

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
 INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

JUL 6 1979

DATE ENTERED

SEP 25 1979

 SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
 TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS
1 NAME

HISTORIC:

Medicine Park Hotel and Annex

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

East Lake Drive, along Medicine Creek

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Medicine Park

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

4

STATE

Oklahoma

CODE

40

COUNTY

Comanche

CODE

031

CLASSIFICATION**CATEGORY** DISTRICT BUILDING(S) STRUCTURE SITE OBJECT**OWNERSHIP** PUBLIC PRIVATE BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION** IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS** OCCUPIED UNOCCUPIED WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE** YES: RESTRICTED YES: UNRESTRICTED NO**PRESENT USE** AGRICULTURE COMMERCIAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL MILITARY MUSEUM PARK PRIVATE RESIDENCE RELIGIOUS SCIENTIFIC TRANSPORTATION OTHER:**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mr. and Mrs. Rex Leath

STREET & NUMBER

Medicine Park Hotel (The Old Plantation)

CITY, TOWN

Medicine Park

STATE

Oklahoma 73357

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Office of the County Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

Comanche County Court House

CITY, TOWN

Lawton

STATE

Oklahoma 73501

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Oklahoma Comprehensive Survey

DATE

1978

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS Oklahoma Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Oklahoma City

STATE

Oklahoma 73105

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

CHECK ONE

CHECK ONE

EXCELLENT

DETERIORATED

UNALTERED

ORIGINAL SITE

GOOD

RUINS

ALTERED

MOVED DATE _____

FAIR

UNEXPOSED

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Local labor was used in the initial construction of the hotel in 1908-09, and consisted of one floor which included a spacious porch 150 feet long. The structure was of wood frame construction but had exterior walls of the local and unique cobblestones on concrete foundations. Windows, doors and their frames were also wood but the most unusual feature of the building was the way the porch was supported. Trees with the upper branches intact composed the columns under the porch eaves, lending a natural appearance when viewed from the interior of the dining area. Due to its rustic nature the hotel was named the "Outside Inn".

In 1914 a flat roofed wood frame second story was added over the existing hotel and cobblestone columns replaced the previous "tree" columns. It was felt that the added weight of the second floor would be too much load for the wood supports to sustain.

A two-story hotel annex was built in 1915-16, the first floor imitating the original cobblestone while the second level copied the wood frame and siding of the hotel proper. A wood frame breezeway connected the annex to the hotel at the second level. The first floor was called the "Trading Post" general store while the second floor served as additional living quarters for the hotel.

While there were no additions to the hotel until the thirties, it was noted that in 1922 the "Outside Inn" was offering meals in a large airy dining room, an ice cream parlor, a telephone, piano and excellent dancing floor plus neighboring livery stables and family laundry.

During the thirties the hotel was called the "Grand Hotel" and a third floor was added in 1939 to try to entice more people into the area. This new floor had a flat roof over a large dance floor and public toilets, which were the only public toilets in the entire complex. The hotel underwent redecorating during this period with the "Tap Room", Dining Room and "Silver Lounge" being equipped with draped ceilings. Deep red fabric lengths were sewn together, arranged on the ceilings in swags, then sprayed with lacquer. Don Blanding, an Oklahoma artist, painted the west wall of the "Tap Room", with this mural surviving until it was damaged by water and was painted over. A sixty foot bar was also added at this time.

1949-The second floor of the annex and the third floor of the hotel burned.

(See continuation)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

In 1966 the hotel was leased by Rex and Ruby Leath and renamed "Old Plantation" where they served food in the old ballroom area. The Leath's purchased the hotel in 1973 and began restoring and remodeling the structure. The third floor has been renovated into living quarters for the Leath's while an ongoing program is in progress to halt further deterioration of the structure. The second floor of the annex was never replaced and the building now houses "Hank and Shank's Cobblestone Saloon". The breezeway connecting the annex and hotel was removed since it served no useful purpose and was badly deteriorated.

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 type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" 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 1908 to present BUILDER/ARCHITECT no record

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Medicine Park Hotel achieves significance in a multitude of ways, some of which follow:

1) It was the focal point of the resort complex which was known as "Medicine Park, Queen of the Southwest-A Health and Summer Resort", and was truly the recreational spot in the state from the early 1900's until its decline in the late 1930's.

2) Architecturally the hotel is significant since it is probably the largest building in Oklahoma to employ the use of the cobblestone which is indigenous to that area. The cobbles range in color from light tans, yellow-browns and deep reddish browns with an average diameter of 7".

