

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Cherry Hotel

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 333 East Nash Street

not for publication

city, town Winson vicinity of

Second Congressional Dist.

state North Carolina code 037 county Wilson

code 195

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. C. H. Alberding

street & number 9 East Huron Street

city, town Chicago vicinity of

state Illinois 60611

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Wilson County Courthouse

street & number 100 West Nash Street

city, town Wilson

state North Carolina 27893

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wilson, North Carolina: Historic Buildings Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1980  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Survey and Planning

Branch  
city, town Raleigh state N. C.

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
XX <input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Cherry Hotel is located on the main street in the downtown area of Wilson, N. C. The hotel is located on a flat lot on the northeast corner of Nash and Lodge Streets. To the left stands Thomas-Yelverton Funeral Home and to the right is the Atlantic Coastline Railroad Station. Directly across the street is a used car lot.

The hotel was started about 1917 for Rufus A. Cherry, designed by Charles C. Benton and built by Joe W. Stout and Company. "The Cherry Hotel epitomized hotel design for the period. The elaborate metal cornice with its plume motifs on the corner crowns a symmetrical facade."<sup>2</sup> The six-story brick building typifies the many medium-sized hotels built in small cities in the early twentieth century, echoing in simplified fashion the base-shaft-capital organization and Beaux Arts detail of the nation's railroad oriented hotel architecture. Like its several contemporaries in North Carolina, it occupied a key role in the early twentieth century development of the town in which it stood. It is topped by a modillion block cornice with an anthemion cresting. The Beaux Arts entrance features lions masks supporting the elaborate point in the entrance. To the left of the main entrance is a smaller entrance to a grill and to the right of the main entrance is a smaller entrance to a tavern.

The hotel is U-shaped and six stories in height with approximately two hundred rooms. The rooms are simple, small and architecturally unadorned. They were typical of hotel rooms of the first quarter of the twentieth century. The lobby, banquet rooms and public areas are well-appointed and intact.

The lobby which is the focal point of the interior is two stories in height with the mezzanine from the second floor behind the hotel desk. The stone-veneered first floor serves as a base for this composition. The lobby desk is oak with a marble top and marble baseboard. Four Art Deco lighting fixtures hang from the ceiling with other Art Deco lighting fixtures on the walls. To the left of the hotel desk is a marble stair, with wrought iron handrails, leading to the mezzanine area. A single elevator is adjacent to the stairs. Immediately to the left of the lobby area stands the grill area which is not original with the construction, but added later. The grill was simple and small, and typical of grill decor of the late 1940s and early 1950s with approximately twelve booths and a coffee counter. The three arched front windows are surrounded with with a carved wood molding with a classical transom. Off the lobby area to the right stands the tavern (used in earlier years as a meeting room). Along the hall to the ballroom is the newspaper stand and a two-chair barber shop. The ballroom is two stories in height with a tile floor and beams with art deco lighting fixtures. A bay from the mezzanine with wrought iron rail stands over the ballroom.

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### Footnotes

1 Bainbridge, Robert C. and Ohno, Kate, Wilson, North Carolina: Historic Buildings Inventory. 1980, p. 74.

2 Ibid.



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The Cherry Hotel, begun in 1917, was designed by architect C. C. Benton, and built by contractor J. C. Stout, both Rocky Mount men important in regional architecture of eastern North Carolina. The Hotel was among the key endeavors in the railroad-based urbanization that swept North Carolina in the early twentieth century. The first two decades of the century brought long rural North Carolina its first great burst of urbanization, which focused not in a single leading metropolis but in small cities across the state. Vital to that growth was the construction of the first big buildings these towns had ever seen, including hotels such as the Cherry. They depended upon and spurred the growing rail system, which in turn generated the commerce upon which these little cities flourished. In Wilson, the railroad was key to its growth in these years, and the hotel functioned as a social and entertainment center for the town and for the rural and small-town population of much of eastern North Carolina.

The Cherry Hotel is significant to the economic and social development of Wilson and eastern North Carolina. Wilson has seen many hotels and boarding houses come and go such as the Battle, Briggs, Seabrook Imperial and Belmont hotels, but none with the glory and significance of the Cherry Hotel. "The Cherry was a mirror of life as it was lived day by day...the comic, the tragic, and the ridiculous."<sup>1</sup>

