

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMPH0687804
FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED NOV 15 1978

DATE ENTERED

DEC 9 1978

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

HISTORIC

The Oaks Hotel (Casa de Fresca)

AND/OR COMMON

Casa de Fresca

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

~~200 block of Southwest Railroad Avenue~~ SW.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Hammond

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

6th - Henson Moore

STATE

Louisiana

CODE

22

COUNTY

Tangipahoa Parish

CODE

105

3 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: (none)**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Malcolm B. Wright, Jr.

STREET & NUMBER

First Guaranty Bank; P. O. Box 520

CITY, TOWN

Hammond

STATE

VICINITY OF

Louisiana 70404

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Tangipahoa Parish Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 215

CITY, TOWN

Amite

STATE

Louisiana

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Louisiana Historic Sites Survey

DATE

May 1978

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

State Historic Preservation Office

CITY, TOWN

Baton Rouge

STATE

Louisiana

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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

The Casa de Fresa is located adjacent to the main business district of Hammond across Railroad Avenue from the railroad station. Sole occupant of a large city block, the "L"-shaped building is situated in one corner with open lawns in the rear and a planted area with trees and shrubs in the front.

The building is entered by means of a corner vestibule on the inside of the "L", with a large corner lobby. The south wing of the "L" contains public rooms including the dining room, porch, bar, desk, and lounge. The west wing contains private hotel rooms as do the two upper floors. Some of the rooms have been enlarged and bathrooms have been added. Elevators were installed in the 1940's.

The building is constructed with brick bearing walls, wood frame floors and partitions, and a wood truss hip roof.

The building's striking feature is its attenuated pedimented entrance portico which surmounts the entrance vestibule in the corner where the wings meet. Added in the 1920's, it appears to be constructed of standard commercially available members. Detailing both in and out is low-key catalogue-ordered Colonial Revival.

Especially noteworthy is the main entrance door and the interior columns. Most of the hotel rooms have simple transom doors. Aside from the portico, the exterior is sparsely ornamented with coins and horizontal bands of recessed brickwork.

The boundaries of the nominated area were chosen to encompass the hotel and its open and foliated setting, viz. the entire block.

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 1905, 1929 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Favrot and Livaudais (1929)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Due to its close relationship to the important strawberry industry and its status as a social center and widely-known local landmark, the Casa de Fresa Hotel is of commercial and social/humanitarian significance.

Since about 1900 the strawberry industry has been the leading industry of the Hammond area, and the state's strawberry industry, centered on Hammond and Tangipahoa Parish, has been one of the leaders nation-wide. As of 1899, when the industry was just beginning its major phase, there were only thirteen other counties in the United States which produced more strawberries than Tangipahoa Parish. The value of the state's crop that year was \$172,803. By 1909, the value of Louisiana's strawberry crop was \$485,478. As of 1918, in terms of crop value, Louisiana was the nation's third leading strawberry state with a crop valued at \$1,750,000, and in 1930 it was in first place by a wide margin with a crop valued at \$6,507,000.¹

In about 1924, a promotional booklet on Hammond by E. A. Herring, secretary of the local Chamber of Commerce, stressed the importance of the railroad to the town and the strawberry industry:

The Illinois Central Railroad and the American Railway Express Co. are entitled to great credit for the advancement and success of the strawberry industry in this District, because, due to the perishable nature of the crop, it is extremely important that it be handled with promptness and dispatch, and gotten to destination with the least possible delay, with close attention to temperatures of the cars, and other features.

The promotional booklet also had high praise for the Oaks Hotel (the early name for the Casa de Fresa), calling it "one of the best hotels in the South" and "one of the finest, most modern, hotels to be found in any city of similar size." The original Oaks Hotel opened its doors in 1893. It was built by Colonel and Mrs. H. W. Robinson, who had come to Hammond from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and designed by Colonel Robinson's brother-in-law Benjamin S. Gallyp. The hotel's name referred to the grove of oaks surrounding the building, some of which are still there today. This original building was destroyed by fire in 1905.³

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Campbell, Edna. "From Oaks to Berries--and Now?" Hammond Daily Star, April 20, 1977.

Campbell, Edna. "Landmark Hotel Closes Its Doors." Baton Rouge Morning Advocate, September 18, 1976.

(continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.7 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>15</u>	<u>714355.0</u>	<u>3317.815.75</u>	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Casa deFresa site boundaries extend over an entire city block of Hammond, Louisiana. This 1.74 acre site is bounded on the north by Rober St., on the east by S. W. Railroad Ave., on the south by Charles St. and on the west by Oak St. These boundaries have remained the same from the beginning of the hotel's history, when Col. Robinson purchased the land from Charles E. Cate prior to 1893. At one point in time the hotel building was actually

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Laurie Moon, SHPO Intern & Andrew Gasaway, Hammond Historic District Committee

ORGANIZATION

(Revised by Jonathan Fricker and John Easterly)

DATE

August 25, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

306 E. Church Street

TELEPHONE

345-5047

CITY OR TOWN

Hammond

STATE

Louisiana 70401

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.

SIGNATURE

J. Bernard Lewis

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

11 Oct 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

ATTEST:

Laura A. Olliver

DATE

12/29/78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

12/29/78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Colonel Robinson quickly replaced it with a larger structure built along the same lines and located on the same block but at the opposite corner from the original building. In 1918, Colonel Robinson died during an epidemic of influenza, but Mrs. Robinson, with the assistance of her sons Joseph and John, continued to operate the hotel. Once again the Oaks fell prey to fire in 1929, but this time only the interior was destroyed. The hotel was quickly renovated, and a contest was held to select a new name. The name "Casa de Fresa" ("House of Berries") was the winner.

