



Name of Property: Wyandotte National Burying Ground, Eliza Burton Conley Burial Site

City, State: Kansas City, Kansas

Significant Dates: 1843-1965 and 1906-1946

NHL Criteria: 1 and 2

NHL Exception: 4 and 5

NHL Theme: III. Expressing Cultural Values
6. Traditional culture
IV. Shaping the Political Landscape
4. Political ideas, cultures, and theories

Previous Recognition: 1975, National Register of Historic Places

National Historic Context: XXVIII. The Law
A. Development of Principles in the Legal Specialties
XXXI. Social and Humanitarian Movements
M. Civil Rights Movement



NHL Significance:

- The site serves as tangible evidence of the consequences of federal American Indian policy during the 19th century, particularly the consequences of removal policy to a tribal population and its identity.
- The most important site associated with the life of Eliza (Lyda) Burton Conley who is nationally significant because she waged the historic legal battle to save a sacred American Indian burying ground from destruction.
- Conley's legal case in the Supreme Court was the first ever argued there by an American Indian attorney. Conley was the second woman in American history to argue a case before the U.S. Supreme Court.
- Conley was the first attorney to raise the legal argument that American Indian burying grounds are entitled to protection by the federal government.
- Conley was the first attorney to claim that the descendants of treaty signatories have the right to sue to enforce treaty provisions.
- The court case is associated with several pieces of historic federal legislation pertaining to American Indian legal rights in the mid-to-late 20th Century

Integrity:

- The entire site retains a high degree of integrity in all seven aspects of integrity.
- The site exists in the same location as the first recorded burial in 1843.
- The Eliza Burton Conley burial site is intact and is located within her family's burial plot.
- The boundary of the Burying Ground is the same as it was surveyed for the 1855 treaty.
- The gentle topography of the Burying Ground landscape that slopes down on all four sides imparts the recognition that this is the crest of the original hilltop chosen by the Wyandot people and bestowed by the Delaware for the Wyandot burying ground in the mid-19th century.
- Taken together, it is the assemblage of shade trees, shrubs, flower beds, lawn, variety of extant headstones, combined with a minimum of modern embellishments that collectively comprise the Wyandotte National Burying Ground's sense of place and conveyance of historic character and feeling.

Owner of Property: Department of the Interior through the Bureau of Indian Affairs for the benefit of the Wyandotte Nation

Acreage of Property: 2.5 acres

Origins of Nomination: A NPS Midwest Regional Office research effort to address the lack of Women-related and American Indian-related NHL nominations identified this property.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:

Designating this property as a NHL will illustrate its importance to the Wyandotte Nation, Wyandot Nation of Kansas, and many other American Indian tribes for educational purposes.

National Park System Advisory Board

<https://www.nps.gov/nhl/news/LC/spring2016/WyandotteNationalBuryingGround.pdf>

Designation will also help promote Eliza Burton Conley as a positive role model for young American Indian girls and women.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known

Landmarks Committee Comments:

Landmarks Committee Recommendation: Designation. Dr. Stevens moved, Dr. Chen seconded; unanimous approval.

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of):

Advisory Board Recommendation: