

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

PH0696005

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

JAN 30 1979

DATE ENTERED

MAR 9 1979

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC

Utopia Hotel

AND/OR COMMON

Nicholson Cleaners

## LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

206 4th Avenue North

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Nashville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fifth

VICINITY OF

STATE

Tennessee

CODE

047

COUNTY

Davidson

CODE

037

## 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

Angelia Nicholson Duncan

STREET & NUMBER

801 Belton Drive

CITY, TOWN

Nashville

VICINITY OF

STATE

Tennessee

37205

## LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Davidson County Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Metro Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Nashville

STATE

Tennessee

37201

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Downtown Nashville Plan and Development Program  
Historical-Architectural Survey and Analysis

DATE

April 1977

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Metropolitan Nashville Development and Housing Agency

CITY, TOWN

Nashville

STATE

Tennessee

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT

GOOD

FAIR

DETERIORATED

RUINS

UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED

ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE

MOVED

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

---

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Utopia Hotel stands on Fourth Avenue, North, in downtown Nashville, a few blocks south of the Metro Courthouse and west of the Cumberland River. It is a narrow, six-story masonry building, the stone facade (southwest elevation) of which is constructed in the Romanesque Revival style. Distinguished by a slightly projecting three-story bay resting over the entrance, this bay accentuates the verticality of the structure and draws the eye upward to a row of four arched windows, another row of unusually treated windows, and finally to a false gable that caps the central bay. Another distinctive feature is the foliated carved stonework which decorates the rock-faced, coursed ashlar facade.

A portico in antes has been created at the entrance by the use of a glass curtain wall set back from the four supporting columns at the building's edge. This is the only alteration to the facade. The bay above, which projects from the second, third, and fourth floors, contains a unit of three windows and a transom on each level. Flanking the bay on both sides is a single window at each level. The window treatment on the sixth floor is unique in that the two end windows have a double transom opposed to the single transom above the two central windows. The northwest and northeast elevations are unadorned and the southeast wall adjoins that of the adjacent building.

The interior of the first floor, which served as the dining room and other public spaces, has been altered greatly to accommodate a dry cleaning business. Most of the detail there has been lost. However, much detail remains on the upper floors. Two large parlors occupy the second floor. The front parlor contains double fireplaces and a tile floor. The woodwork is quite grand, with up to twenty-five paneled sliding doors of an immense scale, complemented by massive moldings and balustrades. The building is structurally sound, but the interior spaces have been allowed to deteriorate. Although the building is only approximately 24 feet wide, it has a depth of almost 164 feet. On the upper floors, a side hallway runs the length of the building serving a single row of rooms, many of which are interconnecting. The basement of the building is occupied by a restaurant which opens onto the Printer's Alley entertainment district.

The property nominated is the entire parcel owned by Angelia Nicholson Duncan. A copy of the boundary description is attached.

# 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 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                      1890                                      BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Utopia Hotel, noted for its rich detailing of carved foliated forms and variety of windows, is a fine example of the Romanesque Revival style. It is the only remaining commercial stone structure in Nashville built in that style.

In 1890, Nashville was the largest city in Tennessee and a major commercial, educational, and entertainment center of the South. The Utopia Hotel, built in 1890, was a reflection of this prosperity, growth, and the resulting need to accommodate commercial travelers. In the 1892 City Directory, the hotel's listing reads "European Hotel and Restaurant, Saloon, Cigars, and Tobacco."

The hotel was one of several establishments that made up the "men's quarter" along what was then named Cherry Street. In the Gay Nineties, men gathered in the quarter to eat, drink, and gamble in the restaurants, saloons, and the new Utopia Hotel. The lively social life centered there was for men only; the famous Maxwell House Hotel, which was across the street from the men's establishments, had a Ladies Entrance on a connecting street so that women would not have to even walk along Cherry Street.

The first manager of the Utopia was Ike Johnson, who after a few years moved to the Southern Turf Saloon just down the street and developed it into a nationally known establishment. William R. Polston succeeded him at the Utopia, managing it until 1910. Polston was well known in Nashville for his generosity toward the city's poor. He originated a "bread line" and traditionally hosted a Christmas dinner for the needy. After Polston died in 1911, the name was changed to the Bismarck Hotel and Cafe. It became the Utopia again in 1920 until it finally closed in 1935. Since then, the first floor has served as a barber shop and office and, in 1973, became a dry cleaning business.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Graham, Eleanor, (ed.), Nashville: A Short History and Selected Buildings. Historical Commission of Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County, Nashville, 1974.  
 W. R. Polston obituary. Nashville Banner, Feb. 9, 1911, p. 11.  
Nashville City Directories, Nashville: Marshall & Bruce, Co. 1883-1973.  
 Waller, William, (ed.), Nashville in the 1890s. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press. 1970.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY app. 24' x 164' (.01 acre) *.14. Cont 3/9/79*  
 QUADRANGLE NAME Nashville West, Tenn. QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 6	5, 1, 9, 9, 0, 0	4, 0, 0, 1, 9, 8, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION  
 See Davidson County Deed Book 4582, p. 956; a copy of this page is enclosed.

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  
John H. Compton

ORGANIZATION  
Metropolitan Historical Commission

STREET & NUMBER  
Second Avenue North at Broadway

CITY OR TOWN  
Nashville

DATE  
January 1978

TELEPHONE  
(615) 259-5027

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE Herbert E. Hays  
 TITLE Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission DATE 1/26/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE 3-2-78

ATTEST: [Signature] DATE 3/9/79  
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION