

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received FEB 10 1986

date entered

MAR 13 1986

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

**1. Name**

historic Wilder, John T., House

and/or common C. R. Graybeal House

**2. Location**

street & number 202 Main Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Roan Mountain

N/A vicinity of

state Tennessee

code 047

county Carter

code 019

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name Mrs. C. R. Graybeal

street & number 202 Main Street

city, town Roan Mountain

N/A vicinity of

state Tennessee 37687

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Carter County Courthouse

street & number Elk Avenue

city, town Elizabethton

state Tennessee

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date N/A N/A federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

## 7. Description

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

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

Situated near the center of Roan Mountain in upper East Tennessee, the John T. Wilder House is a two story vernacular Italianate building sheathed with weatherboard. Constructed in 1884, the L-shaped residence sits on a stone foundation and is surmounted by an asphalt shingle hip roof with deck. The exterior displays sawn wood trim below overhanging eaves and pedimented windows, while the interior is characterized by poplar woodwork and oak flooring. Two original outbuildings, a smokehouse and a privy, are located on the property. The John T. Wilder House has undergone few alterations and retains its architectural integrity.

The four bay south facade of the John T. Wilder House is embellished with sawn scroll brackets and an ornamental frieze. Four 2/2 double hung sash windows capped by segmental pediments and flanked by louvered shutters delineate the symmetrically-proportioned second story of the facade. Three windows on the first story are of a similar design, but they are capped by cornice lintels. The same pattern of eave trim and windows is found on other elevations. The main entry is composed of a single leaf door, plain surrounds and a transom light. A hip roof porch supported by slender chamfered columns and ornamented with sawn scroll brackets spans most of the facade. The porch floor is concrete faced with Crab Orchard sandstone.

The east portion of the south elevation contains three 2/2 double hung sash windows on each story. The west portion contains two windows, a single leaf door and a screened sleeping porch. A one story extension has a single 2/2 double hung sash window on its south side.

The east portion of the north elevation contains two 2/2 double hung sash windows and one four pane window on each story. The west section contains similar fenestration, as does the one story extension.

A one story hip roof extension and a two story shed roof extension are located at the rear (west) elevation of the house. A paneled door and two windows are the only openings on this elevation.

The original floor plan of the John T. Wilder House is intact. Oak floors and poplar woodwork are found throughout the house. The main stairway is a three run open well stair with a turned balustrade and paneled newel posts. Wainscoting lines the second story hall. Interior doors are paneled and have plain surrounds and their original locks. Built in poplar bookcases and fireplaces embellished with colonettes and a simple bed molding are the principal decorative features in the living room.

A one story chestnut smokehouse and a weatherboarded privy are located within the boundaries of the nominated property. Landscaping is minimal, with only a few apple trees and shrubs on the lot. A wooden fence, constructed in the early 1900s, surrounds the house.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** ca. 1884-1890      **Builder/Architect** Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The John T. Wilder House is being nominated under National Register criteria B and C for its historical and architectural significance in Roan Mountain, Carter County, Tennessee. It is an excellent example of a late nineteenth century Italianate design. Minimally ornamented, the house displays interesting sawn bracketing and eave trim and pedimented windows. The interior retains original woodwork, fireplaces, and door hardware. John T. Wilder, a well-known soldier and entrepreneur, played an important role in the development of many sections of East Tennessee, including Roan Mountain. Wilder built two hotels in Roan Mountain and promoted the development of natural resources in Carter and Unicoi Counties. His house has undergone few alterations and retains its historical and architectural integrity.

John Thomas Wilder (1830-1917) was born in Hunter County, New York to Reuben and Mary Merritt Wilder. Around 1848, Wilder moved to Ohio where he worked as an apprentice mechanical and hydrolic engineer. In the late 1850s he moved to Indiana and established a foundry. While in Indiana, he invented and patented an improved waterwheel (1859).

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Wilder enlisted in the 17th Indiana Volunteers. Wilder took part in over 200 battles and skirmishes in the south including leading the advance on Chattanooga and participating in the battles of Chickamauga and Missionary Ridge. His command was known as "Wilder's Lightning Brigade" and he was credited with introducing mounted infantry during the war. Shortly before he resigned his commission in 1864, Wilder was brevetted brigadier general.

Wilder moved his family from Indiana to Chattanooga soon after the war ended. Realizing the potential for developing coal and iron resources in Tennessee, Wilder formed a business partnership with Hiram Chamberlain and William A. Rockwood (two Union Civil War veterans). They organized the Roane Iron Works in the new town of Rockwood in Roane County, Tennessee and built one of the first blast furnaces in the south. The company expanded operations when it purchased the Southeastern Iron Company and operated a rolling mill for the railroads in Chattanooga. Wilder eventually helped organize and became vice-president of the Cincinnati Southern Railway and the Charleston Cincinnati and Chicago Railway (Clinchfield). He served as mayor of Chattanooga in 1872 and was the federal pension agent in Knoxville for many years.

