

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

RECEIVED MAY 31 1991 NATIONAL REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Hotel Montague other names/site number Same

2. Location

street & number 200 South State Street N/A not for publication city, town Caro N/A vicinity state Michigan code MI county Tuscola code 157 zip code 48712

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: [X] private, [] public-local, [] public-State, [] public-Federal. Category of Property: [X] building(s), [] district, [] site, [] structure, [] object. Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 1, Noncontributing 0, Total 1.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. 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. [] See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: [Signature] Date: 5-24-91 Acting State Historic Preservation Officer State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. [] See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official: _____ Date: _____ State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: [X] entered in the National Register. [] 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:)

Entered in the National Register [Signature] 7/8/91

Signature of the Keeper [Signature] Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Domestic/Hotel

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Vacant/Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone
walls Brick
Stone
roof Asphalt
other N/A

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY:

Hotel Montague is a 3-1/2 story brick and cut fieldstone building sited on a small triangular lot at a major intersection in the small community of Caro, MI. The single building actually fronts on three streets; State, Almer, and Frank Streets. Accordingly, the building exhibits two entirely different facades, one of utilitarian nature at the rear and one of utilitarian Neo-Classical Revival inspiration at street side. The present 1924 hotel occupies the same Lazy L foundation plan of the original 1902 hotel. A pedimented, double-decker, brick-pier portico stands at the apex of the L. The roof is flat, hidden behind a parapet. A projecting metal classical cornice surrounds three sides of the structure at the roof line. Except for two small 1950+ additions, the integrity of the building exterior remains intact. The hotel has been vacant since 1984 when a fire destroyed a portion of the second and third floor interior.

SPECIFICS:

The hotel is flanked by small one and two story frame residences at both sides of the triangular lot. Adjacent uses across the street include the one story IGA Foods, 1-1/2 story Strand Theater, and 2 story mixed commercial structures along State Street. With the exception of the IGA, little has changed in this area in the past 50 years.

The exterior of the structure is in good physical condition. The cut fieldstone walls at the lower 1-1/2 story portion with keyed window and door heads are remnants of the original 1902 construction. A brown face brick in running bond now covers the upper two story facades at street side. At the rear, a mortared rubble fieldstone wall is visible for the first 1/2 story above grade, followed by a cement stucco covered brick to the second story floor line. A light buff colored brick covers the second and third story rear exterior.

A small lean-to metal skinned addition has been constructed at the apex of the interior angle at the rear. Adjacent to State Street a small "doghouse" addition covers a lower level entrance areaway. Both additions are insignificant and appear to have been placed after 1950.

All windows are double hung wood, single light. Window heads at street side have invisible lintels. The rear window heads are double rowed brick arch. A projecting metal cornice surrounds the building at the roof line on street sides only.

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

A fieldstone-faced terrace flanked by concrete stairs at both ends provides access to the main floor entrance. Each staircase leads directly to an entrance. One door is of mill finish aluminum with sidelights and transom. The other door is a single door with transom. The terrace supports a double-decker, pedimented portico with four brick columns. A simple balustrade fronts a second-story veranda.

The interior of the hotel is in extremely poor condition. A 1984 fire destroyed portions of the second and third floors of the south wing. Since then, vandals and leaking roofs have taken their toll. The building has been vacant since the fire.

Basically, the basement level was used for mechanical and storage space, meeting or sample rooms, and at one point a two-lane bowling alley. The first floor level incorporated the hotel lobby, lounge, dining room, kitchen, and banquet rooms. The second and third floors have almost identical floor plans with sleeping rooms and baths on each side of a center corridor.

Except for spatial relationships, little remains of the 1924 interior integrity. Two simple brick fireplaces remain - one in the first floor lobby and the other on the second floor. Public areas such as stairways, lobby, and meeting rooms have either been scavenged or destroyed during the last remodeling. On the second and third floors, most sleeping room doors with transoms remain in place except where destroyed by fire. The interior window and base trim is a simple 1X4 pine with outside corner molding. In some rooms, the molding has been removed to place paneling over the plaster walls. Approximately 50% of the trim appears to remain in place.

