricultural villages. In the autumn they moved their dwellings into the woods for the winter hunting season. There they remained until spring when they returned to begin anew the planting of crops. These relatively ancient practices, respecting shelters and the culture of the soil formed a very suitable preparation for a significant advancement in white civilization in the West during the nineteenth century.⁶

Many contemporary records show that intermarriages with neighboring Indian tribes were common thereby creating the great number of mixed-bloods found on record in later years. There was also a very pronounced early tendency for the Potawatomi womenfolk to intermarry with the whites. This practice was an important factor in that it was, in later Potawatomi history, a direct link toward moving a large segment of the tribe in the direction of the white man's culture.

Richard Smith Elliot, a sub-agent to the Potawatomi developed a noteworthy discussion of the white-Indian intermingling in his 1845 report: Whatever advances the Potawatomi have made towards civilization have been promoted in a greater degree by the intermixture of white with the tribe, than any other cause.

⁶Murphy, p. 12.

These carry with them the habits of our race: and though the standard of imitation which they constitute for the Indians may not be considered high, yet it is for that reason more attainable by the latter. Their houses and farms are constant example, and they are able to do much in teaching agriculture in a simple and rude manner. It also seems that the issues of mixed blood, arising from such connexions, is much better fitted to adopt our habits than full blood Indians. The half-breed, men and women, among the Potawatomie, all wear the dress of the whites, and adopt our mode of life as far as their knowledge and means enable them to do so. The half-breed women almost invariably marry white men, if they can get them, and do their best to rank as sound housewives, but it is a little singular that the half-breed man, while they build houses, make small farms, and dress and live like the white, generally marry full-blooded Indian women. A full-blood Indian woman (at least among the Potawatomie here), with a white man or half-breed as a husband, always dresses her children, so far as she knows how, after the fashion of the whites, and generally observes the same rule herself.⁷

It may be well to note here that in the eyes of the white men employed by the government, it was not particularly necessary nor desirable that the Potawatomi attempt to preserve the pure Indian blood. In fact, they were of the opinion that intermingling of the races was an aid in taming the savage and held the position that the Indian should take the way of the white man. The Potawatomi in Indian Territory often appeared as whites and is explained by their continuous practice of intermarriage throughout history.

⁷Annual Report of the Commission of Indian Affairs (Washington, 1829-1908), 1845, p. 553, quoted in Murphy, p. 42.

During the British and American periods, politics, Indian wars, treaties, and international struggles, placed great strain upon the Indian movement. These conditions plus the never ending westward move of the American pioneer caused the Potawatomi great suffering. The tribe had become widely scattered over Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin. Again and again they yielded their lands by treaty arrangements with the United States Government. As one studies the removal of almost any of the tribes located in Oklahoma today, it is possible to find a "trail of tears" marking their way from their ancestral homes. For the Potawatomi this came in 1838.

The major bands of Potawatomi of Indiana known as the Kankaku, the Wabash, and the St. Joseph bands generally comprised the Osage River segment and are considered the roots of the Citizen Band or Oklahoma Potawatomi. The Osage River Reserve was located southwest of the Missouri River, in the present state of Kansas. On February 11, 1837, a treaty agreeing to remove to the reservation was signed and the tragic experience was underway by the middle of 1838. The tragic happenings were related by the following article:

Late in August, 1838, the principal removal of the Potawatomi from Indiana to the new reservation in Kansas was put into operation. The Indians of Twin Lakes, Marshall County, a peaceful, partially civilized group, were herded together without warning. Beginning August 30, different groups were collected until September 3, according to William Polke, 756 Indians were enrolled. They left encampment at Twin Lakes, Tuesday, September 4. On September 6, they

encamped near Logansport. On Monday afternoon, September 10, the mournful procession reached Winnemac's old village. On the 12th they forded the Tippecanoe River and passed Battle Ground. On September 14 camp was made near Williamsport and on the 16th they went into encampment at Danville, Illinois. All the way to Danville, great distress was occasioned by lack of water and the scarcity and poor quality of food. Most of the Indians became ill-- one day three hundred cases of sickness were reported. Many adults, and more children, died. A few Indians escaped and were found. The suffering continued more or less until the destination was reached Sunday, November 4, at Potawatomie Creek. ... Older residents of the towns through which the procession passed can recall hearing their parents and grandparents speak of the pitiful sights witnessed when the Indians, herded together like sheep, slowly moved across the state.⁸

The treaties of Chicago, September 26 and 27, 1833 provided for the removal of all Potawatomi bands from their north-central homelands. Considerable disagreement as to the exact lands exchanged in the treaties resulted in segments of the tribe being located in both the Council Bluffs and Osage River Reserve areas. The Council Bluffs Potawatomi were later known as the Prairie Band and wanted only to retain the native way of life to which they were accustomed. The Osage River segment was interested in advancement in agriculture, education, religion, and the arts of civilization. Both segments of the Potawatomi faced a period of anxiety and uncertainty that always accompanies the settlement of a new land.

⁸"Centennial of Removal of the Potawatomi," Indiana Historical Bulletin, XV (August, 1938), p. 285. Murphy, p. 107.

This study shall be concerned only with those phases of education, religion and social institutions that might have bearing on the Oklahoma settlement and the life contingent thereto.

The influence of the mission schools and their personnel, was an important factor in progress toward an agricultural way of life. The missions and schools provided the facilities necessary for training in the manual and domestic arts which characterize a civilized, agrarian society. This job might well have been done by government manual labor schools but none existed on these new reservations.

The Indian Department's records carry a constant theme of praise and commendation for the girl's school at Sugar Creek. While it would not be possible to prove that the female institution was the greatest single civilizing agency in the total mission effort, there is little doubt that praise was merited. The education of Indian women and girls to the domestic arts of the white man was a principal means of achieving civilized manners among the Potawatomi.⁹

While the women of the tribe were being educated at the reservation schools, the young men were often sent to distant institutions. As has been previously mentioned, many men students went to the Choctaw Academy in Kentucky where they received an education consistent with the standards of the day. The writer's great-grandfather was one of those students.

⁹Murphy, p. 168.

By practicing this discipline of education, the Potawatomi was departing from their native attitude toward children. Love for freedom and independence was stressed and encouraged from infancy.

Although the Indian loved his children very dearly ... the ungovernable spirit of independence is the effect of the manner in which they have been brought up from infancy. Every kind of liberty is given to the children; they may do as they please, without the slightest rebuke or check from their parents as this would be considered ill-treatment, and would be construed into a want of esteem and love for their offspring. They love their children most affectionately, and also their relatives, and they show their esteem and love by presents which they make to them. Even while their children are yet infants, and unable to make use of such gifts, they present them with horses and other property which they possess, and these gifts and presents are so much appreciated by them that they would consider it a theft and robbery to use or dispose of them without the consent of these little infants.¹⁰

The desire for education was a continuing factor in the life of the Osage River Potawatomi in their consequent removal to the Kansas River settlement and ultimately into Oklahoma Territory.

"The impact of the Christian religion cannot be minimized. Some intense loyalties"¹¹ to both the religion of the white man and the missionaries were developed during this time. The Baptists and the Jesuits worked untiringly among the Indians to Christianize and

¹⁰Ibid., p. 201.

