

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received AUG 8 1986

date entered 9/11/86

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

1. Name

historic Early Twentieth Century Resort Buildings of Red Boiling Springs

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number See individual inventory forms N/A not for publication

city, town Red Boiling Springs N/A vicinity of

state Tennessee code 047 county Macon code 111

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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
<input type="checkbox"/> Thematic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X Group		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership - See individual inventory forms

street & number N/A

city, town N/A N/A vicinity of state N/A

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Macon County Courthouse

street & number 206 Court Square

city, town Lafayette 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

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input 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

Buildings associated with the development of the mineral springs resort at Red Boiling Springs (pop. 1,173), Macon County, Tennessee between the years 1916-1936 comprise this thematic resources nomination. Included in the nomination are: the Counts Hotel, the Cloyd Hotel, and the Donoho Hotel Historic District. All of the principal buildings are two stories and are of frame or brick construction. Several outbuildings associated with the operation of the resorts are also included in the nomination. Although all of the principal buildings have been altered somewhat, they retain their original design and integrity. Located along State Highway 151 (Market Street) and Salt Lick Creek, the hotels are still used commercially on either a year-round or seasonal basis.

Red Boiling Springs is located in an isolated corner of Macon County, in the Upper Cumberland region of Middle Tennessee. The area is characterized by steep hills and ridges and narrow valleys. The town itself is situated in a valley on the Highland Rim, approximately 70 miles northeast of Nashville. A unique combination of geography, geology, and hydrology results in highly mineralized waters found in local springs and wells. The groundwaters become mineralized by remaining in contact with a layer of Chattanooga black shale, which lies just under the ground in the area, and was occasionally exposed in the Salt Lick Creek bed. The presence of numerous mineral springs led to the development of a thriving resort town.

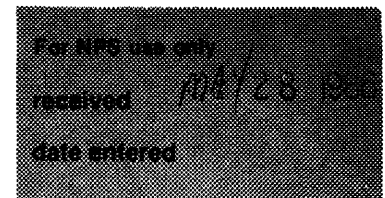
Red Boiling Springs was a popular mineral springs resort from the 1890s until after the second World War. Unlike many mineral springs resorts which had their heyday in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Red Boiling Springs enjoyed its greatest popularity in the years between World War I and World War II. At its peak, around 1936, more than 14,000 guests stayed in the eight hotels and dozen or so boarding houses which lined Salt Lick Creek. Today, only three hotels remain.

The Donoho Hotel Historic District is comprised of the Donoho Hotel, the house of the owner/proprietor, and several outbuildings. The oldest of the three hotels, the Donoho, opened for business in 1916, and was built to replace an older hotel which had been destroyed by fire a year earlier. The new Donoho is a two story white-painted frame building with Colonial Revival detailing. Long verandas around the front and sides on both stories are supported by four large columns and 22 smaller ones. The outside appearance of the Donoho has changed very little since it was built. The Donoho closed in the early 1940s, as the resort business was declining, and remained empty for more that a decade. Today, the hotel, with 44 guest rooms, is open for business throughout the summer.

Adjacent to the Donoho is a two story red brick house with Craftsman and Colonial Revival ornamentation. Built in 1924 by B. W. Chitwood, owner of the Donoho at that time, as a residence, it was used only as a residence until the fall of 1985. At that time, a bed and breakfast inn and restaurant was opened to the public (by reservation only). The house is still owned by the owners of the Donoho, and they continue to use it as a residence, as well.

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

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



Early Twentieth Century Resort Buildings of
Continuation sheet Red Boiling Springs, Tenn. Item number 7 Page 2

The Donoho Hotel is the only wood frame hotel still standing. The other remaining hotels are built partially or entirely of brick. The Counts Hotel is a two story structure, primarily of brick, built by its first owner John Smith. Like the Donoho, this hotel has a two story porch with a second story balustrade. A kiln was set up at the rear of the property and bricks were made on the site. According to a local story, Smith sold tickets on the building as it was being constructed, leading people to believe the hotel would be given away at a drawing. There was no drawing, and no one knew what became of the ticket money. Smith owned and operated the hotel until he sold it to Shelley Russell around 1943.

The Counts Hotel was originally named the Central because it was located centrally to the other resort hotels. However, it is best known as the Counts Hotel, a name it received when it was purchased by Henry Counts. Counts purchased the building, put in plumbing and electricity, and continued to operate it as a hotel until around 1960. Even after the building was sold, it continued to be known as the Counts until 1984, when the name was changed to the Red Boiling Inn. Today, the inn houses some local boarders, as well as visitors. It is the only one of the three hotels open year-round, and the only one continuing to offer the traditional sulphur water baths. The exterior is basically the same as when built, except for an addition to the rear of the building and an addition on the northwest elevation in the 1970s.

The newest of the hotels, the Cloyd, was built in 1927 of red brick, reputedly made on the property. The exterior of the two story building is distinguished by an arcaded portico. The original Cloyd was built by Zack and Clay Cloyd in 1890. That building was destroyed by fire in 1924, and the present hotel was built on the same site by the then-owner Joseph H. Peters. For the past several years, the hotel has been operated as Mossy Creek, a summer camp for children.