By the early 1880s, Wilder had begun to explore the possibility of developing the natural resources near Carter County. As president of the Roan Mountain Hotel Company, he was responsible for the construction of two hotels on Roan Mountain. Both the Cloudland Hotel and Roan Mountain Inn were popular (resort) hotels in the late nineteenth century. Wilder purchased large tracts of timber in Carter and Unicoi counties and in the village of Roan Mountain itself. In around 1884 he built a large frame Italianate residence in the center of Roan Mountain.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Roan Mountain, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 17 403700 4006000  
 Zone Easting Northing

B                      
 Zone Easting Northing

C                    

D                    

E                    

F                    

G                    

H                    

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The nominated property is rectangular in shape and less than one acre in size. It is bounded on the north by Stratton Street, on the south and west by adjacent property lines, and on the east by Main Street. This includes enough land to protect the historical setting and architectural integrity of the John T. Wilder House. (see tax map)

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jennifer Wilson

organization N/A

date November 8, 1985

street & number Route 1, Box 236

telephone (615) 772-3303

city or town Roan Mountain

state Tennessee 37687

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

     national      state X 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.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Singer

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

date 1/31/86

For NPS use only

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

for Delores Byers  
 Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
 National Register

date 3-13-86

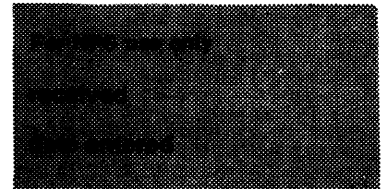
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Wilder moved to Johnson City in Washington County, Tennessee in around 1890. Here he was responsible for developing Carnegie, a suburb of the city, and organizing the Carnegie Furnace Company. In 1893 Wilder moved to Monterey in Putnam County, Tennessee. He established the Fentress Coal Mines and constructed the Imperial Hotel during his stay in Monterey. Wilder died in Jacksonville, Florida in 1917.

The John T. Wilder House was sold in the early 1900s to the Graybeal family, who still own it. The building is a relatively unaltered example of late nineteenth century vernacular design in Roan Mountain. In addition, it is the only extant building in Roan Mountain associated with Wilder.

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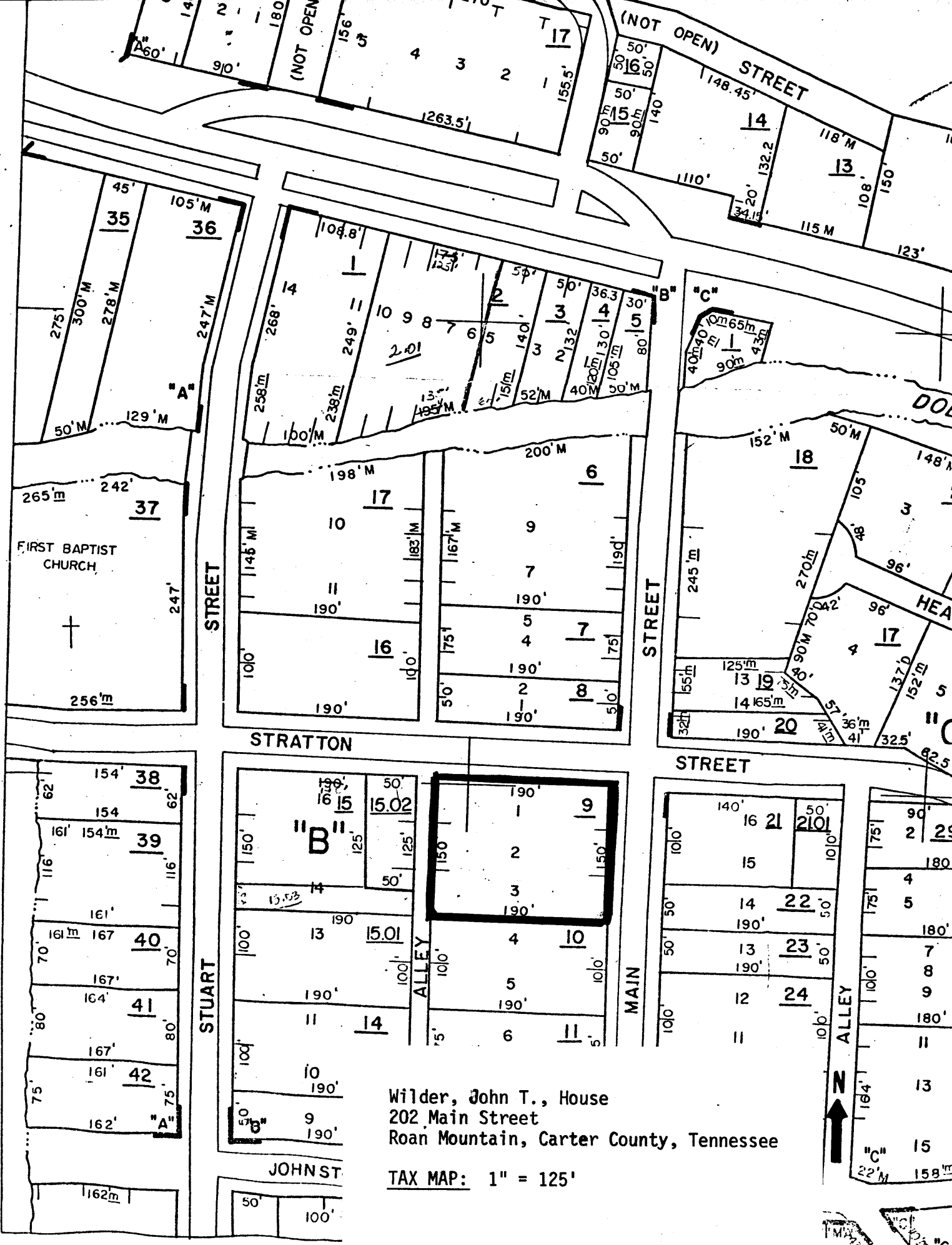
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Catamount, 27 September and 25 October, 1984.

Malone, Dumas (ed.). Dictionary of American Biography, Volume X. New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1936.

The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, Volume XXII. New York: James T. White and Company, 1932.

Williams, Samuel C. General John Wilder, Commander of the Lightning Brigade. Indiana University Press, 1936.



Wilder, John T., House  
 202 Main Street  
 Roan Mountain, Carter County, Tennessee

TAX MAP: 1" = 125'