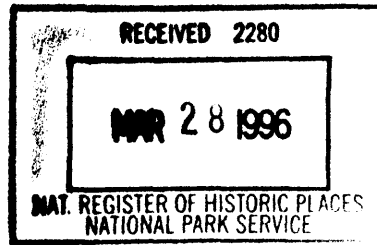


NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Noble Hotel

other names/site number Bills, Abe, Rooming House

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number 112 North Noble not for publication N/A
city or town Watonga vicinity N/A
state Oklahoma code OK county Blaine code 011
zip code 73772

=====

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

=====

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Blake Wade February 29, 1996
Signature of certifying official Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====

4. National Park Service Certification

=====

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register Beth Boland 5/10/96
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the
 National Register _____
- See continuation sheet.
determined not eligible for the _____
- National Register _____
- removed from the National Register _____

other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper Date
of Action

=====

5. Classification

=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> buildings
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> sites
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>DOMESTIC</u>	Sub: <u>multiple dwelling</u>
<u>DOMESTIC</u>	<u>hotel</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>COMMERCE</u>	Sub: <u>restaurant</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

roof ASPHALT

walls BRICK

other WOOD

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====

8. Statement of Significance

=====

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1912-c. 1941

=====
8. Statement of Significance (Continued)
=====

Significant Dates 1937

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Reynolds, W. H., contractor

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====
9. Major Bibliographical References
=====

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: _____

=====

10. Geographical Data

=====

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>14</u>	<u>553060</u>	<u>3966700</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
2	<u>N/A</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

N/A See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

=====

11. Form Prepared By

=====

name/title Jane Thomas, edited by Cynthia Smelker

organization _____ date September 28, 1995

street & number 124 W. Harrison telephone 405/282-1000

city or town Guthrie state OK zip code 73044

=====

Additional Documentation

=====

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage
or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====
Property Owner
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Fred R. Lucas, Jr., etal.

street & number 401 N. Clarence Nash Blvd. telephone _____

city or town Watonga state OK zip code 73772

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 9

Noble Hotel
name of property
Blaine County, Oklahoma
county and State

SUMMARY

The Noble Hotel, built 1912 with a rear addition in 1937, is a two-story, 25' wide, brick commercial building in downtown Watonga. The building is an excellent example of early twentieth century, Prairie Commercial style architecture. Located on one of the town's historic, primary commercial streets, the hotel remains in Watonga's central business district. The exterior possesses an unusually high degree of integrity.

DESCRIPTION

The Noble Hotel is a two-story, red brick building. Simply designed, the architectural style of the building is Prairie Commercial. The building is rectangular in shape, 25' wide by 130' deep, with a flat roof. The original portion of the building, constructed in 1912, was 25' wide by 65' deep. In 1937, an addition was made on the east end that doubled the building to the 25' wide by 130' deep that exists today.

The most prominent distinguishing features on the exterior are a series of stepped parapets on the street side (west) and on the south side (adjacent to the alley) of the 1912 building (one parapet on the south side being double stepped); three tiers of corbelled ornamental brick work with dentils along the second floor roof line of the facade and portions of the north and south walls of the 1912 building; and a buff colored face brick on the west facade. In the center step of the west parapet is a namestone which reads "19 Abe Bills 12."

The west facade entrance and storefront were altered sometime between 1941 and 1952. The balcony had been removed, leaving only the front porch, which was in an advanced stage of deterioration. Working from photographs, the front balcony has been reconstructed. It has a slightly sloped roof supported by four wooden square columns with a painted wood balustrade around the balcony. The balcony rests on its original four round metal poles which still provide columnar support for the balcony deck. The window and door configurations on the first floor were altered sometime between 1941 and 1952. The original building front had two doors, one on either side of large plate glass windows, topped by a clerestory of vertical light panes. When the facade was altered, a metal frame door was installed in the middle of the lower elevation and a partial brick half-wall was

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Noble Hotel
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added on both sides. The lower facade has been returned to its original configuration with wood and glass doors on either side of large plate glass windows. A row of clear panes resembling clerestory windows and transoms top the doors and plate glass windows. All windows in the facade are framed in wood with wooden panels below the large plate glass windows. A small sign hangs on each side of the porch that identifies this as the "Noble House Restaurant." The second floor of the west facade still retains its original centered wooden panel door, topped by a transom, and flanked by a set of two double-hung wood windows on each side.

The windows along the south exterior wall are in two even rows (upper and lower). There are six, segmentally arched, double-hung, wood windows in each row on the 1912 building. In the 1937 addition, double, segmentally arched, double-hung, wood windows are interspersed with small, single, segmentally arched, double-hung, wood windows. Both upper and lower rows are identical.

The north exterior wall contains an irregular configuration of large and small, single and double windows in both the 1912 and 1937 portions of the building. All windows are double-hung, wood, segmentally arched. There is one wood panel door located almost at the end of the 1912 building. A six foot, solid, wood fence runs the length of the north side, blocking almost all of the view of the lower portion of the building. This fence separates the restaurant parking lot from the building.

The rear of the building has its 1937 configuration of identical sets of doors and windows for upper and lower floors. A wood panel and glass door under a segmental arch is centered between two single, segmentally arched, double-hung, wood windows. The fire escape is the original, black, iron staircase, with an inside rail added for additional safety. Multiple conduits containing the electrical wiring run vertically from the top of the building to the electrical boxes mounted between the door and the south window.

INTERIOR, LOWER FLOOR:

On the interior, the first floor room in the 1912 portion has been completely altered with the later construction of walls and fixtures. The 1937 addition's lower floor has also been gutted to allow the installation of a kitchen and a dining room.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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 Noble Hotel
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county and State

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The remaining original interior features include the hard wood floors, milled (five panel) doors, door facings, transoms, and base boards. An inside stairway at the front (north interior wall) of the building provides access to the second floor.