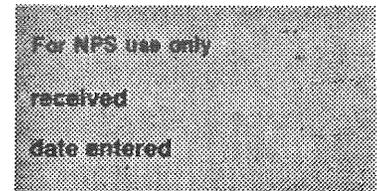
According to Mary Edmondson, a long time hotel employee, "They started on it around 1917, but they ran out of money and had to come back later and finish it. R. A. Cherry had it built."<sup>2</sup> The hotel was not listed in the 1920 Wilson, North Carolina Directory published by Hill Directory, but was listed in the 1922-1923 Directory. The advertisement from that directory stated that it offered the American Plan, 200 rooms of solid comfort, and absolutely fireproof with R. A. Cherry as manager.<sup>3</sup> A 1928 advertisement of the Cherry stated "J. T. Barnes, manager, American Plan, opposite A.C.L. Passenger Station. Wilson is exceptionally provided with good hotels, and in view of this fact traveling men make it a special point to be in this city for the weekend. The railroads that center here also favor this arrangement, giving conveniences for quick transportation in all directions. Over two hundred traveling salesmen make Wilson headquarters. The Cherry Hotel has become a favorite with the better class of traveling salesmen. The hotel is most modern throughout, contains many rooms, serves most excellent meals and provides in every way service required by the traveling public."<sup>4</sup>

On March 20, 1919, J. E. Giles sold the lot on which the hotel is located to R. A. Cherry, John T. Barnes and W. N. Harrell.<sup>5</sup> On February 19, 1921, R. A. Cherry, John T. Barnes, and W. N. Harrell transferred the title to Hotel Cherry, Inc.<sup>6</sup> On July 17, 1925, the lot behind the hotel (Lot 4--Adkins property) was transferred to Hotel Cherry, Inc. by John T. Barnes, R. A. Cherry and W. N. Harrell. On September 30, 1948, the deed was changed from the Hotel Cherry, Inc. to Cherry Hotel, Corporation.<sup>8</sup> On September 30, 1949, the property was deeded from Cherry Hotel Corporation to D. L. Connett.<sup>9</sup> One month later D. L. Connett transferred the title to Cherry-Wilson Corporation.<sup>10</sup> This group has maintained ownership since then.

The Cherry Hotel from its inception to the end of the 1940s and World War II grew and prospered through its tourists, salesman, and tobacconists. Wilson was the midpoint and stopping place between New York and Florida for travelers on U. S. 301. The Cherry Hotel was only separated from the railroad by Lodge Street and train travelers only had to walk from the passenger station across the street if they needed lodging. The sales-

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men and particularly the tobacconists were regular roomers with many staying at the hotel during the whole tobacco season, year after year. The Cherry Hotel was the social meeting place in Wilson. Many dances, Junior-Senior proms, and bridal parties were held in the ballroom. Civic clubs and conventions were held there as well. "All the big celebrities who came to Wilson stayed there. Perry Como, Arthur Godfrey, Guy Lombardo, and the Fontaine Sisters were among the many."<sup>11</sup>

With the improvement in the road systems and building of motels on U. S. 301, and the decrease in train traffic, the Cherry Hotel was doomed to die a slow and agonizing death. "She served well as Wilson's showplace for decades. She achieved statuses that are unlikely to be matched by any other single establishment in Wilson. She catered to the rich, and the poor, the young and old and held the respect of them all. Today the Cherry is comparable to the aged and the infirm. Stripped of her pride, her dignity, her posture, she is only a shell of her former self. She stands mute, testimony to the ravages of time. But her record will be there for porternity."<sup>12</sup> The Cherry Hotel closed in 1981.

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Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup>Wilson Daily Times, May 16, 1981; Taylor, "Hotel Cherry", p. 10A.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Hill Directory Company, Wilson, North Carolina, 1922-1923, Richmond, Virginia, p. 58.

<sup>4</sup>Weaver, C. E., Sketches of Wilson, North Carolina, Richmond, Virginia: Central Publishing Company, 1928, p. 22.

<sup>5</sup>Wilson County Courthouse, Register of Deeds Office, Deed Book 113, p. 184.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, Deed Book 125, p. 575.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, Deed Book 157, p. 451.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, Deed Book 363, p. 30.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid, Deed Book 381, p. 337.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid, Deed Book 381, p. 348.

<sup>11</sup>Wilson Daily Times, October 16, 1908; Rawlings, "Hotel Cherry", p. 12.

<sup>12</sup>Wilson Daily Times, May 16, 1981; Taylor, "Hotel Cherry", p. 10A.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Wilson, N. C.

Quadrangle scale 1:24 000

UTM References

A 

Zone	Easting		Northing				

B 

Zone	Easting		Northing				

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See enclosed tax map with property outlined in red.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title J. Robert Boykin III, President

organization Toisnot Historical Company date July 8, 1982

street & number 200 West Green Street telephone (919) 291-1967

city or town Wilson state North Carolina 27893

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature William S. King Jr.

title State Historic Preservation Officer date July 8, 1982

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

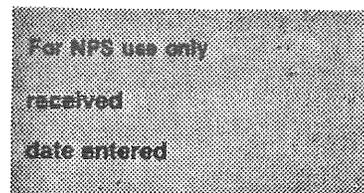
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



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Hill Directory Company, Inc. Wilson, North Carolina, 1925.