¹¹Ibid., p. 149.

ultimately civilize the Potawatomi. Many of the missionary groups followed the Indian movement from Indiana to Oklahoma. Religion was not just an unfeeling motion, but an actual part of their daily routine. Daily religious participation is described by the Mathevon Journal as follows:

I have never seen in America or in France greater faith and piety. One of the missionaries assembles them every morning in the church. An Indian says the prayers aloud; this is followed by half an hour of meditation. Then the braves, at least one hundred everyday, assist at Mass, during which they sing hymns in their native tongue. After Mass one of them teaches catechism to about thirty boys and as many girls. At six-thirty in the evening, they have prayers in common and return to their homes. Every Sunday, they sing High Mass and Vespers beautifully. The Americans mingle their voices with the savages. The Indian voices are superbe.¹²

Ceremonies and rituals have always been an integral part of the life of every Indian tribe and the Potawatomi was no exception. It was a natural move for the Indians to enter into the ceremonies of the Catholic Church with great zeal. Father Joseph Murphy relates in his study of the Potawatomi one such occasion:

A contemporary letter of one of the Jesuit Fathers gave an account of a Corpus Christ feastday procession in 1843. The description of the size, color, and splendor of the affair would have done justice to similar ceremonials in Old Spain or Mexico: 'The canopy was carried by the eight principal chiefs, and followed by the commander in chief and a squadron of lancers on horseback ... the prayer of twelve hundred people ... rose like incense.' This type of public religious

¹²Ibid., p. 172.

demonstration was repeated later, both at St. Mary's on the Kansas River and at Sacred Heart Mission in the Indian Territory.

A large and colorful party often went forward some distance to welcome distinguished guests or new arrivals. When the Ladies of the Sacred Heart first came to the reservation, the Potawatomi, to the number of five hundred, greeted them a mile from the mission. Their dress was gay; many were mounted; bright blankets, plumes and feathers were displayed; feats of horsemanship were performed for the entertainment of the newcomers. This kind of cordial display was also enacted later at St. Mary's on the Kaw River upon the arrival of the first Catholic bishop of Kansas. And the Potawatomi in 1891 accorded a similar welcome to the first bishop of the Indian Territory on the occasion of his first visit to Sacred Heart Mission, located in the southeast corner of their reservation. It is probably symbolic of the intervening advancement in civilization that one new feature was added to the reception party in Oklahoma: there were twenty wagons along with the mounted horsemen, and the cortege met the bishop at a total distance of three miles from his destination.¹³

In a study of linguistics of primitive tribes, it is not surprising to find that they often are able to master several languages or dialects. Among the Potawatomi, it was not unusual to find a certain proficiency in the French tongue which was no doubt a direct result of their early alliance with the French traders. Missionaries working among the tribe never felt a necessity of learning the native language and very few gained even a limited knowledge of the Potawatomi language. Reports seem to indicate that in Oklahoma the Indians spoke French, English and Potawatomi all very fluently.

¹³Ibid., pp. 173-174.

The Indian Advocate, one of the earliest Oklahoma Territory newspapers, gives this account of the first visit of Isidore Robot:

When the learned Abbot visited the inhabitants of this wilderness, he was surprised to find that the great majority of the Pottawattomies could speak English and French as fluently as their native language.¹⁴

As previously discussed, the tribe was separated into two segments during the removal from Indiana and Illinois after the treaties of Chicago. With one segment continuing, the chase and the other pursuing an agricultural civilization, it was virtually impossible to reunite them again some ten years later on the Kansas River. After twenty years on the Kansas lands, it again became apparent that the Potawatomi would be forced to move. The Prairie Band elected to receive a small reservation and remain in Kansas, while the Citizen Band chose to take allotments in Indian Territory. Once again, this time seemingly forever, the two segments were parted.

In 1870, the Citizen Band set up headquarters in Oklahoma. A business committee and tribal councils were organized and only since then have they had a unified history. The Business Committee, elected to serve by tribal vote, is still actively engaged in conducting tribal affairs. An elected chief also serves with the business committee. A small amount of land near Shawnee

¹⁴Ibid., p. 347.

is still held in common.

The first building needs in Oklahoma on the Pottawatomie lands after homes had been established were quite naturally churches and schools. They immediately set about to satisfy these needs. During their first ten years of residency in Oklahoma, they found both the Friends Society (Quakers) and the French Catholic Missionaries extremely helpful, and their first major buildings reflect this fact.

CHAPTER III

SHAWNEE MISSION

During 1870, the Citizen Band Potawatomi began moving onto the Indian Territory lands assigned to them by the government in return for their valuable Kansas River Reserve. They were dismayed to find a band of Absentee Shawnees living on and claiming the land. A treaty giving the Shawnees access to this portion of Indian Territory had never been ratified, thus the records did not show their residency. Thomas Wildcat Alford recalls, "When the Pottawatomies came into the country there was a great deal of unpleasantness, hard feelings, and nearly a war between the two tribes."¹ After much suffering on both sides a delegation of Friends who were working among the Shawnees took the matter to the President and it was temporarily settled. "Ultimately, the Pottawatomies agreed to let the Shawnees live undisturbed in their homes, and the Shawnees were given allotments along with the Pottawatomies."²

¹Thomas Wildcat Alford, Civilization as Told to Florence Drake, University of Oklahoma Press (Norman, Oklahoma, 1936), p. 70.

²John Fortson, Pottawatomie County and What Has Come of It, Auspices of Pottawatomie County Historical Society (Shawnee, Oklahoma, 1936), p. 5.

The federal Indian policy had undergone monumental changes in the post-Civil War period, and because of the great concentration of tribes in Indian Territory these changes had specific meaning for the inhabitants here.

The most interesting change in Indian administration during the post-bellum period concerned President Grant's encouragement of the 'Peace Policy' as a substitute for the War Department's 'Force Policy', in solving problems associated with the Indians.³

Because the government treatment of various Indian tribes had become almost intolerable, some of the nation's church leaders asked for a hearing with President Grant. A number of these church leaders were of the Quaker faith, and they pointed out that a century of force had failed to solve the Indian problem. At this hearing the President agreed to appoint the Indian agents from selected leaders of various religious denominations. This same policy was to be used concerning the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Most of the 'Peace Policy Agents' assigned to the Indian tribes of Oklahoma were Quakers. Thomas Miller and later Johnathan Hadley, headed the Sac and Fox Agency.⁴

Many of the Quakers also served as teachers at government schools.

Because of the ill will between the Shawnees and the Potawatomis and the trouble with the government, there was

³Gibson, p. 252.

⁴Ibid., p. 252.

a feeling of uncertainty and uneasiness everywhere. There were many meetings of the councils, and much discussion around the campfires of both tribes.

There was a feeling among our people that some of our young men should be educated so that they could read and write, and understand what was written in the treaties and old documents in our possession. . . . As one chief put it, 'It would enable us to use the club of the white man's wisdom against him in defense of our customs and our Mee-saw-mi as given us by the Great Spirit.'⁵

Thus, the Shawnee Tribe now felt the need for education as did the Potawatomi. The Friends Society of Philadelphia had visited among the Shawnee and were trusted completely, so it was decided that they would open a school in connection with the mission they had planned. The site selected was about a mile and one-half from the Canadian River on a majestically wooded hill.

The Mission was built about one-third of a mile from my father's cabin. He was one of the few Indians who really believed in education, and he heartily endorsed the efforts of the Friends. In fact he helped to haul the lumber used in the building from the Sauk and Fox agency, about thirty miles distant as the crow flies, but much farther by wagon roads. There was a government saw mill at the Agency, and the lumber was donated for the new school and church building.

When the mission was finished, and a day school opened, six Indian children and I were admitted, and were given English names.

The mission when first opened consisted of one building about fourteen by twenty-eight feet, divided into two rooms. The missionary, Joseph Newsom, and his family, lived in one room, and the other was used for the schoolroom and office.

⁵Alford, p. 73.

The furniture was crude, but seemed wonderful to Indian children. I do not remember what books we studied at first. Our teaching must have been mostly oral. We wanted to learn words that white children used in their play. We quickly learned words that were commonly used, such as game, deer, cat, dog, duck, bow, and arrow. After we had learned to spell and read, we used McGuffey's readers, and they opened to us many wonderful visions of the life of white people, especially white children.