The hotel was less than a block from the railroad station, and it soon became known as "a haven for travelers and a mecca for wealthy people from the North during winter months. It was widely-known as the best hotel between Memphis and New Orleans." The hotel's close relationship to the railroad is illustrated by the facts that the Illinois Central advertised it as an excellent winter resort and also used it exclusively for the lodging of railroad officials.⁴

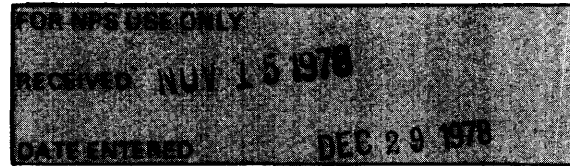
The hotel was also a social center for local citizens. Newspaper articles repeatedly mention it as a meeting place for city government groups and social clubs. In addition, Mrs. Robinson held teas and card parties for the local ladies, and imported orchestras from New Orleans for dances.⁵

The hotel's connection with the strawberry industry was very close, and the name change of 1929 was appropriate. From the hotel's early days strawberry buyers from outside the area tended to stop at the Oaks. According to some citizens of Hammond who were interviewed about 1930, the hotel may have played a role in the formation of the first strawberry associations around 1900;

Many outside buyers came into the district each season. The increase in the number of buyers and the keen competition for the berries finally led several growers to believe that the buyers were making too much profit. The buyers from the district all stopped at the Oaks Hotel in Hammond. They soon became well acquainted with each other and many growers thought that these buyers frequently agreed among themselves as to the prices they would pay. . . Some of them finally decided to band themselves together for collective shipping and marketing, and thus the first strawberry association came into existence.⁶

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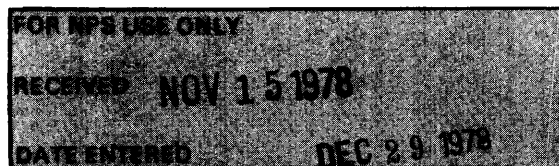
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Along with providing accommodations for virtually all the out-of-town buyers, the Oaks enjoyed a close relationship with the strawberry industry due to the presence of the "Log Cabin" strawberry auction center right next door fronting Railroad Avenue. A general auction was first inaugurated in Hammond in 1923, and the "Log Cabin" was built the following year. For many years after that, the Log Cabin was the major strawberry auction center in the area.⁷

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FOOTNOTES

¹A. M. Hopper, "The Strawberry Industry of Louisiana" (M. A. Thesis, L. S. U., 1931), pp. 15, 43, 60, hereinafter cited as Hopper, "Strawberry Industry."

²E. A. Herring, The Story of Hammond and Tangipahoa Parish (Undated pamphlet), p. 11, hereinafter cited as Herring, Story of Hammond.

³Herring, Story of Hammond, pp. 6-7; Donna E. Robbins, "Buildings from Hammond's Past," Southeast Louisiana Historical Association Papers, Vol. 2 (1975), p. 48, hereinafter cited as Robbins, "Buildings from Hammond's Past;" Edna Campbell, "From Oaks to Berries--and Now?" Hammond Daily Star, April 20, 1977.

⁴Robbins, "Buildings from Hammond's Past," p. 48; Souvenir Album of Hammond, Louisiana (Illinois Central Railroad publication, 1897).

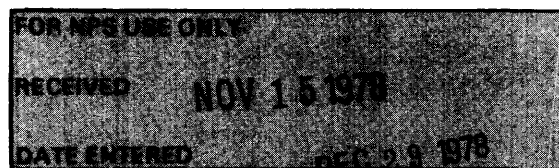
⁵Louisiana Vindicator, December 27, 1907, "Hammond" Vertical File, Louisiana Room, L. S. U. Library; Hammond Vindicator, March 3, 1929, Newspaper and Microfilm Department, L. S. U. Library; Robbins, "Buildings from Hammond's Past," p. 48.

⁶Hopper, "Strawberry Industry," pp. 27-28.

⁷Hopper, "Strawberry Industry," pp. 38-40.

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"Hammond" Vertical File, Louisiana Room, L. S. U. Library.

Hammond Vindicator, March 3, 1929.

Herring, E. A. The Story of Hammond and Tangipahoa Parish, Undated pamphlet.

Hopper, A. M. "The Strawberry Industry of Louisiana." M. A. Thesis, L. S. U., 1931.

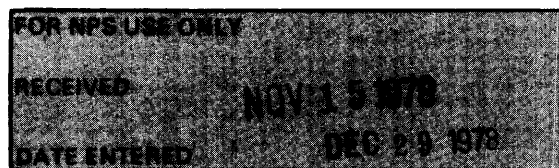
Interview with Edna Campbell by Laurie Moon, May 29, 1976.

Robbins, Donna E. "Buildings from Hammond's Past." Southeast Louisiana Historical Association Papers, Vol. 2 (1975), p. 46-53.

Souvenir Album of Hammond, Louisiana, Illinois Central Railroad publication, 1897.

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10. Verbal boundary description (cont'd)

on the opposite corner of the site, and the Strawberry Auction Center was in the northeast corner of the site. Now only the rebuilt hotel exists, in the southeat corner of the site.