The resort business at Red Boiling Springs experienced a brief revival in the early 1960s, with the Cloyd, the Counts, the Donoho, The Moss, and the Colonial open for business. However, by the end of the decade, the number of hotels was again down to three--those three remaining today as reminders of a once-thriving resort business.

Properties for nomination were determined in consultation with staff members of the Tennessee Historical Commission and in consultation with Dr. Homer Kemp and Dr. Calvin Dickinson of the Upper Cumberland Humanities and Social Sciences Institute at Tennessee Tech University. Dr. Kemp and Dr. Dickinson toured the town and talked with residents in the early summer of 1985. Later that summer, Claudette Stager and others of the Tennessee Historical Commission visited the town and recommended that these four properties (the only resort buildings remaining in the town) be submitted as a thematic resources nomination.

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 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Entertainment/Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> invention				
Specific dates	1916 - 1936	Builder/Architect	Multiple	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Early Twentieth Century Resort Buildings of Red Boiling Springs are being nominated under National Register criteria A and C for their historic and architectural significance in Red Boiling Springs, Macon County, Tennessee. The two hotels and one historic district (comprised of a hotel, residence, and several outbuildings) present excellent examples of early twentieth century resort architecture. The vernacular buildings are two stories in height and are faced with brick or weatherboarding. All of the buildings are dominated by broad two story verandas. Historically, the nominated properties are significant for their association with the development of the mineral springs as a resort/recreation industry, a principal factor in the growth of Red Boiling Springs in the first third of the twentieth century. Although the area was first promoted as a health resort, later emphasis was placed on the scenic beauty of the area, recreation opportunities, and the hotels themselves. Once, over thirty mineral springs resorts were in operation in Middle Tennessee, and the properties at Red Boiling Springs are some of the few such buildings extant.

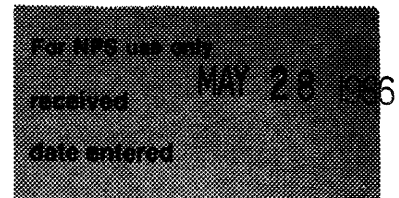
In the late 19th century, mineral springs resorts became very popular among upper-class Americans. While vacationers were "taking the waters" in resort towns such as Sulphur Springs in western Virginia and Saratoga Springs in upper New York State, a small summer resort was also developing in the isolated foothills of the Tennessee Cumberland Mountains. Some of the early settlers of the Salt Lick Creek area in Macon County recognized the potential value of the mineral springs located there, and a hotel was built as early as 1849 to house visitors. However, the resort at Red Boiling Springs did not begin to grow until improvements in transportation in the 1890s made the isolated area more accessible.

The town apparently got its name from a red sulphur water spring which bubbled up early every morning on a farm owned by Jesse Jones. Local legend has it that, even prior to this time, an early settler by the name of Shepherd Kirby had discovered the medicinal properties of the area's springs when he cured a serious eye infection by bathing with the waters.

In 1849, Samuel E. Hare, a Jackson County businessman, bought the red sulphur spring and 20 surrounding acres from Jesse Jones, and he and a partner, Jesse C. Bledsoe, built an inn. There is little information about the resort until the late 1870s, when Nashville newspapers began mentioning the town and its hotels. The small town made the front page of the Nashville papers in 1889, when former Tennessee Governor John C. Brown died there of a hemorrhage. Reports of his death emphasized the isolation of the resort, as there was no telephone nor telegraph in the town to call for help.

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

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



Early Twentieth Century Resort Buildings of
Continuation sheet Red Boiling Springs, Tenn. Item number

8

Page 2

In the early 1890s, railroads reached both Carthage (Tennessee Central) and Hartsville (Cheasapeake and Nashville), each located about 30 miles from Red Boiling Springs. Arrival of the railroad made access to the resort easier, although the 30-mile trip from the railhead by horse-drawn hack over unpaved roads still took most of a day.

About the same time, the railroad arrived, summer resorts were becoming increasingly popular among the middle class, which always made up the largest portion of the Macon County resort's clientele. In 1890, the Red Boiling Springs Hotel (non-extant) opened with a 10-pin bowling alley and a bathhouse. About the same time, Zack and Clay Cloyd built and opened the first Cloyd Brothers Hotel. Newspaper accounts from the 1890s rarely mention the health resort aspect of Red Boiling Springs. Even though hotel advertisements continued to stress the medicinal value of the waters, most people seemed to visit the area primarily to relax and have a good time.

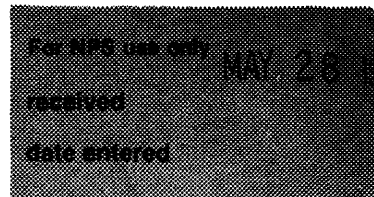
With the arrival of the automobile, Red Boiling Springs experienced an even more dramatic period of growth. By 1916, there were at least four hotels in the town. The most elegant was the Palace, owned by the RBS Water and Realty Company. Henry Counts, a Kentucky hotelier hired to manage the hotel, later owned and operated the Counts Hotel. Along with the 64-room Palace, there was the Donoho, its closest rival, the Cloyd, and the Central Hotel (later known as the Counts).