A 1984 fire destroyed much of the south wing, second and third floors. Subsequently, moisture and rains have caused the first floor lounge area and floors above to deteriorate and settle at the interior frame corridor bearing wall.

No elevator exists. The heating system is a gas fired boiler and steam radiators. Asbestos is present as pipe wrapping. The basement floor is approximately 1/2 wood and 1/2 concrete slab. Basement ceilings are in fair condition with some structural repair needed.

The former hotel is to be rehabilitated, utilizing as much as possible of its historic finish, to serve as housing for the elderly.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Commerce

Period of Significance

1923-24
1923-41

Significant Dates

1923-24
N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Cowles & Mutscheller

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

SUMMARY:

The original Hotel Montague, which this present structure replaced after a fire in 1923, was one of many commercial, industrial, and civic improvements which early Caro businessman and promoter Charles Montague carried out in Caro between his arrival in town in 1868 and his financial decline after 1903. The present 1923-24 building of the same name stands on the highly visible site of its predecessor and utilizes its cut fieldstone lower portion, thus retaining something of a direct association with its namesake, Charles Montague. Reconstruction of the building after the 1923 fire, because of the perception that a good hotel materially encouraged local growth and development while poor or no hotel facilities discouraged them, became a community project, financed by the sale of stock and bonds to local citizens. The present building served as the city's principal hotel and a leading meeting place for over fifty years. The Hotel Montague, despite its interior renovation and fire and water damage, remains a prime example of an early twentieth-century, small-town, Michigan hotel because of its size, visual prominence, and unusual form and design.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The completion of the original Hotel Montague in 1902 as a first class hostelry and dining establishment was the crown jewel of Charles Montague's long career. He had spent all of his adult life in varied industries and banking, general mercantile, transportation, and communication businesses in the Caro, Michigan community.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Caro Centennial Souvenir Booklet, 1852-1952
 Centennial Committee of Caro, 1952
 History of Michigan Sugar Industry, The Sugar Tramp, 1954, Dave Guttleben
 History of Tuscola & Bay Counties, MI, illustrations and biographical sketches
 H & R Page & Co., 1883, Chicago
 Tuscola County Advertiser, Caro Edition
 Sep. 12, 1902
 Jan. 14, 1921
 Nov. 23, 1923
 Nov. 30, 1923
 Dec. 7, 1923
 Dec. 28, 1923
 Jan. 11, 1924
 Feb. 1, 1924
 Mar. 7, 1924
 Mar. 21, 1924
 Apr. 18, 1924
 Apr. 25, 1924
 May 9, 1924
 May 16, 1924
 Jun. 6, 1924
 Jun. 6, 1966
 Nov. 19, 1980

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS): None

- 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

Specify repository:

Indianfields Public Library, Caro, MI

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A 17 306140 4817670
 Zone Easting Northing
 C _____

B _____
 Zone Easting Northing
 D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Village of Caro, Township 12 North, Range 9 East, Section 3. Beginning at center of Section 3 thence South 134.2 feet along North-South quarter line thence South 46° 49' 45" West 118.4 feet along centerline of State Street thence North 42° 16' 55" West 172.55 feet thence South 88° 30' 15" East 45.28 feet parallel to East-West quarter line thence North 92.8 feet South 88° 30' 15" East 155.87 feet along East-West quarter line to point of beginning.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire city lot that has been historically associated with the subject property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Leslie C. Linsemier, Partner
 organization Montague Place Limited Partnership date 11-12-90
 street & number P.O. Box 12275 telephone (517) 372-1372
 city or town Lansing state MI zip code 48901

