

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name Cherokee Friends Church

other names/site number Cherokee Monthly Meeting, Society of Friends

2. Location

street & number 120 South Pennsylvania not for publication N/A
city or town Cherokee vicinity N/A
state Oklahoma code OK county Alfalfa code 003 zip code 73728

NATIONAL REGISTER
LISTED

DEC 06 '04

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally. (N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Bob Beal
Signature of certifying official

10-25-04
Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:
___ entered in the National Register _____
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined eligible for the _____
National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined not eligible for the _____
National Register
___ removed from the National Register _____
___ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper Date
 of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u> 1 </u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
 N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION Sub: Religious Facility

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: SOCIAL Sub: Civic

WORK IN PROGRESS

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY
AMERICAN STYLES: Craftsman

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
roof ASPHALT
walls BRICK
ASBESTOS SHINGLE
other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1919- 1950

8. Statement of Significance (Continued)

Significant Dates 1919
1949

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation _____

Architect/Builder Smith, Edward, builder

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>14</u>	<u>557680</u>	<u>4067900</u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

N/A See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jim Gabbert, architectural historian

organization Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office date 8/01/04

street & number 2704 Villa Prom, Shepherd Mall telephone (405) 522-4478

city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73107

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Cherokee Main Street

street & number PO Box 39 telephone (580) 596-3575 ext 122

city or town Cherokee state OK zip code 73728

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 9

Cherokee Friends Church
name of property
Alfalfa County, Oklahoma
county and State

Summary

The Cherokee Friends Church is a two-story, red brick, building designed and constructed in 1919/20 in a Craftsman style. It is located on a corner lot in a residential neighborhood east of downtown Cherokee. The church features an irregular footprint, with a square, pyramidal roof entry tower inset between two gabled wings. The main entry is located in the tower, through an arched opening in a canted corner. The church has over fifty stained glass windows of various sizes spaced regularly throughout the building. The interior is little changed, with a large sanctuary on the second floor and offices and community rooms on the ground, or basement floor. A dropped ceiling and some paneling have been added to some of the ground floor space. The building sustained damage in a 1949 tornado, resulting in modifications to the tower, including a new roof and new, clear glass windows. Overall, the church retains a high degree of historic integrity and is an excellent example of the Craftsman style applied to a religious structure.

Description

The footprint of the Cherokee Friends Church is complex. The main body of the church consists of a square center section with two gable wings set at 90°, making it roughly "L" shaped, with a square tower inset into the crotch of the "L" and canted extension off of the rear corner. The center section, the tower, and the rear extension have pyramidal roofs. The wings are gabled. Rafter tails are exposed on all roofs. Five knee braces support the wide eaves on each the gable ends. All of the roof structure is covered in modern composition shingles; the original roof was wood shake.

The primary material for the walls of the church is red brick. The brick is coursed in a running bond. A belt course of soldier bond encircles the building at the height of the lintels of the raised basement windows while a second, similar belt runs just below the sills. A corbelled cross is located between the upper and lower windows in the gabled wings in recessed panels. Brick buttresses, each approximately seven feet in height and capped with limestone, are located at the corners of the wings.

The upper section of the tower and the upper section of the main core of the church do not have brick veneer. The upper section, approximately five feet down from the roof, of the main core of the church is sheathed in asbestos shingle. This is visible only from the rear (north) elevation and the east elevation. The tower's upper section, approximately the top eight feet, is covered in rolled asphalt siding that resembles shingles. Although the 1920 Sanborn map indicates that these sections were to have been stucco and a dedication-day photograph hints at that possibility, subsequent maps indicate only "frame."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 10

Cherokee Friends Church
name of property
Alfalfa County, Oklahoma
county and State

The primary entrance into the Cherokee Friends Church is located in a canted, or cutaway corner of the central tower. The elliptical arched entry is flanked by two tall buttresses; the arch is marked with three courses of rowlock bricks. Above the entry is a single, segmental arch, stained glass window. The top section of the tower is square; there are two knee braces supporting the corner that is cantilevered over the cutaway corner. The top section of the tower has paired, clear glass, 1/1 windows centered in the south and west walls. The base of the tower, flanking the cutaway corner, has a single, segmental arch window centered in the side wall. The windows have stone sills and three-course rowlock lintels.