3) The first hotel structure was built by Elmer Thomas, lawyer, developer, U.S. Congressman and Senator, who had an established law practice in nearby Lawton, but who had an intense love affair with the rough terrain that later became known as Medicine Park. Thomas, who practiced law in Lawton in 1901 (the year the vast Kiowa-Comanche-Apache reservation was opened for settlement) often camped on the rocky banks of Medicine Creek and envisioned a summer resort and colony in the area. Although Lawton was a small town, Ft. Sill was a well known and important U.S. military post, which represented business potential that the young lawyer recognized very quickly.

He filed claim to 120 acres along Medicine Creek and built a two room house on the property as required. Locating a partner with money who shared his vision, Thomas worked until 1908 accumulating land, clearing titles and providing facilities. Medicine Park, as a summer resort and health spa, opened to the public in a limited way on July 4, 1908. It was a success.

He built a two story house of cobblestone just north of the hotel in the early 1920's and he made his home in Medicine Park until 1950. Because law and politics occupied Thomas all his life, he and his partner decided to get out of the resort business and sold in 1914 to developer D. L. Sleeper and Associates. The next year Thomas and Lloyd were back in the resort business since Sleeper defaulted after adding on to the hotel.

(See continuation)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

John, Lisa "Historic Medicine Park..." Oklahoma City Times, Dec.17, 1976
 Routh, Audrey "Renovation Under Way..." Oklahoma City Times, Sept. 30, 1975
 "The Story of Medicine Park and the Old Hotel" Lawton Heritage News, Spring 1977, pp.1-3

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Mount Scott QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>14</u>	<u>545</u>	<u>650</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>81</u>	<u>0</u>
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING				
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION
 Starting at point "A" in the center of East Lake Drive and going in a straight line to the northeast, parallel and two feet outside of the northwest wall of the annex, for a distance of 125' to point "B", then

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Oklahoma	40	Comanche	031
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

Howard L. Meredith, Historian

NAME / TITLE
 Melvena K. Thurman, Architectural Historian
 Bill E. Peavler, Senior Preservation Architect

ORGANIZATION
 Oklahoma Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER
 Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN
 Oklahoma City,

DATE

TELEPHONE
 (405) 521-2491

STATE
 Oklahoma 73118

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
 TITLE Harry E. Deery, M.D. DATE 6-26-79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

William H. Anderson DATE 9.25.79
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: Bob G. Brown DATE 9/28/79
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

The partners then built an annex to the hotel, two story's tall, in 1916, and used it for a general store on the first level and added quarters for the hotel on the second level. A connecting breezeway completed the accessibility between the annex and the hotel and was constructed so that it was in effect a bridge at the second floor level. After Thomas became sole owner of the resort in 1920, many of Lawton's first families bought lots for summer cottages and then built cabins, using the native cobblestone for exterior walls.

The 1920's and 1930's, when Medicine Park experienced its greatest population, the resort was filled with people every weekend, using the beach at the pool created by damming Medicine Creek. The swimming area, boasting a 110' slide, was spanned by a swinging bridge at the north end of the pool. A common sight on most any summer day would find spectators viewing the activities from the wooden walkway above the dam or from the porch of the hotel.

Thomas sold the hotel to a corporation of three doctors and others who operated the business, changing the name of the hotel to "Grand Hotel" in 1934. It seems that after Thomas separated from the resort the hotel went through several traumatic periods. Because the building was located over a dry gully it suffered considerably after heavy down-pours, the interior being flooded on several occasions. It was abused by the activities of the time which included gambling, shooting scrapes, whiskey running and fights at the dances.

Lulabelle Hutchens purchased the entire town in 1939 and changed the name of the hotel again, this time to "Medicine Park Lodge". The building received extensive remodeling under Mrs. Hutchens direction, not only the hotel itself but cabins and other buildings in the area too. Ceilings were draped with fabric, murals were painted on the "Tap Room" wall and a sixty foot bar was added. For some reason, no changes were made without first consulting with Senator Thomas.

The major drawing card for the hotel business was the live band dances held every Saturday night and the large parties held in special seasons. The old stage in the ballroom (now a fireplace) held many famous "big band" era names such as Pinkie Tomlin, Les Brown and Bob Wills.

When Mrs. Hutchen's daughter died, she sold Medicine Park. In fact,

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

she sold it 3 or 4 times, repossessing it when the owners would default. The third story of the hotel and the second story of the annex burned in the late 1940's while under the care of the last owner to default. Mrs. Hutchens finally sold to the Texas Land Company who leased portions of the hotel to various people after 1955. Sometime between 1957 and 1966 the bay end on the third floor was built with a pitched roof capping the third floor. It appears that this point the old hotel was getting ready to enter a new phase.