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Charles Montague significantly impacted the development of the Village of Caro and Tuscola County, Michigan. Charles Montague was born near London, Ontario in 1847 and moved to Caro, Michigan in 1868, clerking temporarily in his uncle's store. He joined the Union Army, returning to Caro in 1865, thereupon joining business with his uncle, J. C. Montague & Company. In 1867, his uncle sold out and Charles bought out D. C. Bush, and, joined by William E. Sherman, continued in the mercantile business for the next several years. In 1869, as a partner in Montague and Sherman, Charles built the first three-story brick building block, called the Sherman Block, in Caro (later the Wilsey Block). In 1878, he built the Opera House Block; in 1879 the Bank Block, in 1880 the Citizens Block, and in 1881 a block of six stores at Frank and State Streets.

At the same period of building and development of downtown Caro, Charles spearheaded a drive to secure a railroad connection to Caro. Besides donating the depot site, he and a fellow businessman each gave \$5,000 and personally guaranteed \$80,000 of subscriptions from the people of Caro. Charles also assisted in obtaining rights of way and contracted for the construction. The railroad went into service in July of 1878.

Montague opened the first bank of Caro, the Caro Exchange Bank, in 1875 and continued the banking and real estate operations throughout the 1880's. He acquired substantial wealth during this period in lumber operations in Michigan's Upper Peninsula and in Green Bay, Wisconsin, under the partnership of Van Winkle & Montague, from 1882 to 1906.

Another significant contribution of Charles Montague came in 1899, one which continues today. Sugar beet culture was introduced to the Caro area in 1898 by Richard Hoodless. In order to process the beets, a factory had to be built, requiring \$400,000. This was beyond the means of Montague, so he and John Seeley went to Detroit to arrange for additional financing. With the additional capital secured, they returned to Caro and were greeted with much joy, a parade, and band playing "Hail to the Chief." Land was purchased, the still standing factory was built, and the first processing of beets began in October of 1899. Charles Montague was one of the original seven directors of the Peninsular Sugar Refining Company. Today, the sugar beet industry still thrives in the Caro area.

Shortly after the sugar factory success, Charles envisioned the need for a first class hotel for Caro; thus, Hotel Montague became a reality. Its location was the site of the Wilsey Block. Montague's earliest business block was demolished in 1900 to make way for the new hotel, which opened in 1902. The spacious lobby, friendly dining room, and well appointed rooms were reportedly one of the very finest gathering spots in Eastern Michigan. Charles Montague had triumphed again.

Unfortunately, Lady Luck was not always with Charles. Another vision of Montague was to harness the Cass River for electrical power for the rapidly developing Caro community. Planned in 1900-1901, the dam and turbines were constructed in 1902. Unfortunately, immediately after the gates were closed, problems surfaced with a break in the foundation. The dam was destroyed, the builders blamed, and these issues contributed to Charles Montague's financial woes during the economic panic of 1903. Fortunately, he was able to settle with his creditors and saved a considerable amount of his property.

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In the years following, he had plans to build a magnificent Masonic Temple and Opera House adjacent to the hotel. Work had begun when he was overtaken by illness and his family convinced him to abandon the project. Charles Montague died January 10, 1921.

This original Hotel Montague burned on November 21, 1923. The Caro Board of Commerce spearheaded a drive for a replacement structure that began practically before the fire's ashes had cooled. The board invited Olin C. Eckley, secretary of the Ypsilanti (Michigan) Board of Commerce, to speak to its December 4, 1923 meeting concerning the means adopted by that city to finance a new hotel, the Huron Hotel, that had been opened on January 1, 1923. Mr. Eckley explained that the needed funds had been raised through the sale of stock within the community and that a manager appointed by a board of trustees was operating the business as a profit. At a meeting on December 26, 1923, the executive board of the board of commerce reviewed plans for the new hotel submitted by architects Cowles and Mutscheller of Saginaw and estimates of the construction cost. The Tuscola County Advertiser reported that "The plans show a front elevation very much like the old building but the interior will be more compact and provide 53 rooms instead of only 33." (It is not clear that these were the plans ultimately used.) The board adopted a financing plan by which investors would receive the value of their investment half in stock and half in bonds paying six percent interest. An investment in a first-class hotel was viewed as an investment in the community that would be amply repaid by the business development and increased property values that would result. By late March, 1924, the estimated \$60,000 cost of the new building was pledged. The names of all subscribers were listed in the March 24 Advertiser.