The growth of Red Boiling Springs as a resort town was based on the reputation of its mineral waters. In the 1920s, there were said to be over 50 springs in the area and five different kinds of water, ranging from "freestone," or plain water, to "double and twist," a highly mineralized sulphur water. "Double and twist" was not considered safe to drink, and was used for baths only. Reputedly, after drinking it, one "doubles up and twists around," hence, the name. Other kinds of mineral water -- white, red, and black -- were promoted by hotel advertisements for curing anything from insomnia to diabetes.

Rather than experiencing a decline in business with the discovery of more reliable cures for disease in the 20th century, Red Boiling Springs experienced its greatest popularity in the years between World War I and World War II, when all three of the remaining hotels were in full operation. The resort apparently reached its peak around 1936, when eight hotels and a dozen or so boarding houses were open. However, soon after WWII, the resort business declined rapidly, and by 1952 only two hotels remained open. The resort's decline was triggered by changed labor conditions during World War II, improvements in transportation, and improvements in medical science. Better roads throughout the area enabled people to travel to more distant vacation spots, such as the Great Smoky Mountains National Park or the coasts of Florida. In addition, most of the town's hotels had not kept pace with the increasing public demand for cleanliness, sanitation, and convenience.

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

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



Early Twentieth Century Resort Buildings of
Continuation sheet Red Boiling Springs, Tenn. Item number 8 Page 3

By 1952, only the Cloyd and the Counts remained open. The Palace had closed by that year and was torn down six years later. Other hotels were torn down or destroyed by fire over the next several years. Today, the Donoho, the Counts, and the Cloyd are the only resort hotels remaining in Red Boiling Springs.

In 1950, the Cloyd was purchased by Dr. A. T. Hall of Lebanon, Tennessee, who remodeled it and added a golf course and a swimming pool. The Donoho, which had closed in the 1940s, was purchased around the same time by Ed Hagen, a former town postmaster. He repaired and remodeled the hotel, adding 32 private bathrooms, and reopened it in 1955. Hall and Hagen cooperated to push for a town water and power system, and to revive the town's resort business. However, their hopes for a revival were crushed when a June 1969 flood caused over two million dollars in damages to the town. Even though the hotels were not damaged in the flood, the extensive damages made promotion of the town as a resort area difficult.

Today, the three remaining hotels are all used commercially. The Donoho is open for guests, and the Cloyd is now operated as the Mossy Creek Summer Camp.

Although the nominated buildings have been altered somewhat over the years (particularly in the adding of private guest baths and modern kitchen facilities), they all retain their original design and architectural integrity. The Donoho is probably the most representative of early Red Boiling Springs' hotels. Prior to the 1920s, most of the hotels were two story white frame structures with long two story verandas, where guests could sit in rocking chairs and enjoy the summer air. After some of these hotels were destroyed by fire, they were replaced with brick structures, and the Cloyd and the Counts are representative of those built in the 1920s, during the resort's most popular era.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property See individual inventory forms

Quadrangle name Red Boiling Springs, TN-KY

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A See individual inventory forms
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

See individual inventory forms

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 Pat Lane, Humanities Scholar-in-Residence

organization Tennessee Tech University

date March 12, 1986

street & number Box 5064

telephone 615-528-3616

city or town Cookeville, Tennessee 38505

state Tennessee

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.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Huger

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

date 8/4/86

For NPS use only

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

See Continuation Sheet for Justification
Keeper of the National Register

date

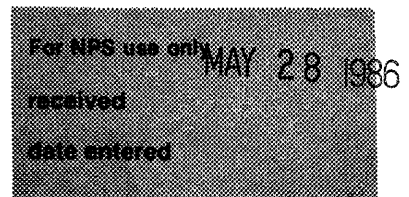
Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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

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



Early Twentieth Century Resort Buildings of
Continuation sheet Red Boiling Springs, Tenn. Item number

9

Page 2

Major Bibliographical References

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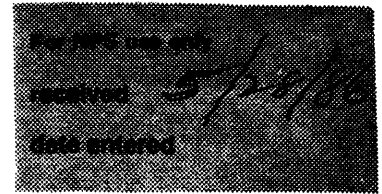
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Item number Page

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Early Twentieth Century Resort Buildings in Red Boiling Springs TR
State Macon County, TENNESSEE

Nomination/Type of Review

Substantive Review *Concurrence of Schlazel* *9/11/86* *105*
Date/Signature

1. Cloyd Hotel

Keeper

A Schlazel *9/11/86* *2*

Attest

2. Counts Hotel

Substantive Review

Keeper

A Schlazel *9/11/86* *5*

Attest

3. Donoho Hotel
HIST. DIST.

Substantive Review

Keeper

A Schlazel *9/11/86* *5*

Attest

Continued

4. Donoho House

Substantive Review

Keeper

A Schlazel *9/11/86* *25*

Attest

5.

Keeper

Attest

6.

Keeper

Attest

7.

Keeper

Attest

8.

Keeper

Attest

9.

Keeper

Attest

10.

Keeper

Attest