For two years, the Friends held the day school in connection with the mission, then the government assumed control, added a new building and turned it into a boarding school. The friends still exercised an influence in the management of the school, and conducted religious services in connection with the school.⁶

During the next ten years the area surrounding the Friends Mission became known as Shawneetown and was home to whites and Indians alike. Shawneetown was on the direct route from Fort Smith, Arkansas and boasted a Post Office and Trading Post. Several white traders had been licensed to enter the area and establish trading posts.

The Potawatomi, Kickapoo, Sauk and Fox, and Shawnee tribes were all pulled together under the jurisdiction of the Sauk and Fox Agency and were being served by the Friends Society. In 1885 the meeting house was enlarged and Dr. Charles W. Kirk, who was then head of the Friends group, started the Shawneetown monthly meetings with both Indians and whites attending. Many different tribal groups took advantage of this meeting place (see Figure 1). However, soon after 1904 interest in the mission work

⁶Ibid., p. 75-79.



Figure 1. Stone Marker at
Shawnee Mission

began to drop, and by 1924 the work was abandoned.

By the 1920's it was apparent to many of the pioneers that Pottawatomie County had records and traditions that were worthy of being preserved for future generations to use. On February 18, 1926 a group of interested persons met in the Shawnee Carnegie Library and formed the Pottawatomie County Historical Society. The by-laws and constitution were adopted by the group on February 25th and they immediately entered into negotiations with the Friends Society concerning use of the Mission Church. This endeavor was eventually a success and the Shawnee Mission now houses the Pottawatomie County Historical Society's extensive collection of arti-facts and records.

The Shawnee Mission is a small, unpretentious, white frame building with simple angular lines reflecting the decades of service rendered (Figure 2). The beauty of this building lies in the miracle of the words and deeds of those who worked there and in the fond memories of all whose lives were touched by this force in civilization. Resting in the bell tower atop the church is the old bell which once rang resoundingly the call to worship.

The approach to the building is from the west by a long drive terminating in a parking area on the south. The front entrance is on the west and has a relatively small doorway of only three feet wide. The door is made from three one-foot vertical oak panels fitted together and finished with a very dark oak stain and varnish. The



Figure 2. Shawnee Mission,
Exterior View

door opens directly into the auditorium and the entire space is visible as there are no partitions. Even though the mission now houses a museum, the pews and pulpit are still in place and accommodate the monthly meetings of the Historical Society.

The large room is an area of approximately nineteen feet by forty-seven feet, and the north room is fifteen and one-half feet by nineteen and one-half feet. The north room was the original building and the larger room was added during a later expansion. Four inch flooring was used in both rooms, but was laid in opposite directions. Glass exhibit cases have been placed on the south, north, and west walls and contain pictures, documents and other small items. Large floor exhibit cases and fittings that are attached to the walls and floors are indicated on the floor plan (Figure 3).

The building materials are not consistent in the two rooms and reflect two construction periods. A three foot wainscoting of five inch boards has been placed on the walls in both rooms. A pressed paper or fiber board with twelve inch vertical scoring covers the top section of the walls in the large room. The top walls in the smaller room are sealed with a three inch lath stripped in a horizontal position.

The ceiling of the small room has beaver board squares stripped together with a two inch lath. The ceiling of the large room is covered with square ceiling

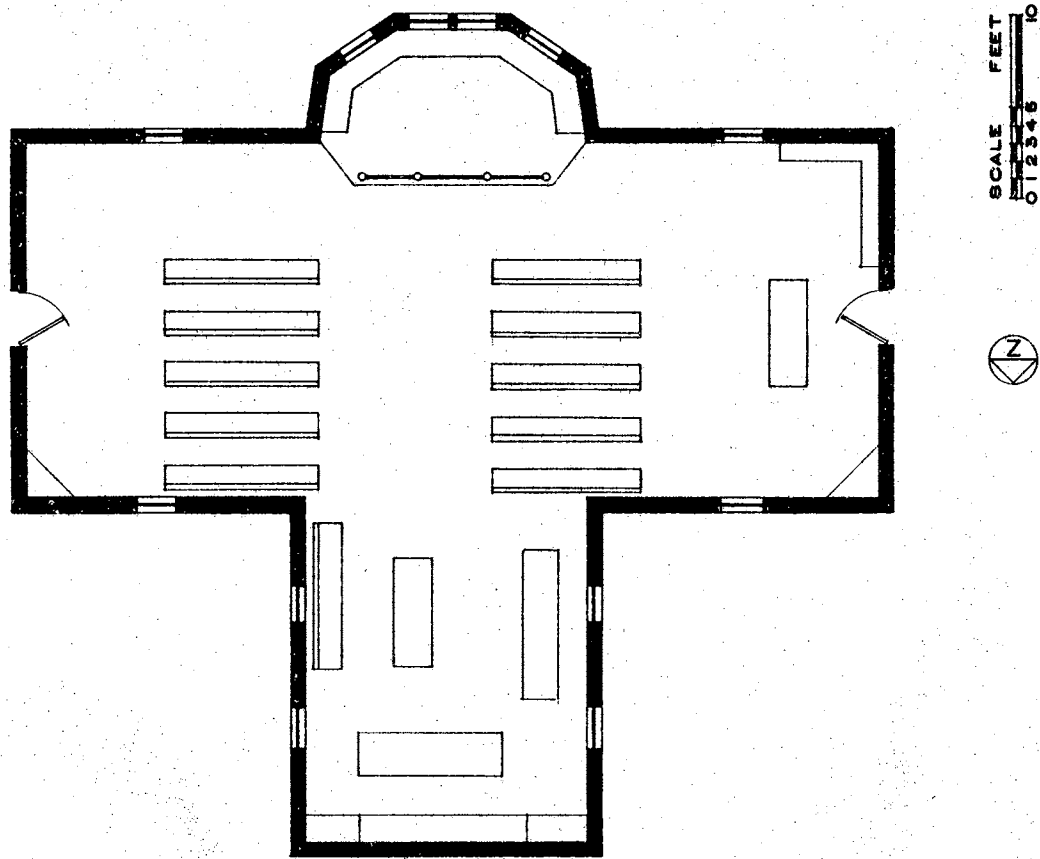


Figure 3. Exterior View Shawnee Mission Building
Floor Plan

blocks that are of a rather recent date although no record was available as to when they were put in place.

Ten four-on-four double hung windows are spaced around the building. They are twenty-six inches wide and have a four inch plain plank facing. In the center bay section are two short two foot stationary windows as shown in the exterior view of the church.

There are numerous items furnishing the church such as an organ, a piano, and a roll top desk, but each has a history apart from the mission and it is not the intent of this study to cover all items cataloged in the museum. However, there are five small, very plain pews or benches that are believed to be of the original furnishings. An undated newspaper article in the files of the Shawnee News refers to crude wooden pews made by Indian labor that are on display at the Mission Historical Building. These benches are small and quite low indicating that they might have been used in the school for the children. They afford a most interesting contrast to the ten commercially constructed pews that are in place in the main body of the building.

The Historical Society is in the process of having the building painted both inside and outside and there will be no doubt some reorganization of the museum pieces. Because of limited space and an ever growing collection, the Historical Society is beginning to think in terms of a new building to be constructed beside the church. A new

building would house the museum articles and the church could again relate to visitors the original purposes of religion and education.

CHAPTER IV

SACRED HEART BAKERY

Sacred Heart Mission was established in October, 1876, thirteen years before the opening of Oklahoma Territory by Rt. Rev. Don Isadore Robot from the old French monastery of Pierre qui Vire. He volunteered for missionary work with the American Indians after the Franco-Prussian War, in which he served as a chaplain. Father Robot and a lay brother sailed from Havre on January 14, 1873 with New Orleans as their destination. During his service in Louisiana, Father Robot became increasingly aware of the conditions under which most Indian tribes were being forced to survive. He had also made some personal contact with the Jesuit Fathers who were working among the Potawatomi at St. Mary's in Kansas.