INTERIOR, UPPER FLOOR:

A small dining room has been rehabilitated at the west end. Very little rehabilitation has been done to the rest of the second floor. The original configuration is still visible as small, single rooms arranged on either side of a central hallway. Much of the wall covering is gone. The original studs are in place, providing an outline of the configuration of the rooms and upper hall. Other than the small dining area on the west, the condition of the upper floor prohibits any use other than storage.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

The Noble Hotel retains a high degree of integrity. The only addition to the building is the rear portion added in 1937; thus, this construction falls within the hotel's period of significance. Due to the removal of the balcony between 1941 and 1952, the building underwent limited alteration. However, as this vital architectural feature has been reconstructed, it does not adversely impact the integrity of the hotel. The Noble Hotel maintains its integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship and conveys the feeling of its past environment.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 12

Noble Hotel
name of property
Blaine County, Oklahoma
county and State

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Noble Hotel is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for the role it played in the commercial life of downtown Watonga, Oklahoma. Originally one of five hotels in the commercial core, it is the only one that is still extant. The Noble Hotel is also eligible for the National Register under Criterion C as an excellent local example of a Prairie Commercial style building in Watonga, and the only one with a second story balcony.

BACKGROUND

Located in west central Oklahoma, Blaine County was originally designated as "C" County in 1890. After the opening of the Cheyenne-Arapaho lands in 1892, the settlers in "C" County voted to change the name to "Blaine" County in honor of James G. Blaine, U.S. Senator, House Speaker and Republican presidential candidate in 1884. This name change was made in November, 1892.

Watonga, the county seat of Blaine County, was established in April, 1892, in the land run that opened the Cheyenne-Arapaho lands for settlement. Watonga was named after a noted Arapaho Chief, "Watangaa", which means Black Coyote.

Watonga is located in the center of Blaine County, between the Cimarron River on the north and the North Canadian River on the south. Watonga was serviced by the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific railroad. There were two depots in the town, one on the east side and one on the west side. The east spur ran to Hitchcock and Okeene. The west spur ran from Geary to Alva and handled both passenger and mail service.

Blaine County and Watonga were built on an agricultural base. The late 1800s and early 1900s were the peak of the agricultural revolution, and were also the years of the county's greatest population growth and most rapid economic development. Blaine County experienced its largest population between 1897 and 1930, when it grew from 17,000 to over 20,000. Watonga, as the county seat, shared in this period of growth and prosperity. The local economy was at its strongest between 1897 and 1930.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 13

Noble Hotel
name of property
Blaine County, Oklahoma
county and State

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

By 1914 Watonga had five hotels/rooming houses. On this site, which housed an old frame rooming house, Abe Bills had this brick, two-story, 25' by 65' rooming house constructed in 1912, using W. H. Reynolds, of Geary, Oklahoma, as the contractor for the construction. The location of the rooming house in relationship to the Blaine County Courthouse and the railroad stations allowed it to thrive.

Abe Bills died in 1913, leaving his wife and daughter, Oretta, to operate the rooming house. In spite of the depressed economy of the 1930s, the building doubled in size and became known as a hotel. The Noble Hotel, so named by Oretta and her husband, Clarence Knappenberger, in 1937, played a prominent role in the community until the 1980s. It was operated by the Knappenbergers until 1965. Oretta, then a widow, sold the property to Jack and Erma Huffman, who ran the hotel until 1981. They, in turn, sold the hotel to Mr. and Mrs. R. G. Bhakta, the last owners until it was finally closed as a hotel in 1985.

The Noble Hotel is the only one of the five hotels that served Watonga in its peak period of development to remain standing. The Rock Island Hotel and the Watonga Hotel were demolished in approximately 1930. The Palace Hotel was demolished in 1958. And, the Fisher Hotel was demolished in 1967.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Noble Hotel is an excellent example of the commercial construction common during the settlement of Oklahoma. The segmentally arched windows, the parget coated limestone sills, the stepped parapet, the simple brick corbelling for decoration, the symmetrical spacing of the windows, and the combination of wood and glass lower facade are all typical of the Prairie Commercial style construction of the early 1900s. The blonde brick used on the facade of the hotel was left over from the construction of the Blaine County Courthouse. The balcony was typical of the smaller rooming-come-boarding houses in Watonga, such as the Palace Hotel, which was located on the north end of this same block and also began its history as a rooming house. The Noble Hotel's straight lines and simple geometrical design in both the 1912 and 1937 portions are typical of the utilitarian construction of both the period and the prairie circumstances. The brick construction was a product of availability of brick over lumber, which was relatively scarce on the prairie, and the desire to express permanency that marked the settlement construction in early Oklahoma history.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Noble Hotel
name of property
Blaine County, Oklahoma
county and State

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Heritage Book Committee. Their Story: A Pioneer Days Album of the Blaine County Area. Oklahoma City: Metro Press, 1977.

Lucas, Fred. Interview by Jane Thomas. October 1994.

McReynolds, Edwin C. Oklahoma: A History of the Sooner State. Norman: University Press, 1954.

Photograph of Abe Bills Rooming House, c. 1920. Private Collection, Watonga.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Watonga, 1914, 1930, 1941.

U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service. "Historic Preservation Certification Application, Part I and II." 6 July 1992. Project No. OK-92-00004.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All Lot 7, Block 48, Original Townsite of Watonga, Oklahoma.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes all the property that historically has been associated with the hotel.