The south wing of the church has symmetrical fenestration. The raised basement level has four stained glass windows with stone sills and flat lintels. The two central windows are closer together, set approximately three feet apart. The outer windows are separated from the inner windows and the corners of the wing by approximately six feet. Directly above the first row of windows are the aforementioned-corbelled crosses. The second floor windows are placed identically to their first (or basement level) floor counterparts. These windows have segmental arch lintels. Two arched vents are located in the apex of the gable, directly over the inner pair of second floor windows.

The west wing fenestration pattern differs slightly from that of the south wing. There are three pairs of windows, evenly spaced. As in the south wing, the lintels on the first floor are flat while those on the second floor are arched. Two arched, louvered vents are centered under the gable peak.

The north façade has an irregular fenestration. The gabled wing has two windows on the first floor while there are three on the second. Only the outermost windows, those paired with first floor windows, have the corbelled cross decoration in the recessed spandrel. The main body of the church has three ranks of windows. The basement, of first rank, consists of five segmental arched, stained glass windows. The westernmost of the five is smaller in height and width. It lights the women's rest room. The second rank, or second floor, windows are large. There are three of them and they reach up to the roofline where they terminate in a flat lintel. These oversize windows light the sanctuary. Above them is a pent roof. Above the pent roof, the wall material changes to asbestos shingle. Set into this wall are five stained glass windows. These windows are horizontally oriented and act as clerestories for the sanctuary. A single matching window is located on the west side wall of the main core above the slope of the roof of the gabled wing.

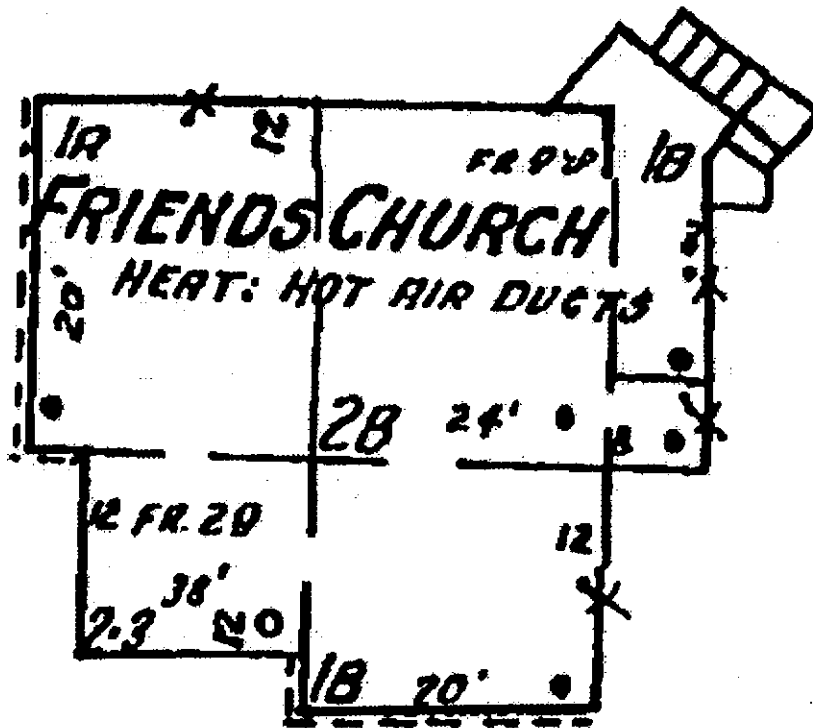
The east elevation has an irregular fenestration pattern. The east side of the south wing is identical in layout to the north side of the west wing. The main core of the building, though, differs from the north side in that there is a shed roof extension off the rear. This extension obscures part of the wall that on the north elevation contains the three prominent windows. On the east side there is only one window in the main wall of the core and it is smaller than those on the north wall. The extension also has a single stained glass window as well as a fire door that exits an alcove behind the pulpit. At the corner of the building, the extension is canted and has a hipped roof (see footprint below).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 11

Cherokee Friends Church
name of property
Alfalfa County, Oklahoma
county and State



Cherokee Friends Church, 1948 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Showing Footprint of Building