Awareness of the ever increasing Indian population of Oklahoma Territory and the knowledge that they were living without the benefit of church or school was of great concern to Father Robot. Because he had been urged by the Fathers in Kansas to aid the Potawatomi in their new homeland, Father Robot and a lay brother set out for Atoka, Choctaw Nation where there was a small group of Catholics.

They arrived in Atoka in October 1875 from whence they immediately set about making several journeys to visit among various Indian tribes. Some of those visited were the Osage, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and the Potawatomi.

By the autumn of 1876, Father Robot had decided to settle among the Potawatomi and had chosen the site for his new mission. "Bald Hill was selected for the site of Sacred Heart Mission on a section of land given by the Potawatomies on the condition a church and school would be built."¹ To further pinpoint the site, it is approximately thirty miles south of Shawnee, and forty miles east of Purcell, Oklahoma. In later years the Mission was to become a stopping place for travelers from Fort Smith, Arkansas to the Fort Sill military installation. Hospitality was a trait for which the Benedictine Fathers were noted, and the writer found this trait still very prevelant among their successors at St. Gregory's College.

The untiring labors of the Benedictine Fathers and their Indian helpers, coupled with an amazing use of the natural resources resulted in an institution of rare quality. Because of the fine relationship, the Potawatomi had enjoyed in Kansas with the Sisters at St. Mary's, they prayed constantly for God to send some Sisters to teach their girls in Indian Territory. The prayer was answered

¹Ada Evening News, Sunday, April 20, 1952. No page as this was a clipping in St. Gregory's Archives folder.

as Father Robot had worked diligently to secure an Order of Sisters to take up this task. There was now the St. Mary's School for Girls to compliment the Sacred Heart Institute.

Rev. Joseph Francis Murphy, O.S.B., St. Gregory's College, has written a very complete and detailed account of the history of Sacred Heart in his thesis entitled The Monastic Centers of the Order of St. Benedict in Oklahoma.

Father Murphy describes the school as follows:

The schools are large and commodious and beautifully situated. Shut out from view on all sides, itself on a hill, it is not until you are directly in front of it, on the highest hill for miles around, that you can fully appreciate the lovely location. ... St. Mary's Academy is to the south of the monastery. Both face the east. The monastery is surmounted by two towers of modest pretention, between which, elevated on a pedestal rises a life size statue of the Sacred Heart. A new and spacious building has been added to the boys school, and now the missionaries hope with the help of kind friends to carry on with greater success their noble work.²

When one analyzes the isolated location of Sacred Heart, the task that was monumental becomes awe-inspiring.

With the pioneering era at an end and the magnificent institution in operation, it seemed impossible that disaster could strike. On the night of January 15, 1901 at 11 p.m., fire from an unknown origin struck and completely demolished the main structures of Sacred Heart. Several

²Rev. Joseph Francis Murphy, Monastic Centers of the Order of St. Benedict in Oklahoma (Shawnee, Oklahoma, 1968), p. 23.

of the outlying buildings were not touched and the Bakery building was one of these.

The Benedictine Fathers rebuilt the monastery and the girls school was reopened, all with amazingly little time lost. The St. Benedict's Industrial school made great strides in the following year. After the fire, however, the Fathers began to think in terms of locating the college and a monastery in a place which was more accessible. Now that the placement of railroad lines had been determined, Shawnee was such a location.

"The beginnings of Sacred Heart Mission enterprises were humble indeed"³, but "the remains of Sacred Heart pay tribute to the French Catholic and the Indians, as they toiled together in the effort of the Culture of the Continent, to clasp that of the aborigine."⁴ Sacred Heart never completely recovered from the fire and by 1957 the last of the buildings were torn down leaving only a few of the service buildings standing.

It seemed impossible that a place that had given of its very soul to so many should be completely deserted. Many visitors continue to come to Sacred Heart if only to view the crumbling foundations, the thickets of wild lemon bushes brought from Palestine by Father Gregory, old cemeteries abloom with crepe myrtle in all its glowing

³Tulsa World, Sunday, May 1, 1932 (Archives Clipping).

⁴Ada Evening News, April 20, 1952 (Archives Clipping).

color, and the huge weathered crucifix still standing amid an abundant growth of greenery. These few remaining signs sparked many memories for those who have known Sacred Heart and try to relate to newcomers some of the magnificent past that transpired here.

Rev. Denis Statham, O.S.B., St. Gregory's College, Shawnee, Oklahoma has embarked upon a program of restoration for some of the remaining buildings of the mission. The first building to receive attention was the bakery (Figure 4). This is "a two-story stone building which was used as the bakery as well as the printshop for the Indian Advocate, the mission newspaper."⁵ The building is approximately thirty-six feet by eighteen feet and built of native stone, cut and constructed under the guidance of the pioneer Fathers. The building is very reminiscent of the French style of architecture and has been identified as typical of those found in Southern France or the French Basque county. This is not surprising considering the fact that many of the early Fathers came to Sacred Heart from that part of France.

The first phase of restoration was to rejuvenate the bakery by repointing the stone, repairing and repainting the woodwork and replacing floors in the basement and first story.⁶

⁵Oklahoma Orbit, Daily Oklahoman, Sunday, July 24, 1966.

⁶Ibid.



Figure 4. Sacred Heart Bakery Building



Figure 5. Iron Work, Sacred Heart Bakery

Not only the exterior construction is of stone, but also the first story floor and it was estimated to weigh approximately fifteen tons. Because of the excessive weight, the floor stones were removed and reinforcement steel put in place. The sub-floor was of split logs and was covered by a thick layer of sand into which the stones were placed. After the reinforcement elements were in place, a four-inch layer of sand was spread on the sub-flooring and the stone relaid in its original state.

The double front doorway, the only entrance to the building, is a Romanesque arch as are the openings for the six casement type windows. Each is outlined with perfectly cut stone forming a gentle arch pattern approximately 12 inches deep. The metal work adorning the door is of the original pieces made and used at early day Sacred Heart (Figure 5).

The roof has been resingled and is topped by twin chimneys from the ovens on the north wall; these extend into the leanto on the north of the main body of the building. The ovens are approximately eighteen inches high, six feet wide and six feet deep. The ovens operated on a retained heat system.

The upstairs room, reached by a steep, narrow, shallow tread stairway in the southeast corner, was divided into three rooms. Partitions indicated the room was divided into half and the north half divided again. The baker used the south one-half for sleeping quarters

and it is believed the other two rooms may have been used for storage. The partitions have all been removed and Father Statham uses the upper floor for sleeping when he is working on the restoration project.

An altar from the last monastery has been refinished and is in place on the first floor of the bakery building, which now serves as a meditation room. The oven receptacles make an excellent storage place for the altar articles.

The little bakery, that was once so well known for the delicacies prepared there, is now a shrine where one can give thanks for the heritage Sacred Heart left to Pottawatomie County and indeed all of Oklahoma.

CHAPTER V

SACRED HEART CHURCH

Bald Hill was a landmark known to the Indian and the frontiersman long before Sacred Heart Mission was established. "From the vantage point of this gently rounded and treeless height the traveler can look more than thirty miles across the horizon in nearly any direction."¹ "The present church stands in gleaming white on this crest."² "For miles the stately white church atop Bald Hill can be seen"³ and appears to be a "sentinel guarding the last few treasures ... of the heroic efforts to bring faith, education, and culture to the Shawnee and the Pottawatomie, and the frontier."⁴

For several years after the fire of January 15, 1901, Sacred Heart was without a church. Church services were held in the granary during the intervening years between the fire and 1913 when the new parish church was completed. The new church was "one of the first re-enforced concrete

¹Ada Evening News, April 20, 1952.

²Ibid.