On April 10, 1924, an architect's drawing of the "new" Hotel Montague appeared in the local newspaper. Touted as being fireproof and modern in every respect, the hotel was to have hot and cold water in each of the 50 sleeping rooms, while 10 rooms were to have baths. On May 12, 1924, construction began on the Hotel Montague and by June 6, 1924, construction was well underway. Miller-Uhlman of Bay City, General Contractors, had been awarded the contract for \$34,000 with stipulations that construction be completed by September 1, 1924. Heating and plumbing was to be completed for \$10,200 by Wood and Gee of Caro. Trombly Electric Company, of Saginaw, was to provide the electric for \$996.55. It is not clear, but it appears the remainder of the \$60,000 subscribed was used to furnish the sleeping rooms, parlor, and public areas as originally planned in December 1923. The completed building was opened with a party on December 3, 1924.

The Hotel Montague is one of a number of hotels built in the downtowns of large and not-so-large Michigan cities in the early twentieth century by community corporations to provide quality hotel accommodations where they were lacking. Other examples from the 1910's and 20's include the Huron Hotel in Ypsilanti, Olds Hotel in Lansing, Park Place Hotel in Traverse City, Hotel Warm Friend in Holland, Ojibway Hotel in Sault Ste. Marie, Four Flags Hotel in Niles, and Wolverine Hotel in Boyne City. The Montague, for a community of the relatively small size of Caro, is a substantial building, the equal of other small-city hotels of the era such as the Wolverine in Boyne City and the Doherty in Clare. Its architects, the Saginaw, Michigan firm of Clarence L. Cowles and George Mutscheller, are known to have designed the Doherty Hotel in Clare and the Central Junior High School in Saginaw -- both built in the 1920's.

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The hotel continued to operate as a hotel. In 1938 all stocks and bonds were paid off and as late as 1963, some \$20,000 remained unredeemed. It survived the Great Depression, a World War, and changing economic times. It had provided shelter for many important people, was a local gathering place, and few politicians missed the opportunity to use the great stone porch as an oratory.

By 1966, much of the lodging trade had moved to newer "motels" on the community outskirts and the automobile and new highways made travel distances and duration considerably less. The hotel changed owners in 1962 and again in 1978. In 1984, a fire brought the end of hotel operations. The structure has been vacant since then.

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Property: Hotel Montague
Location: Caro, Michigan
Photo by: Leslie C. Linsemier
Date: August, 1990
Negative Location: 422 W. Lenawee, Lansing, MI

PHOTOGRAPHIC LISTING

Photo No.

1. East and Northeast Elevation from State Street.
2. North Elevation
3. West Elevation from Frank Street.
4. West Elevation oblique from S.W. corner of site.
5. South Elevation oblique.
6. Sleeping room door (interior)
7. Sleeping room window (interior)
8. First floor lounge/dining interior from former lobby.
9. Second floor fireplace and French doors to veranda.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Hotel Montague

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MICHIGAN, Tuscola

DATE RECEIVED: 5/31/91 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 6/18/91
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 7/04/91 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/15/91
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 91000875

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 7/9/91 DATE

Entered in the
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____
REVIEWER _____
DISCIPLINE _____
DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

CLASSIFICATION

___count ___resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

___historic ___current

DESCRIPTION

___architectural classification
___materials
___descriptive text

SIGNIFICANCE

Period Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

___summary paragraph
___completeness
___clarity
___applicable criteria
___justification of areas checked
___relating significance to the resource
___context
___relationship of integrity to significance
___justification of exception
___other

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

___acreage ___verbal boundary description
___UTMs ___boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

___sketch maps ___USGS maps ___photographs ___presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

Phone

Signed Date



COMMUNITY CALENDAR
CONGRATULATIONS CARD VFW
POST 464 - ALL STATE
POST 1916 - 1931

STOP

1. HOTEL MONTAGUE
CARO, MICHIGAN

1 EAST AND NORTHEAST ELEVATION FROM STATE STREET.



HOTEL MONTAGUE
CARD, MICHIGAN

#2. NORTH ELEVATION



HOTEL MONTAGUE
CARO, MICHIGAN

#3. WEST ELEVATION FROM FRANK STREET.



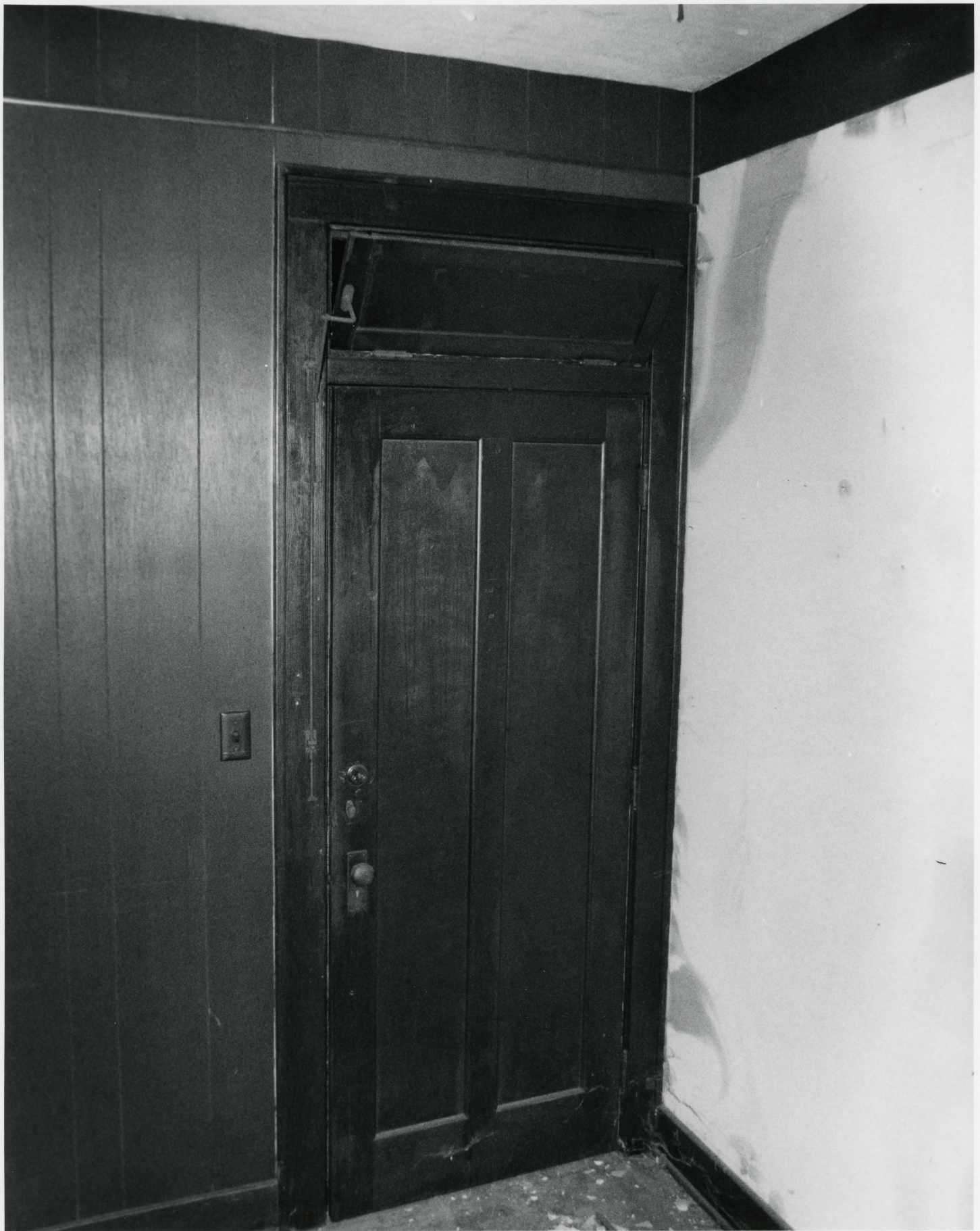
HOTEL MONTAGUE
CARO, MICHIGAN

#4. WEST ELEVATION OBLIQUE
FROM S.W. CORNER OF SITE.



HOTEL MONTAGUE
CARO, MICHIGAN

5. SOUTH ELEVATION OBLIQUE



HOTEL MONTAGUE
CARO, MICHIGAN

#6 SLEEPING ROOM DOOR (INTERIOR)



HOTEL MONTAGUE
CARO, MICHIGAN

#7. SLEEPING ROOM WINDOW (INTERIOR)