The stained glass windows in the church were designed and built by the Kokomo Opalescent Glass Company of Kokomo, Indiana. The windows are of mottled glass, in greens, cremes, and other muted colors. Set in wooden frames, the windows have lead comes set in geometric patterns, primarily rectangles and small diamonds. The pattern is replicated throughout the church. There is a total of 62 stained glass windows of various sizes in 56 openings. One window, near the entrance on the south side of the west wing, has been removed to install a window air conditioning unit. The window is in storage. Prior to the tornado of 1949, the two pairs of clear glass windows in the tower matched the other stained glass windows in the building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 12

Cherokee Friends Church
name of property
Alfalfa County, Oklahoma
county and State

Interior

The basement level of the Cherokee Friends Church has been divided into a number of spaces – classroom space, a community room, kitchen, and the minister's office. Largest of these spaces is the community room. It is located directly under the sanctuary. The kitchen is located on the east side of the space. Under the south wings are classrooms; under the west wing is the minister's office and an extension of the community room. Tucked into corners are the men's and women's bathroom facilities. All of these spaces have been altered with the addition of wood paneling and dropped ceilings. Roof leaks have led to the deterioration of much of this ceiling, especially in the classrooms, exposing the original plaster ceiling, cove mold, and walls.

The main entry vestibule is dominated by the central staircase that leads up to the sanctuary. To the left and right of the staircase leading up to the sanctuary are stairs leading down to the community room and classrooms in the basement. The main staircase has a simple oak balustrade with square banisters and newel posts, befitting the Craftsman style. The risers are carpeted. At the top landing, there are three doors. The central door is at the head of the stairs, parallel to the main entrance. This oak, paneled, pair of doors swings in both directions and gives access to the sanctuary. The flanking doors, on side walls, open into the "overflow" spaces for the sanctuary.

The main sanctuary of the church is rather plain, as befitting a Society of Friends meeting room. The room is square, with clipped corners at the southwest and northeast. The floor slopes down from the southwest corner (entry doors) to the northeast (pulpit). Behind the pulpit is a recessed alcove with a door leading to an antechamber. The walls of the sanctuary are plaster, unadorned. The stained glass windows have simple, flat, 4" surrounds with simple wooden sills. The clerestory windows have crown molds. The ceiling is flat, broken up by crossing strips of wood. These 4" thick battens create a large grid on the ceiling but are not substantial enough to emulate beams. There are a number of simple lights hanging down from the ceiling, which rises 16 feet or more from the sanctuary floor. There is one central chandelier, hung on chains, and four other single globe lights. Each is suspended eight feet down from the ceiling and all appear to be original.

The pews are arranged in three ranks in a semi-circle facing the pulpit. The central rank has eight rows; the flanking ranks have five rows each. The pews are original to the church.

A small choir space is located on the east wall, adjacent to the pulpit. This recessed alcove corresponds to the rear extension on the east outer wall. The alcove is about 6' deep and the opening is trimmed in 4" oak boards with solid corner braces. The trim on the alcove behind the pulpit matches. A door opening leads from the choir alcove to the choir alcove.

The overflow rooms are located to the south and west of the main sanctuary. These correspond to the west and south

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 13

Cherokee Friends Church
name of property
Alfalfa County, Oklahoma
county and State

gabled wings. The overflow rooms can be isolated from the sanctuary by large, overhanging pocket doors (Wilson rolling partitions¹) recessed into the west and south walls. The openings for the rooms have the same trim treatment as the alcoves. Three light sconces are evenly spaced over each of the overflow room openings.

A small portion of the southern overflow room was enclosed sometime in the 1950s as a "cry room." A large plate glass window allows for viewing of the service. This cry room takes up the southwest corner of the overflow room. Both rooms also have doors that lead out into the stair landing. The west overflow room has an additional door that leads up to the tower room.

The tower room, originally the pastor's study, is accessed by steep, narrow stairs from the west overflow room. This small (12' x 12') room is paneled and carpeted and was rebuilt following the 1949 tornado. In addition to the pairs of windows that are centered in the west and south walls, a single window opening looks into the sanctuary, directly above the entry doors.

Alterations

The Cherokee Friends Church has seen minimal alteration. A tornado in 1949 resulted in a rebuilding of the tower, including a reconfiguration of the tower roof and a change in the interior and exterior wall materials. The front entry doors, once wood, have been replaced with modern aluminum and glass doors. The basement level has seen the most change. Wood paneling and dropped ceilings hide the original plaster finished of the classrooms and community room. Water damage from a leaky roof has damaged the historic and the newer materials.