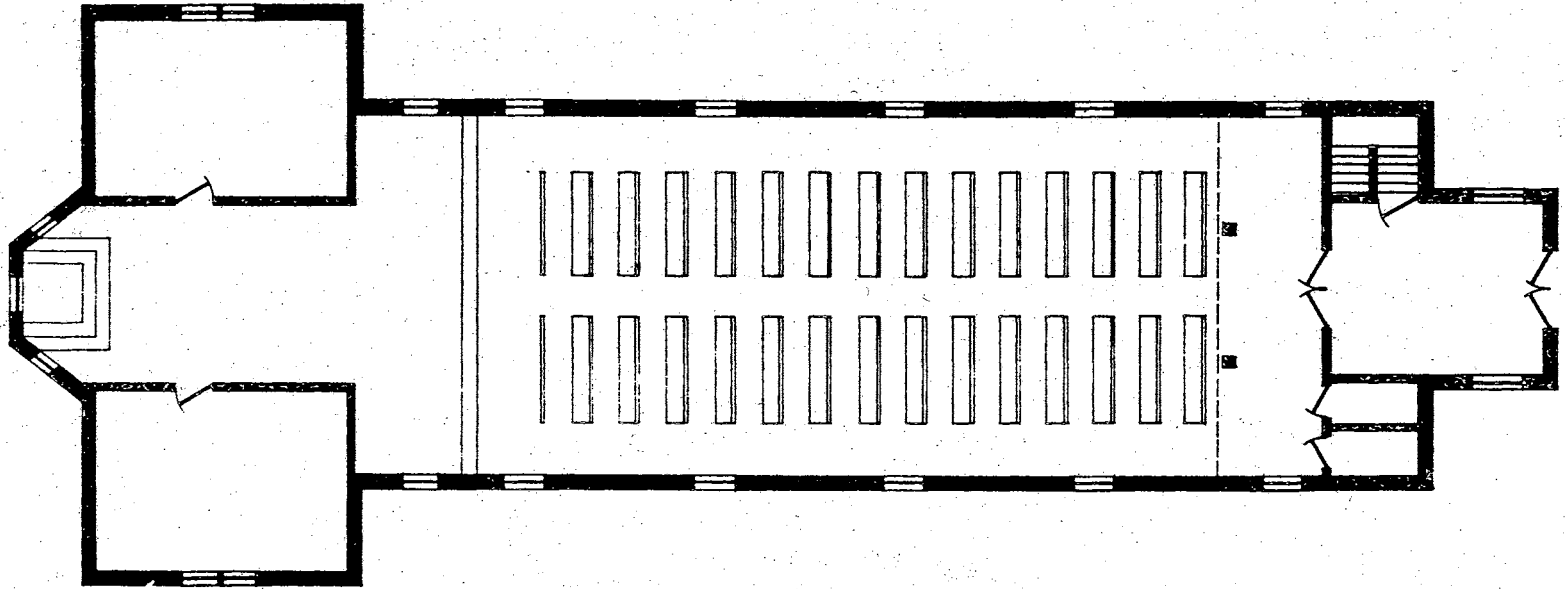
³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

churches in Oklahoma" and was constructed "about one-sixth of a mile east of the abbey."⁵ The building is of Gothic style and is built on a 'latin cross' floor plan (Figure 6). The auditorium is twenty-eight feet and three inches by fifty-three feet. The sanctuary depth is approximately thirty-five feet and nine inches. The sacristy on both right and left side is thirteen feet wide and nineteen feet and eleven inches long. The vestibule is thirteen feet and one inch by sixteen feet and one inch. The Gothic arch is predominant in the doorways, windows, stations of the cross, and mouldings of the alter opening.

The main entrance, on the east facade, is a six foot doorway closed with two three foot doors that are approximately ten feet to the top of the arch. Above the doors are two, stained glass windows that measure two feet and nine inches each and together form a slightly smaller arch above the large doorway arch (Figure 7). The vestibule has two simple rose windows. Each window consists of eight panes of wedge shaped glass separated by eight wooden spines that meet in the center in a six inch circle. The diameter of the window is three feet and nine inches. These windows are on the north and south walls of the vestibule (Figure 8). The vestibule has a table for

⁵Rev. Jerome Wichulis, Notes in Sacred Heart Folder in the Archives of Sacred Heart Priory, St. Gregory's Abbey, Shawnee.



SCALE FEET
0 10 20 30

Figure 6. Floor Plan of Sacred Heart Church



Figure 7. Exterior View, Sacred Heart Church



Figure 8. Rose Window, Vestibule, Sacred Heart Church

literature, a bench, and a glass case to house religious articles.

A step through the two, three foot swinging doors into the main body of the church reveals the beautiful forms of the Catholic religion. Marble altars, stained glass windows, beautifully painted statues, and handmade lace altar clothes create the image of the great and glorious cathedrals. The varying shades of red, green, blue, and gold used with white and woodtones are very pleasing.

There are ten large stained glass windows in the main body of the church, three small windows in the altar area and the two in the balcony area forming the arch above the front entrance. The windows are resplendent in varied colors and designs (Figure 9). The holy family, catholic emblems, fruit motifs, and baby lambs are inscribed on the panes. Most of the area around the main figure is filled in with an arabesque pattern that has been enameled into the glass. The small windows on the west side of the building surround the altar, one on either side and one above.

An angel robed in blue holding a shell which contains holy water is facing the front entry at the right side of the center aisle. Also at the center aisle is a small rectangular table, very sturdy in appearance with legs carved to resemble an outstretched accordion. It was made by the brothers of the monastery. This table is covered



Figure 9. Stained Glass Window,
Sacred Heart Church



Figure 10. Side Altar, Sacred
Heart Church

with a white cloth and holds the communion vessels. The benches in the auditorium number fourteen on each side and were commercially made. They have a cross carved into each end piece. The original wood floor of the auditorium is covered with a grey-green brick patterned vinyl floor covering. The walls and the vaulted ceiling are covered with an embossed tin that is quite elaborate and forms a frieze and cornice at the ceiling line. An embossed line also gives a wainscoting effect approximately four feet from the floor. The embossing is in a geometrical block design with a leaf scroll decorating the cornice. The walls are all painted a soft shade of green and the cornice and ceiling are white.

The choir loft extends seven feet and three inches into the auditorium and has two ten-inch square vertical supports. An organ and five benches are in the loft which is reached by a stairway opening off the front vestibule. The front facade stained glass windows are located in this loft and are a source of light for this part of the building.

The sanctuary is fitted with a main altar and two side altars (Figure 11). These are of wood painted white with marble columns in the front which are capped with a corinthian type capital. The two smaller alters upon which are the statues of The Virgin Mary and St. Joseph are edged with an egg and dart design (Figure 10). The altar linens are trimmed in hand crocheted lace made in a



Figure 11. Altar View, Sacred Heart Church

repeat of a large and small cross. The large altar duplicates the two smaller ones, although it is several feet higher. The dominant motif on this altar is a Greek anti-fix and is supplemented with a stylized leaf design. The mass table, a recent addition to the altar because of changes in the service, is a plain, rectangular, waist high table made by one of the members of the congregation. This table holds The Bible, in its cradle, and brass candle holders. It is covered with white linen edged in lace.

Six chairs flank the altar, three against the south wall and three against the north. The chairs on the south wall are very square and thick-set in appearance. They are made of oak and are finished with a dark stain. These chairs are constructed with a closed back, seat and arms; and the legs are of a four-inch thickness. The quatrefoil motif is applied to the back and around the apron. The chairs and the server's kneeler were made by the brothers of the monastery (Figure 12).

Chairs used on the altar of the Catholic church are usually found in sets of three, the priest's chair with a higher back than the two servers' chairs. On the north wall is another set of chairs that were imported from France, illustrated in Figure 13. These chairs are made from mahogany and have gold colored, cut-velvet upholstery on the seats. The backs of these chairs are quite high, reaching almost five feet, and are topped with a trefoil



Figure 12. Server's Chairs, Sacred Heart Church



Figure 13. French Altar Chairs, Sacred Heart Church

arch and cross. The finials repeat the same general motif. The priest's chair has open arms and the two side chairs have gently curved side rails. The chair legs are somewhat akin to the Louis XVI style and have porcelain casters. The floor of the entire altar area is covered with vibrant red carpet.