Hill Directory Company, Inc. Wilson, North Carolina Directory, 1928.

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Tar-Neuse River Basin, North Carolina  
Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1977.

Sanborn Map Company. "Wilson, North Carolina, 1922, 1930", North Carolina Collection,  
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolins.

Weaver, C. E. Sketches of Wilson, North Carolina, Richmond, Virginia: Central  
Publishing Company, Inc., 1928.

Wilson County Records, Wilson County Courthouse, Deeds.

Wilson Daily Times, October 16, 1980; May 16, 1981; and April 8, 1982.



236

55'

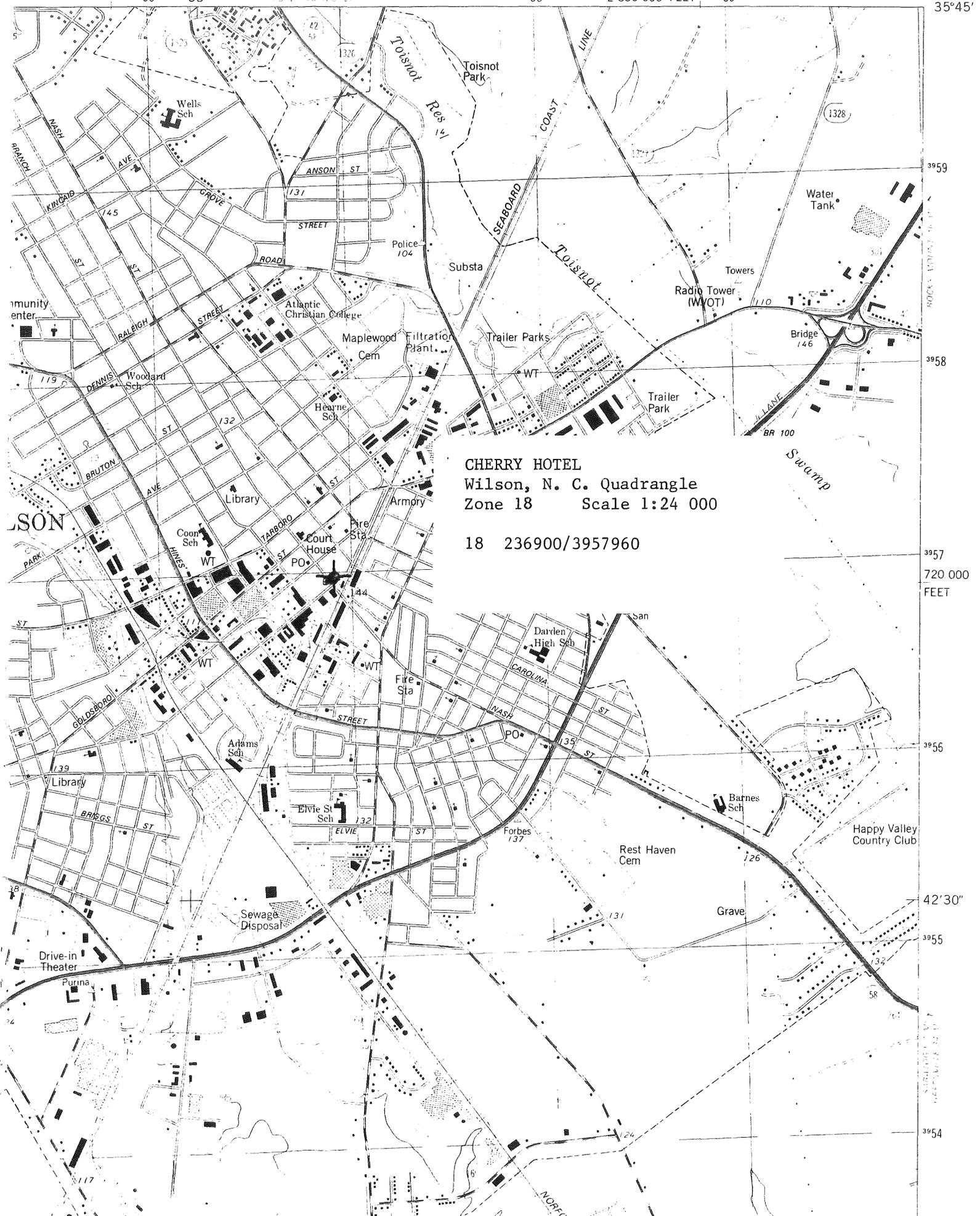
IP AT TOUS 68  
5 17 10 12 97

238

2 330 000 FEET

239

77°52'30"  
35°45'



CHERRY HOTEL  
 Wilson, N. C. Quadrangle  
 Zone 18 Scale 1:24 000  
 18 236900/3957960

3959

3958

3957

720 000  
FEET

3956

42'30"

3955

3954