Overall, though, the church retains a high degree of integrity. The form of the church is unaltered. There have been no additions since 1919. The original stained glass windows are intact, with the exception of one that has been removed and stored. The sanctuary remains as it was designed and only the installation of a small cry room in the south overflow room has altered the historic appearance of the main floor.

The Cherokee Friends Church retains a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, association, workmanship, and materials. Those minor changes that have occurred over time do not diminish its capacity to reflect its architectural distinction as the finest example of a Craftsman style church in northwest Oklahoma.

¹ "Friends Church is Now Complete," *Cherokee Republican*, March 5, 1920.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 14

Cherokee Friends Church
name of property
Alfalfa County, Oklahoma
county and State

Summary

The Cherokee Friends Church is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as the best example of the Craftsman style of architecture applied to a religious building in Alfalfa County, Oklahoma. The church, constructed in 1919-1920, is visually distinctive among the religious buildings of the county. The wide eaves, knee braces, distinctive footprint, and interior finishes reflect the honesty and simplicity of design that are hallmarks of the Craftsman style. Being nominated for its architectural significance, this former church building meets the requirements of Criteria Consideration "a."

Historical Background

Settlement of the Cherokee Outlet, or Cherokee Strip as it is popularly known, began on September 16, 1893 with a land run. Over 100,000 people scattered over 7,400 square miles to claim their future. Once the province of large cattle ranches whose fiefdoms covered thousands of acres and whose herds roamed the open prairie, the Cherokee Strip soon became a patchwork of small farms. The open rangeland was broken by the plow and wheat and corn grew well in the fertile soil. Railroads crossed the plains, bringing in more settlers and goods and taking out the fruits of agriculture. Towns sprang up as service centers in the newly developing Strip. Cherokee was founded in 1901 by townsite developers A.J. Titus and T.J. Brockway, founders of the Cherokee investment Company. Within two years, the Kansas City, Missouri & Orient railroad had pushed through the new town. The population of the town more than doubled by 1905.²

In 1907, with statehood, the old County "M," later called Woods County, was divided into a number of smaller counties. Out of this division came Alfalfa County, named after William "Alfalfa Bill" Murray. Cherokee became the seat of government and the commercial and transportation hub of the county.

Moving into the Cherokee Strip during and after the Run of '93 were a number of Quakers, members of the Society of Friends. A group of Iowa Quakers settled in the area just north of the present location of Cherokee and within a year was joined by others. Among the first things this group did was to establish a Friends Meeting and a school. The Meeting, under the supervision of the Rose Hill Quarterly meeting at Wichita, Kansas, became known as the Stella Church. The name was derived from the name of the school's teacher, Stella Howard. The school, a subscription school opened in 1894, at first was a grade school, but was later expanded into an all-grades academy. The new

² See the National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Hotel Cherokee (98000200), prepared by Dianna Everett, on file at the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office. Also, Carney, George, et. al., "Reconnaissance Level Survey of Five Northwestern Oklahoma Towns," 1995, also on file at the SHPO.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 15

Cherokee Friends Church
name of property
Alfalfa County, Oklahoma
county and State

school's main building was constructed in 1897 and additional buildings, including dormitories for boys and girls, were constructed over the next few years. The Stella Academy closed in 1921, a victim of the public school system and the growth of the new towns along the rail lines. The Stella Church closed as well, with the attendees joining the Friends Meeting in Cherokee.³

The town of Cherokee was founded in 1901. Among the first institutions was a Meeting House for the numerous Quakers in the area. In September, 1901, the new meeting house, a white frame building with a canted corner tower built by Mr. R. H. Hubbard, opened for services. The church was a branch of the Stella Meeting until 1904 when the Cherokee Monthly meeting was established. Many members of the Stella Meeting joined the Cherokee Meeting because it was located closer to their homes.⁴

The Friends Meeting in Cherokee grew as the town grew. By 1915, the population of Cherokee was near 2,500. The Quaker influence on the town was strong – there were no saloons in the town, a rarity in the new towns of the west. The Cherokee Meeting began to outgrow its 1901 building. From a membership numbering 75 in 1902, the church had almost 300 members by 1919. Subscriptions and pledges from the membership led to the decision to construct and new building.