The Sacred Heart Church, gleaming white sentinel guarding the treasures of the past, is truly a rare specimen in the architectural history of Oklahoma.

CHAPTER VI

ST. GREGORY'S COLLEGE

St. Gregory's College is the successor to the Sacred Heart legacy. Known in the early years as the Catholic University of Oklahoma, it is located northwest of the city of Shawnee. After the fire at Sacred Heart in 1901, the Benedictine fathers decided the college should be located in some less isolated spot than the former community. Although Shawnee businessmen arranged for the land, it was not until 1912 that the funds were available to consider construction.

By 1912 Shawnee was decided upon as the new location and land was acquired there. The monastic community placed Hildebrand Zoeller, O.S.B., in charge of construction. He sought out and obtained the services of a renowned architect, Victor Klutho, St. Louis, Missouri. Klutho drew the plans for the Tudor-Gothic main building which today is the administrative and academic center of the college. Construction got underway in 1912, with the laying of the cornerstone in 1913. The name "St. Gregory's College" was inscribed thereon.¹

The building is a five-story structure measuring 220 x 70 and covers a floor space of approximately 70,000

¹Joseph Francis Murphy, O.S.B., The Monastic Centers of the Order of St. Benedict in Oklahoma. St. Gregory's Press, Shawnee, p. 55.

square feet.

The summer of 1915 saw the completion of the building and the first students arrived in September of that year. There were just fifteen of them. Dedication ceremonies took place on Sunday, November 23rd.²

When it was completed, "St. Gregory's Administrative Building was the tallest building in the county."³ "Then she was the latest word in structures."⁴

For fifty-two years the red-brick Tudor-Gothic structure has dominated the Oklahoma prairie on which it stands, and it can be seen for miles in every direction. Its splendid Gothic parapets, surmounted by four graceful towers, literally command attention.⁵

(See Figure 14.) Until 1942 students and faculty ate, slept, learned and worshipped within her walls.

This venerable landmark evokes varied associations. Some associations are pleasant; others are not. To many alumni and friends the Administrative Building is a symbol of care-free school days, warm friendships, dedicated teachers, intense adolescent loyalties, and learning to accept the extraordinary diversity in the family of man. To some instructors and veteran Oklahomans, the great building recalls the bleak depression of the thirties, ancient beds, creaky desks, simple food, poor plumbing, cold nights, dust storms, and deprivations. To many passerby the building elicits fond recollections of an art gallery and museum. To a few the huge edifice originally stirred unreasonable fears, terrifying images of a rampant creature waiting to pounce on any unwary visitor.

²Ibid., p. 55.

³St. Gregory's College Magazine, Spring, 1967, p. 4.

⁴Ibid., p. 4.

⁵Ibid., p. 4.



Figure 14. Exterior View, St. Gregory's
College, Shawnee, Oklahoma

It is a building with a personality; it will always personify St. Gregory's itself and inevitably be the alma mater to the other buildings which are gradually surrounding it.⁶

One of the members of the first faculty recalls:

When school opened in September, 1915 we labored under the handicap of conducting classes on the second and third floors, with the carpenters laying floors over our heads on the fourth.

The present Community Recreation Room and Library, on the northeast corner of the second floor, was used as a Chapel until the plasterers finished their work at the other end of the floor, when the Chapel was located there until the present Abbey Church was built.

During the first school year - the scholastic year 1916 - drinking water was hauled out from the city of Shawnee in barrels on a farm wagon. The electric service failed us frequently, and the telephone service was terrificly poor.⁷

The main entrance to the Administrative Building is on the south facade. The long stairway leads to an arched doorway. The arch is most unusual in that it has a carved moulding enriched with tablet flowers and flowing vine crestings. The arch terminates with the carved gargoyle that appears to be supporting the entire structure as illustrated in Figure 15. The hall is floored with brown, ivory, and gold ceramic tile laid in a geometric design. Tiles cut into triangles, rectangles, and hexagons are fitted into a fascinating, yet subtle pattern

⁶Rev. Richard Sneed, O.S.B., "New Life for a Lasting Landmark," St. Gregory's College Magazine, Spring, 1967, p. 4.

⁷Notes from a folder in the Archives of the Monastery at St. Gregory's College, Shawnee, Oklahoma.



Figure 15. Gargoyle on Front
Doorway,
St. Gregory's
College

and are as handsome with the contemporary decor surrounding them, as they were in the original 1900 setting of columns and high ceilings (Figures 16 and 17). The entry was originally a place for receiving guests and housed part of the famous Gerrer art collection that is now exhibited at The Oklahoma Science and Art Foundation in Oklahoma City. The hall was fitted with rocking chairs and tables grouped in conversation areas. Since the remodeling the area now contains two glass-walled executive suites, one for the president, and one for admissions and records office, academic dean, and admissions dean.

The first floor was built to accommodate the fine museum for which St. Gregory's College was so well known for years. It was one of the finest in the state and with the Gerrer art collection covered much of the east wing of the first floor. The west wing contained the auditorium and a room in which 18th century French sculpture was once displayed. All of the first floor is now converted to administrative offices except for one room in the west wing which is used for art classes. The old high ceilings have been dropped and are now covered with acoustical tile. Contemporary wood paneling now covers the old plaster walls (Figures 18 and 19). The moulded doors with a transom above have now been replaced by a smooth slab style door for offices and a glass panel doorway in connecting halls. Figure 20 shows the west wing doorway and Figure 21 is the east side of the same doorway. This is



Figure 16. Ceramic Tile Entry, St. Gregory's College



Figure 17. Ceramic Tile Entry, St. Gregory's College



Figure 18. Original First Floor Corridor,
St. Gregory's College



Figure 19. Remodeled First Floor Corridor



Figure 20. Doorway, West View,
First Floor Corridor,
St. Gregory's
College



Figure 21. Doorway, East View,
First Floor Corridor,
St. Gregory's
College

where the remodeling and the original construction meet.

On the second floor was the chapel, the library, some classrooms and some instructors' quarters. The ever expanding library now occupies the entire second floor, a 12,000 squ. foot area, and the chapel is housed in a separate building. Entrance is from a west stairway. To the north of the entrance is a check out desk in a reference room. Directly across, in the southwest corner is a microfilm reading room. Five foot stacks of books, interspersed with study tables, cover the entire south wall. Study carrels are also included for student use.

In the center of the south side is the periodical collection and a reading lounge. Another lounge is provided at the far east end. The northeast corner is the book processing room. There are four glass-walled group study or typing rooms, a Xerox room, and librarians' offices. The library area provides seating for 274 people and can house 50,000 volumes. The entire area is covered by a brown and gold plaid carpet and chairs are upholstered to carry out the brown, gold, green, and orange color scheme of the building.

The third floor has always contained classrooms and in the early era also had some sleeping rooms. The third floor today houses 23 classrooms and a number of faculty offices.

Planned here are an art room, engineering room, an acoustically-sealed voice and language classroom, four mathematics classrooms, two

social science rooms, eleven faculty offices, and a student lounge.⁸

All classrooms have permanently installed overhead projectors and screens. The walls have all been panelled and the halls and classroom floors covered with carpeting in shades of gold and green. Some of the larger classrooms have tiered floors for an improved teaching technique.

The fourth floor was a dormitory and study type arrangement. The Shawnee Daily Herald of November 22, 1915 described the students' rooms as follows.