BAND
THUR-NITE
9th 1st



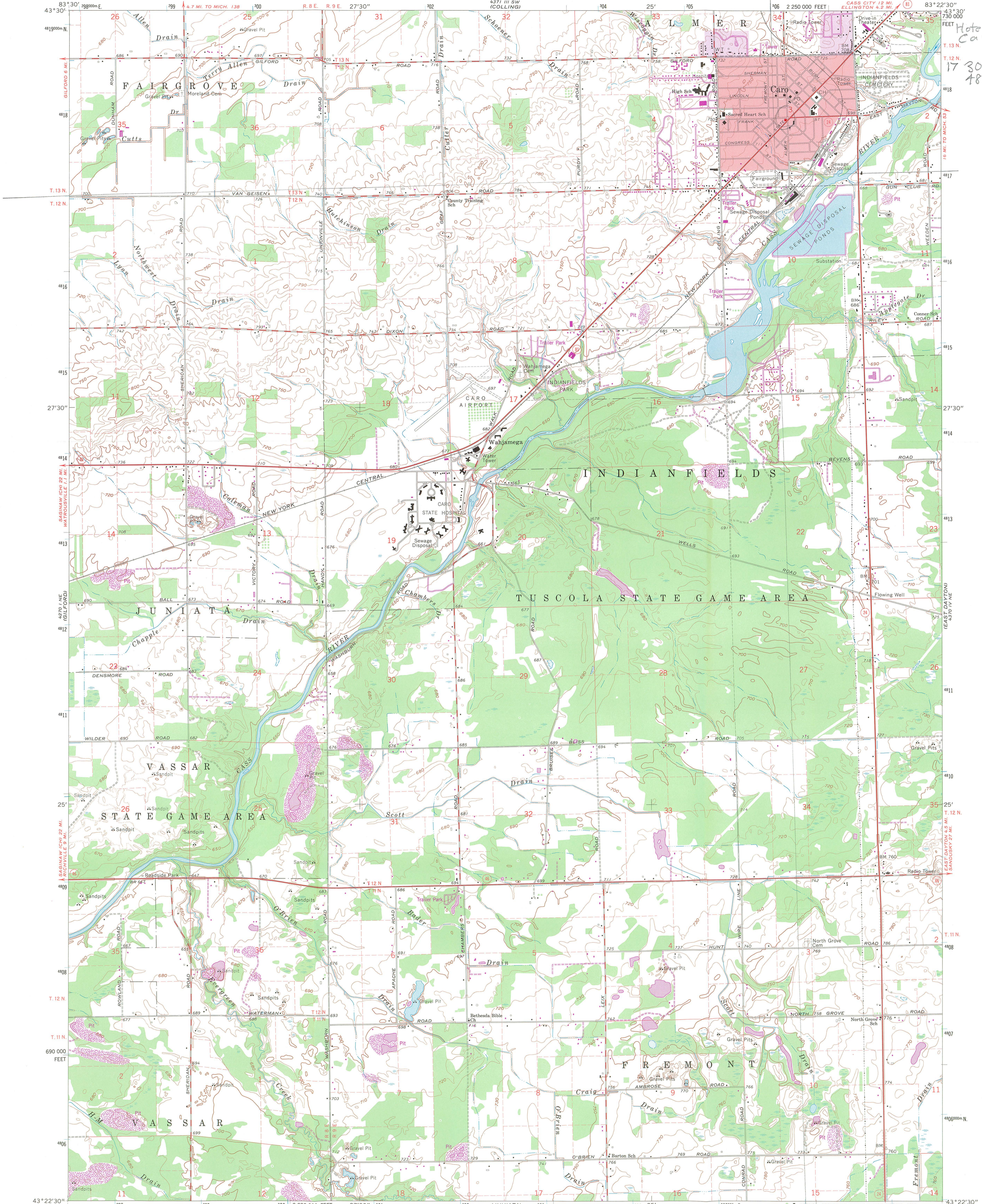
HOTEL MONTAGUE
CARO, MICHIGAN

#8. FIRST FLOOR LOUNGE/DINING
INTERIOR FROM FORMER LOBBY.



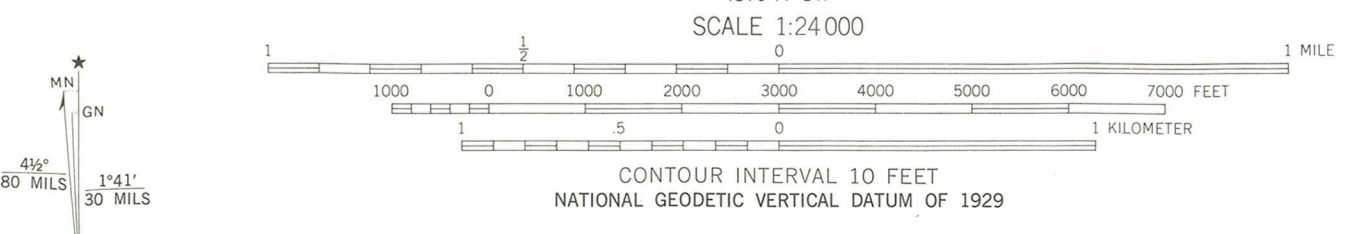
HOTEL MONTAGUE
CARO, MICHIGAN

#9 * SECOND FLOOR FIREPLACE AND
FRENCH DOORS TO VERANDA.



Hotel Montague
Caro, MI
17 306140
4817670

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and USC&GS
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs taken 1959. Field checked 1963
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Michigan coordinate system, south zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 17, shown in blue
Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 1 meter north and
6 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State Reservations shown on this map
Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken
1978. Map edited 1980. This information not field checked



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U. S. Route
	State Route

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND BY THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY DIVISION
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



CARO, MICH.
N4322.5-W8322.5/7.5
1963
PHOTOREVISED 1980
DMA 4370 IV NW-SERIES V862

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE
RICHARD H. AUSTIN SECRETARY OF STATE



LANSING
MICHIGAN 48918

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MAY 31 1991

NATIONAL
REGISTER

May 23, 1991



Ms. Carol D. Shull, Chief of Registration
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed are National Register of Historic Places nomination materials for the Hotel Montague in Caro, Michigan.

I certify that the intent-to-nominate notification requirements have been fulfilled. This property is being submitted for listing in the National Register. No notarized statements of objection or written comments concerning this nomination were submitted to us prior to the submission of this nomination to you.

Please direct all questions concerning this nomination to Robert O. Christensen, National Register Coordinator 517/335-2719.

Sincerely,

Kathryn B. Eckert
Acting State Historic Preservation Officer
Bureau of History

Enclosure