On April 3, 1919, a contract was awarded to Edward. G. Smith in the amount of \$16,000 for completion of the new church. "The Plans and Specifications were taken from the Baptist Church in Nash and will look similar to that building," noted the *Cherokee Republican*. "Some minor changes will be made for the better and the cost will be several thousand dollars above the cost of the building there (Nash)..."⁵ The cornerstone was laid July 5, 1919.

The building was completed over the winter and spring of 1920. Dedication day was March 22, 1920. Enthusiasm by those gathered is evidenced by the church's debt being retired on dedication day. "No greater spirit of brotherly love was ever shown than was manifest during the thirty-five minutes just following the statement of Mr. Wallace Kemp of Wichita, who at 12:15 announced that there was \$11,469 yet to be raised on the new and beautiful building..." By the end of the day, \$13,663.05 was raised, paying for the building and paying for the planned parsonage to be constructed out of salvage materials from the old church.⁶

3 Coppock, Mary Blue, "Stella Friends Academy," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (Summer 1959), pages 175-181.

4 "Alfalfa County History" unpublished manuscript located at Cherokee Library. n.d.

5 "Contract is Let for Friends Church," *Cherokee Republican*, April 11, 1919.

6 "New Friends Meeting Dedicated Sunday, March 22," *The Cherokee Messenger*, March 25, 1920; "Friends Church Raises \$13,663.05 Sunday," *Cherokee Republican*, March 26, 1920; "Friends Church is Now Complete," *Cherokee Republican*, March 5, 1920.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 16

Cherokee Friends Church
name of property
Alfalfa County, Oklahoma
county and State

Architectural Significance

The Cherokee Friends Church is unique in its design among churches in the greater Cherokee area. It utilizes a style influenced heavily by the Craftsman movement espoused by Gustaf Stickley and found most often in residential architecture. Other churches in the area, contemporaneous with the Friends Church, conform to the more traditional Gothic or Classical Revival styles.

The Craftsman ethos dovetails well with the philosophy of the Quakers. Stickley states, when describing the Craftsman Ideal in homebuilding, that he plans "...houses that are based on the big fundamental principals of honesty, simplicity, and usefulness..."⁷ The Cherokee Friends Church adheres to this principal in that its very form is honest, its décor is simple, its layout is useful.

The exterior features of the church carry some of the hallmarks of design utilized in the Craftsman bungalows that dominate residential architecture in the 1910s and early 1920s. In particular, the wide eaves on the low-pitched gabled roofs of the wings are reminiscent of the bungalow. The church's eaves, like many bungalows, feature simple knee braces and exposed rafters. The hipped roof of the main sanctuary is evocative of the raised section of an "airplane bungalow," a room raised above the main level of a house in a monitor fashion. The materials used in the church, brick, stone, and wood, are natural and tie in with the Craftsman ethic.

There are concessions to more traditional church architecture, of course – buttresses and stained glass windows – but these are not primary design elements. The form and layout of the church are its primary characteristics. The interior uses of the church are reflected in its plan. No space is wasted or given over to elaborate, but unfunctional, purpose. The choir space is shown on the exterior by an extension of the outer walls. The main sanctuary is defined by the main, hipped roof, while overflow or classroom space is under the gabled wings. The entry and the former pastor's study are defined by the tower.

Decorative and interior elements contribute both the Craftsman ethic and the Quakers belief in simplicity. The main artistic feature of the building is the stained glass in the windows. Unlike many large churches of the era, the stained glass windows of the Friends Church are not iconographic. The design is simple – rectangles and diamonds – and the glass is colorful but not garish. Blues, yellows, and earth tones cast a diffuse light to the simple interior of the sanctuary, the overflows, and even the basement.

The interior spaces of the church are very simply decorated. There are no works of art, no statues, not paintings, no

⁷ Stickley, Gustav, "The Craftsman Idea" in Craftsman Homes: Architecture and Furnishings of the American Arts and Crafts Movement, New York: Dover Publications, 1979. Reprint of the original 1909 edition. Page 196.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 17

Cherokee Friends Church
name of property
Alfalfa County, Oklahoma
county and State

murals that might be found in other denominations. Pews are simple, with little elaboration. Wall surfaces are plain, smooth plaster, originally painted light tan to contrast with the dark oak stain of the simple window and door surrounds.⁸

One prominent feature of the church is the entry staircase. As one enters the building, the staircase is the primary feature encountered. This, too, seems to follow the Craftsman ethos. Says Stickley in his treatise *The Craftsman Idea*, "Then too we believe that the staircase, instead of being hidden away... or treated as a necessary evil, should be made one of the most beautiful and prominent features..."⁹ Dark stained oak banisters, with squared balustrades and newel posts, draw visitors up to the sanctuary. The effect is dramatic.