The students private rooms are 20 x 14 feet in size, are well lighted, each having two or three large windows, are well furnished, and contain all modern conveniences, such as steam heat, electric light, etc. The private rooms are located on the second and third floors, convenient to the laboratories, library and classrooms.⁹

A picture from the newspaper shows the rooms to contain single size beds with metal bedsteads, a three drawer dresser with a mirror, a wooden rocking chair, and an armoire. There was also a small wall lavatory in the dressing area of each room. A desk and straight chair were provided for student study.

Since remodeling, the fourth floor houses the science laboratories. The chemistry, botany, and zoology laboratories will each accommodate 48 students, while the

⁸St. Gregory's College Magazine, Spr. '67, p. 6.

⁹Shawnee Daily Herald, p. 4.

physics laboratory will seat 24. "One of the features of the chemistry lab will be fume hoods which will remove chemical fumes by forced air ventilation."¹⁰ "New labs will be equipped with the latest in science furnishings, microscopes, analytical balances, power supplies, and other lab tools."¹¹ The new decor on this floor continues that used in the remainder of the building.

The Tower room of the academic center, long a local landmark, has been remodeled into a tiered lecture hall to seat 216 people. Chairs are arranged on seven levels in a semi-circle around a lecturer's desk. This arrangement has been exceedingly successful for college groups.

A 1934-35 catalog for St. Gregory's indicates the previous use of the tower room. "The large square tower of the main building, constructed at a cost of \$10,000 is used as a gymnasium, well adapted to all forms of indoor sports."¹² The gymnasium was temporarily located in the basement until construction was completed, it was then located on this fifth floor. A Shawnee newspaper describes the gymnasium equipment in the following manner:

A large order of gym fixtures are being ordered. These will be installed at an early date and the gym will be replete with all sorts of modern machines that tend to

¹⁰St. Gregory's College Magazine, Spring. '67, p. 6

¹¹Ibid., p. 6.

¹²St. Gregory's Catalog for 1934-35.

make up a modern gymnasium.¹³

Other recreation was available in the basement during inclement weather. The basement is now used for meeting rooms and provides space for the Student Senate, the year-book office, and the newsroom for the student newspaper.

During remodeling the only exterior change was a contemporary concrete basement to tower stairway added to the west facade. The new stairway is approximately one-third the width of the existing wall and is lighted by floor to ceiling windows.

The remodeled area has corridor and office walls panelled in walnut, oak, and mahogany. Carpeting in shades of gold, green, and brown and some light vinyl tile covers the floors. Harmonizing tones of orange and brown are used for upholstery and give the entire building a feeling of unity. The west wing of the first floor still has the light green plastered walls and a brown and beige asphalt block tile floor.

A thorough transformation has given St. Gregory's College a completely up-to-date library, laboratories with the most modern equipment and classrooms with excellent acoustical qualities. New life has been given to an aging Oklahoma pioneer building.

¹³Shawnee Daily Herald, p. 3.

CHAPTER VII

SANTA FE RAILROAD STATION

The railway system was the second greatest single influence on Oklahoma settlement and culture; and culminated in the opening of America's last frontier. Although the rail system was a great economic development for Oklahoma and Indian Territory, it was not welcomed by the original inhabitants because its coming simply meant the land consuming white man was not far behind.

Doubtless the railroad has formed a subject for as much discussion as any one theme in the world. More difficulties have been placed in the path of its progress than of any other triumph of modern skill and action. Ostensible orators and prespiring politicians have hurled bombast and anathema at the vitals of this great public utility since the hour of its birth.¹

Shawnee was established in 1895 and because of the railroads in eight years mushroomed from a village into a booming young city.

Coming of the railroads made Shawnee the metropolitan center of the county although Tecumseh was the county seat and a much older town. Every effort was made by Tecumseh leaders to bring the first railroad their way, but geographic conditions and other factors favored the newer and larger town of Shawnee. The latter grew phenominally

¹Shawnee Daily Herald, Sunday, April 2, 1905, p. 1.

and bitter rivalry grew between the two towns as Shawnee sought the county seat as early as 1899.²

The railroad dispute raged for some time and the rumors were quite numerous. The town claiming to have received word they had won the railroad would rush out to celebrate by "shooting anvils." "This was done by placing powder between two anvils and touching a match to it."³ The citizens of the losing town would hear the noise and mourn their loss, but most likely by the next night the procedure would be reversed.

The Santa Fe Company officials and the Shawnee Chamber of Commerce held a series of meetings and it was decided that Shawnee would be the proper location for a railroad station. The Santa Fe Company proceeded to install a freight and passenger line; and a sizable round house and rail yards. "The first Santa Fe train arrived on June 29, 1904."⁴ The railway company had agreed to build a \$20,000.00 depot but instead built a \$69,000.00 one. The Sunday edition of the Shawnee Daily Herald date April 2, 1905 describes the effort:

Looking up Ninth Street four blocks east of the Burt Hotel is the finest building in the city and one of the swellest depots the Santa Fe system has ever built. As George P. Nelson, the local agent, expressed it, 'They don't

²Ernestine Gravely, "Fifty Years Ago in Shawnee and Pottawatomie County," Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. XXXI, No. 4, Winter 1953-54, p. 381.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

build them any better'. This structure was erected last year.⁵

The passenger depot made of hand-cut stone was constructed in the Romanesque style (Figure 22). The building is one of the most interesting in the State. To the south, an arcaded exterior walkway repeats the curve of the south wall. The red brick paving that completely surrounds the depot, also extends out to the train tracks. This building was used only for passenger service because the freight office was housed in a two story red brick building to the north. Visitors and townsfolk alike were intrigued by the medieval tower which was erected on the southeast corner of the building. The tower has never been of any use so far as can be determined. An interesting article concerning the tower appeared on the first page of the February 21, 1904 issue of the Shawnee Daily Herald.

It has been thought all along that a clock would adorn the tower in the new Santa Fe depot when completed, but it is announced that none will be put in for the present. This will be a disappointment to a great many and some action should be taken by someone to assure a clock for the tower. No doubt the Santa Fe people would allow one put in if the city desired to have one put in place. Here is an opportunity for some philanthropic citizen to carve a nich for himself in the esteem of the people of Shawnee by putting one in at his own expense, and every time anyone looked at the clock they would think of him.⁶

Apparently no such citizen resided in Shawnee at this

⁵Shawnee Daily Herald, April 2, 1905.

⁶Shawnee Daily Herald, February 21, 1904, p. 1.



Figure 22. Exterior View of Santa Fe Station

time, because the tower was never adorned with the clock and has borne only the Santa Fe emblem all these years.

Because of the great amount of newspaper coverage given, it is apparent that the people of Shawnee did indeed recognize the excellence of the Santa Fe installations.

The elegant passenger depot between Main and Ninth streets and the splendid freight depot, with its vast amount of trackage and long platforms have been objects of especial pride to every resident of the city, and they are the wonder of all visitors.⁷

The floor space was divided into six areas as indicated in Figure 23. They include: Ticket office, Ladies Waiting Room, Gentlemen's Waiting Room, Waiting Room for the Colored, Baggage Room, and Storage.

The ceilings of the Ladies and Gentlemen's Waiting rooms, which are still in their original forms, are the most outstanding features of the interior of the building. The circular room on the south side has a ribbed conical ceiling (Figure 24). Seven high windows are spaced around the curved wall. A bench was fitted to the curve of the wall and was referred to as 'The Ladies Circle'. This room also boasted at one time an eight to ten foot orange tree that had been potted and placed in the center of the floor. In this area women passengers could seek refuge from the gentlemanly acts of smoking, chewing and conversation.

⁷Shawnee News, August 8, 1904, p. 1.

