



*KANSAS*  
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Native American Heritage Museum  
Pawnee Indian Village

December 27, 2001

Colonel Donald R. Curtis, Jr.  
Department of the Army  
Kansas City District, Corps of Engineers  
700 Federal Building  
Kansas City, Missouri 64106-2896

RE: Haskell Indian Nations University and the Baker Wetlands  
Douglas County, Kansas

Dear Colonel Curtis:

We understand that the Corps of Engineers, Kansas City District, is requesting the opinion of the State Historic Preservation Officer concerning the eligibility of Haskell Indian Nations University (hereafter cited as HINU) and the Baker Wetlands for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and that my opinion may be submitted to the Secretary of the Interior with a formal request for a determination of eligibility on this property. This statement confirms that I have been consulted as part of the determination of eligibility process.

In our opinion, the existing campus of HINU as well as the former HINU lands now known as the Baker Wetlands is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as a district. This property possesses a significant concentration of buildings and sites that are united historically.

The HINU campus with the Baker Wetlands is eligible as a district for the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A of the National Register criteria of eligibility since it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. Its period of significance is 1884 to 1940 and the relevant themes are Politics/Government, Social History, Education, and Ethnic Heritage-Native American.

HINU was originally designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1961. After a number of original buildings were removed, the landmark nomination was revised by the National Park Service to designate a number of discontinuous buildings at the north end of the campus. It is the SHPO's opinion that the entire existing HINU campus plus the Baker Wetlands, which were originally part of HINU, meets the criteria of eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places as a district.

Haskell was established in 1884 by the U.S. government as one of the first off-reservation boarding schools for Indian students. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century it was the leading such school west of the Mississippi River, and by the 1920s it

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was the leading school of that type in the country. It held that position into the 1930s, until the emphasis for Indian student education changed and the off-reservation boarding schools became less important. HINU has since evolved to a junior college to a university and continues today. Part of HINU's significance comes from its integration of academic, industrial, and agricultural training. The present Baker Wetlands played an essential role in the implementation of that approach. That portion of the campus was used as agricultural land, both for raising crops and for cattle grazing, in the vocational training of Indian students at Haskell.

The HINU campus with the Baker Wetlands retains sufficient integrity to meet the criteria of eligibility and is recommended for National Register eligibility as a historic district.

If the Corps of Engineers, Kansas City District, does not agree that HINU with the Baker Wetlands is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, you may request the opinion of the Secretary of the Interior as described in 36 CFR Part 800.4(c)(2). If you agree that the property is eligible, the next step in the Section 106 process is assessing the effects of the proposed project as described in 36 CFR Part 800.5.

If you have any questions, please let us know.

Sincerely yours,



Ramon Powers  
State Historic Preservation Officer

cc: KDOT  
HNIB  
Paul Brockington and Associates