

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED AUG 1 1978  
DATE ENTERED SEP 20 1978

**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

AND/OR COMMON

Hotel Wilber

SA09-34

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Southwest corner 2nd & Wilson

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Wilber

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Nebraska

CODE

31

COUNTY

Saline

CODE

151

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: being restored

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Nebraska Czechs of Wilber

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Wilber

VICINITY OF

STATE

Nebraska

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Saline County Courthouse, County Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Wilber

STATE

Nebraska

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" 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 Hotel Wilber fronts on Wilson (formerly Doane) Street just one-half block north of Wilber's main business street. The structure is a two-story brick over a limestone basement and is ell-shaped in plan. The front measures 33 by 48 feet while the ell measures 33 by 53 feet. No architect has been identified for the building however it was constructed by Isaac Hickman of Beatrice (stone and brick work) and Charles Whipple, G. D. Coe and George Smith (carpentry work) of Wilber. Although deteriorated, the building remains in virtually original condition according to the detailed newspaper account which documented the opening of the hotel.<sup>1</sup>

The building was designed to accommodate the needs of a first class hotel. The front portion of the building contains a large office and lobby as well as a front and back parlor and family rooms. Writing, toilet and baggage rooms occupy the space between the front office and the large dining room which was able to seat fifty people. The well-equipped kitchen occupies the rear of the ell. An Eastlake-inspired, red oak stairway leads to the sleeping rooms upstairs from the main lobby.

A small lobby is provided at the top of the stairs where the east-west and north-south hallways intersect. The second floor is divided into twenty separate rooms (many of which have not been touched since the hotel closed ca. 1960's) with appropriate closets and a bathroom.

The basement, which is reached by way of the rear stairway, is confined to the rear ell portion of the building. Two compartments are provided: one for the laundry facilities and one for the building's heating plant.

Little has changed since its construction. Some modernization of the kitchen and bathroom facilities have been done as well as the updating of electric lights. The pressed metal ceilings which enhance nearly every room may have been added around the turn of the century. The north and west walls of the building were stuccoed at some time in the recent past.

The building has been acquired by the Nebraska Czechs of Wilber who plan an adaptive use of the structure. Clean-up operations have begun and the used car lot along the north edge of the property has been removed.

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1. Wilber Republican, August 16, 1895, Page 2 Column 3.

# 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 1895

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Charles Whipple et al

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In March 1895, the town of Wilber, Nebraska was left without a hotel, due to a disastrous fire in the downtown area. The city had discussed their need for a commodious brick hotel as early as 1890, but it wasn't until the spring of 1895 that a stock company was formed to erect a new hotel. Work began in April and in August 1895 the Hotel Wilber opened. For this small community (ca. 1,000 population), this hotel was an elaborate addition to the commercial development of the town. It was a social center for the local citizens and a haven for travelers arriving to do business in this rural county seat.

Due to the efforts of the Nebraska Czechs of Wilber, the hotel will remain a social center for Wilber residents and the many thousands of people who visit this community annually because of its designation as the Czech Capital of Nebraska.

The Hotel Wilber stands today as a significant example of late nineteenth century commercial architecture and a building type which, while once ubiquitous, is fast disappearing from the village scene. The building represents a restrained elegance which is noteworthy for the era within which it was built. Built of standard masonry construction, most of the building displays the stilted segmental arch so common for the period. Window and door openings on the front, however, display rough cut stone lintels and sills. Overall emphasis is placed on the front facade which features a two-story columned portico and the unusually well preserved false, pressed-metal gable. A simple pressed metal, bracketed cornice (which is executed in corbelled brick on the rest of the building) completes the decorative motif. The image of luxury portrayed by this facade, so appropriate to its function, does much to enhance the Hotel's significance within the corpus of its building type.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Wilber

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 14 6727810 4483060  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B           
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property is located on the N 1/2 of NE 1/4 of Lot 225 which is known as "Hotel Square".

### 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

Janet Jeffries Spencer, Cultural Historian; D. Murphy, Architect

ORGANIZATION

Nebraska State Historical Society

DATE

July, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

1500 R Street

TELEPHONE

402-432-2793

CITY OR TOWN

Lincoln

STATE

Nebraska

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE   

LOCAL X

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

Marvin E. Knutt 7/25/78

TITLE

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

R. B. Rettig

DATE

9/20/78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: William Laborich  
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

Sept 18, 1978

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Crete Vidette newspaper, various articles 1890-1895 dealing with  
"Happenings in the County Seat" (Wilber), Crete, Nebraska.

Land records, Saline County Courthouse, Wilber, Nebraska.

Wilber Republican newspaper August 16, 1895, Page 2, Column 3,  
"The New Hotel", Wilber, Nebraska.