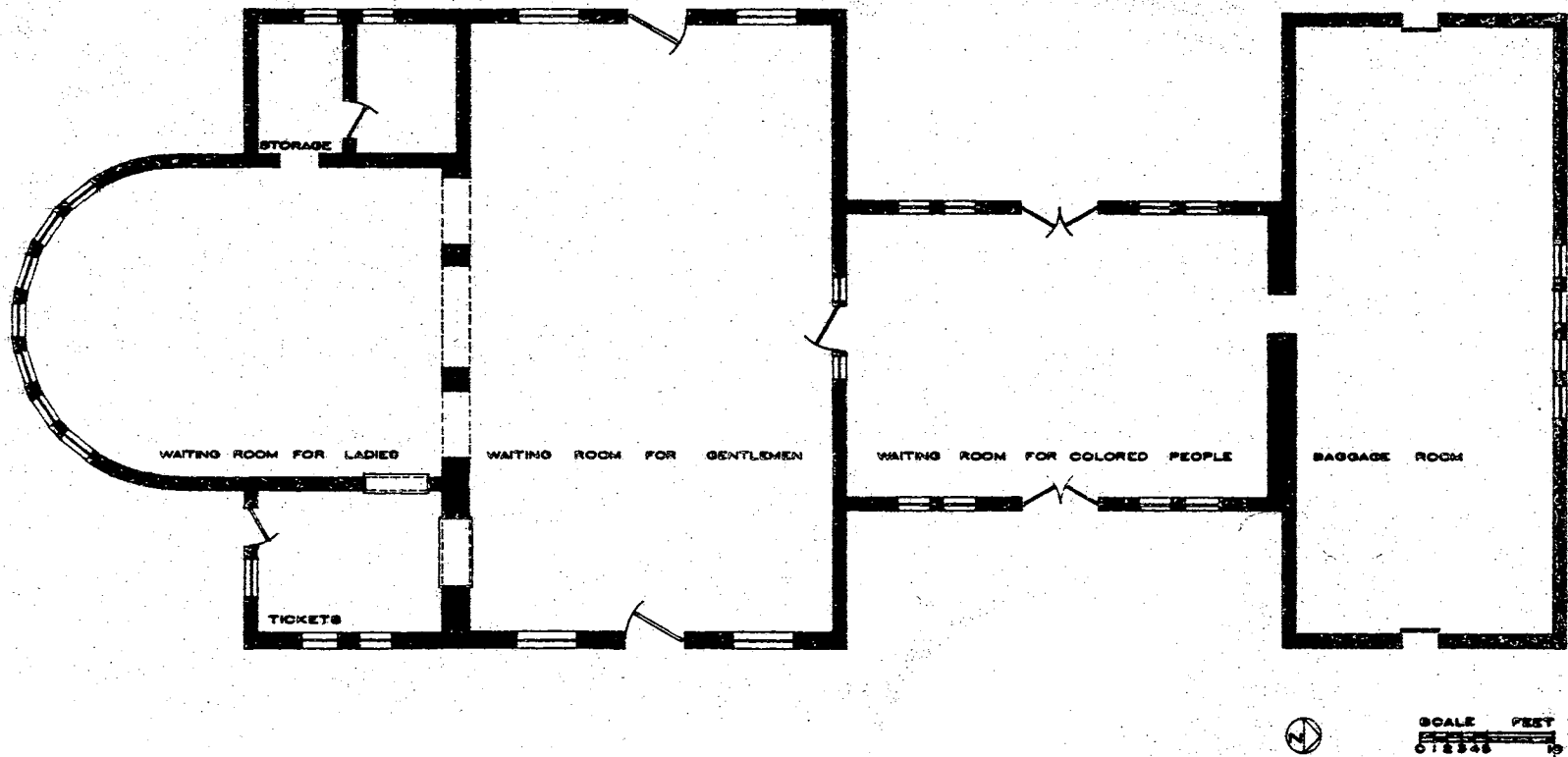


Figure 23. Floor Plan, Santa Fe Railroad Station



Figure 26. Apex of Ceiling,
Santa Fe
Railroad (Men's
Waiting Room)

The Men's Waiting Room has a high pitched ceiling of hammerbeam construction (Figure 25). The ceiling has four evenly spaced cross-members with a wooden pendant or drop attached to the center (Figure 26). On both the east and west ends of this room near the apex of the ceiling, are groupings of windows as seen in Figure 26. The arrangement is of three rectangular window topped with a lunette. The benches furnishing the waiting room are double seats with a common back (Figure 27). Mr. Louis Quinnett, an employee at the Santa Fe station since 1919, recalls that the original benches were like these with the exception that the back was about five feet high.⁸ The light fixture illustrated in Figure 28 is an original and four of these, two on the south wall and two on the north wall, are still in use.

The waiting room for the colored was sparsely furnished and none of the original furnishings remain in this area. Shortly after the closing of colored waiting rooms on public transportation lines, a four foot elevated floor was put in place and the area was used in conjunction with the baggage room and for storage. This new floor, of course, closed both exterior openings of the area, so that it can now only be reached from the men's waiting room or the baggage room.

The walls of the entire building are of a plaster and

⁸Interview with Mr. Louis Quinnett.



Figure 25. Hammerbeam, Santa
Fe Railway Station
Shawnee, Oklahoma



Figure 24. Conical Ceiling, Santa
Fe Railway Station,
Shawnee, Oklahoma



Figure 27. Benches in Waiting Room,
Santa Fe Railway
Station, Shawnee,
Oklahoma



Figure 28. Wall Light Bracket, Santa Fe
Railway Station, Shawnee,
Oklahoma

paint finish. A grooved moulding, four feet from the floor runs around most of the rooms. Some areas have a tile covering below this moulding to give the appearance of wainscotting. A boiler in the basement furnishes steam heat that is distributed by standing coil radiators. The original floors of wood have been covered with asphalt tile. Because passenger service has been discontinued, the building now serves as a freight office. The old freight office building has been rented as a storage space. The men's waiting room is still open, but business is carried on from the circular ladies room. The arches separating the two areas have been filled in with a counter and sliding glass windows. The railroad agent and his assistant have their office equipment installed here, yet the most forceful reminder of more exciting days is the conical ceiling.

Train crewmen are about the only regular visitors and they now use the old ticket office and waiting room. Although the days of rail service to the Santa Fe station may be numbered, this building will remain for many years to come. Interest in the future of the station will surely demand that it remain as a museum or some other equitable counterpart.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY

This study was initiated to gather and compile data concerning the architecture and interiors of five buildings that were chosen as architecturally significant to the history of Oklahoma and located in Pottawatomie County.

As the data were compiled, several conclusions were apparent. It was the writer's assumption that the heritage and cultural traits of the inhabitants of any land would have a definite bearing on the style and type of buildings constructed. This was true in most of the areas investigated.

The Potawatomi history pointed to the lasting alliances with the French, the intermarrying with the white man and consequently an appreciation for his religion and education. These traits are reflected in the desire for school and church immediately upon their settlement in Oklahoma. The French Benedictine Fathers provided both a church and school at Sacred Heart and also later at St. Gregory's College. Once again, the French influence was asserted. The Fathers directed the Indian labor and constructed buildings and furnishings reminiscent of their

home designs. Surviving at Sacred Heart are some items brought to Oklahoma from France.

The Shawnee Mission, built by the Quakers, reflects the austere, pioneer American spirit. Both the building and its furnishings are of simple, straight line design.

In a relatively short period of approximately forty years, buildings representing the styles of several centuries of architecture appeared in Oklahoma. With the coming of the railroad and the white settlers, many varied architectural expressions were readily apparent. The St. Gregory's Administrative building in the Tudor-Gothic style was partially the result of some of the Fathers having served in England. The research in this study failed to find any evidence concerning the reason for the selection of the Romanesque style for the Santa Fe Railroad station.

Resource materials used for this study were books, journals, newspapers, pictures, interviews, and visitation to the sites. The technique of systematic observation was used augmented by tape recorder, photography and measured drawings.

The findings produced suggest many possibilities for future studies such as, seeking out those buildings not designated as landmarks, yet of sufficient interest to merit investigation.

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