Rex and Ruby Leath leased the hotel in 1966 for an antique shop and a few years later, in 1973 bought it outright for an eating establishment which was named "Old Plantation". During the years since, the "Old Plantation" has become well known for its food and hospitality, and the Leaths have done a great deal of restoration and rehabilitation on the structure itself. "Grandma", as Mrs. Leath is called by her friends, is determined to keep the old hotel on its feet, and is a walking history book when it comes to answering questions about Medicine Park and the Old Hotel.

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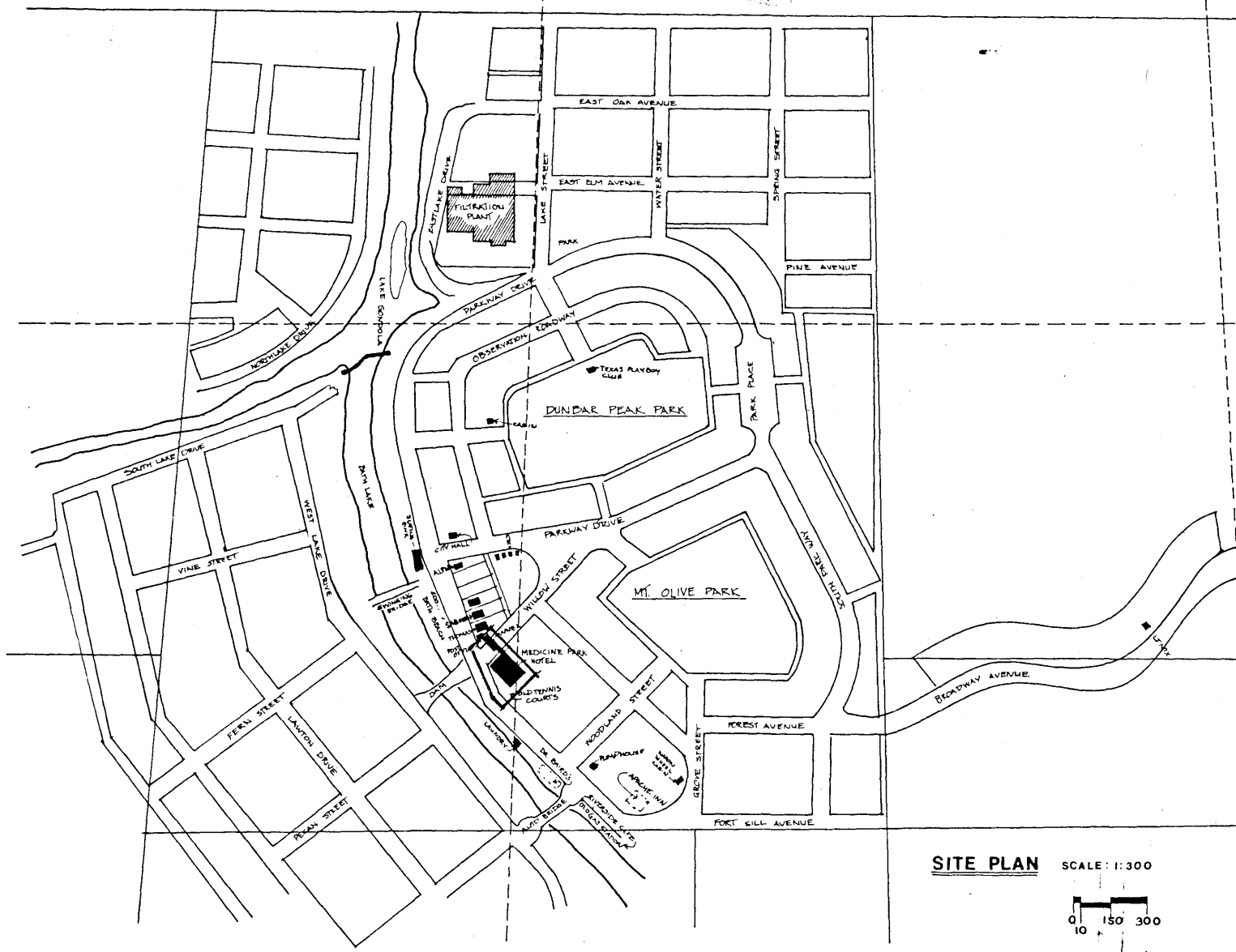
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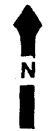
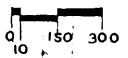
CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

going a distance of 250' in a southeast direction on a straight line, parallel to the northeast sides of the annex and hotel, to point "C", then going in a southwest direction in a straight line, a distance of 200' and parallel to the southeast side of the hotel, to point "D" in the center of East Lake Drive, then going a distance of 50' in a northwest direction to point "E", then going along the centerline of East Lake Drive to point "A", the point of beginning.



SITE PLAN SCALE: 1:300



MEDICINE PARK HOTEL & ANNEX