The simplicity and elegance of the Cherokee Friends Church stands in contrast to the other, more elaborate churches of Cherokee. Located one block west of the Friends Church, the First Christian Church on South Kansas Street is an imposing, three story building constructed in 1927. A red brick building, it has Classical elements including simple pilasters. Its primary feature is the recessed entry reached by a flight of stone stairs. Saint Cornelius Catholic Church was built in 1928. Its design is Romanesque, with a large arched entry and a short tower. It is buff brick. The Methodist Church (First Methodist Episcopal) is located on South Grand. The congregation dedicated its new, Classical Revival building in 1919, just as ground was broken for the new Friends Church. The Baptist Church, south of the Methodists, is a newer building, built in the 1950s. There is a small Nazarene Church, now empty, that was constructed in the 1920s. It is designed in the more traditional Late Gothic style.

There are two other historic churches in town – the old Christian church building is now empty. A simple gabled, wooden building its is distinguished by its arched windows. The Lutheran Church, located on South Oklahoma, is a frame Carpenter Gothic building with a tall tower. It became a Lutheran Church in 1923; before that it was located south of Cherokee and was a Friends Church since its construction in 1903. The congregation merged with the Cherokee Friends meeting and the building was sold to the Lutherans and moved into town.

These churches are all designed in traditional styles. Gothic and Classical (including Romanesque) revivals dominated church architecture in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Cherokee Friends Church strayed away from this mainstream approach, much as the Quaker faith strayed away from the practices of other mainstream Christian faiths. The only church in the area that matched the Cherokee Friends Church was the one that it was patterned after, the old Baptist Church in Nash. Nash is located in grant County, about twenty-five miles east southeast of Cherokee. The original plans for the Cherokee Friends Church were derived from the Nash Church. Common knowledge in Cherokee, though, has this relationship backwards. It is commonly believed that the Cherokee church anteceded the

⁸ "Friends Church is Now Complete," *Cherokee Republican*, March 5, 1920.

⁹ Stickley, page 196.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 18

Cherokee Friends Church
name of property
Alfalfa County, Oklahoma
county and State

church in Nash. However, contemporary news accounts point toward the Nash church as being the first built.¹⁰ The point, though, is moot. The Nash Church, which had served as a private home since the 1970s, was demolished in 2003. The Cherokee Friends Church remains as the sole example of its design in the area.

Conclusion

Distinctive in its use of the Craftsman style, the Cherokee Friends Church is unique in the context of religious architecture in Alfalfa County and the surrounding area. While most churches followed the traditional designs found in religious architecture – Classical and Gothic revivals – the Friends congregation chose to build in a style that was more commonly used in residential architecture. The result is a handsome edifice that continues to attract attention. The one building that could rival it, the Nash Church, was demolished in 2003. The Cherokee Friends Church has had one modification since its construction. A tornado in 1949 resulted in damage to the tower. A simpler roof was placed on the tower and the original windows were substituted with simple, 1/1, clear glass sashes. This change does not impact the overall design aesthetic of the building and does not impact the interior design at all.

The Cherokee Friends Church is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, as an outstanding and rare example of the Craftsman style applied to a religious building. It meets justification under Criteria Consideration “a” as a religious building significant primarily for its architectural merits.

¹⁰ Accounts also say that the church in Nash was a Friends congregation, but the newspaper article states that it was a Baptist church. It is possible that the Baptists later sold their building to the Friends, confusing the “date of establishment” for the Nash church. See “Contract is Let for Friends Church,” *Cherokee Republican*, April 11, 1919.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Sections 9 & 10 Page 19

Cherokee Friends Church
name of property
Alfalfa County, Oklahoma
county and State

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Verabl Boudary Description

All of Lots 19-22, Block 19, Original Townsite of Cherokee.

Boundary Justification

Includes all of the land historically associated with the Cherokee Friends Church.



Cherokee Friends Church



Cherokee Friends Church

