

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	EXP 12-31-84
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# 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 Kilby Hotel

AND/OR COMMON

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 627 East Washington Street

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN High Point

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT Sixth

STATE North Carolina VICINITY OF CODE 037

COUNTY CODE Guilford 081

## 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 checked="" 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 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
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mrs. Marian McElrath

STREET & NUMBER 627 East Washington Street

CITY, TOWN High Point

— VICINITY OF

STATE North Carolina 27260

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Guilford County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Greensboro

STATE North Carolina 27402

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

Determined eligible: No

TITLE Architectural Resources: An Inventory of Historic Architecture - High Point, Jamestown, Gibsonville, Guilford County

DATE 1979

— FEDERAL — STATE  COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Survey and Planning Branch, NC Division of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN Raleigh

STATE North Carolina 27611

# 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 Kilby Hotel, erected in 1910, is one of the finest structures on Washington Street. The three-story building, which contains shops on its first story, has a shallow bracketed canopy which carries over the shops across the south elevation and extends the length of the first two bays on the east elevation. A small entrance to the hotel separates the two shops on the front of the building. The windows on the second and third stories, three pairs on each story, are round arched with decorative hoods.

The fenestration on the east elevation is irregular. The first story has an inset entrance flanked by two vertical windows on the north and an arched window and two small fan-like windows on the south. The second story is nine bays, one of which is a door which once opened onto an upper porch, now removed. The entrance itself has a transom and sidelights; like the windows, it is round arched with a decorative hood. The third story is ten bays long.

The Washington Street entrance opens into a narrow hall. A stair rises to the right. All stairs in the buildings are identical: a square newel post anchors a molded balustrade carried on square balusters. Each stair well is lighted by a skylight.

An arched opening leads into a spacious lobby. From this lobby one has access to the shops on either side. The interiors of these two establishments--a barber shop and a beauty shop--have been altered somewhat through the years. At the back of the lobby is another stair leading to the second floor. On either side of the stair is two rooms--once the kitchen and dining room, now the kitchen and an additional bedroom.

The entrance to the lobby on the south elevation is a single door with transom and sidelights consisting of latticework muntins. Although the sidelights are currently boarded over, the original woodwork remains intact behind the panel. The second floor entrance which once opened onto a porch is similar to this one except that a fanlight replaces the transom.

The building's floor plan is irregular: each floor consists of a wide hall off of which the rooms open. The expanse is broken up by large arched openings and two sets of stairs on each floor. A wainscot of thin sheathing and a molded chair rail are found in the halls and stair wells.

The rooms themselves are entered through single doors consisting of six horizontal panels and identified with small tin numbers. The interiors are simple with plastered walls and plain window and door surrounds. Those rooms on the east elevation contain arched windows, all others rectangular windows.



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Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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The Kilby Hotel was built in downtown High Point around 1913 by John and Nannie Kilby, two of the leaders of that city's black community. For well over half a century the Kilby Hotel has been run by descendants of its builders, and it remains an economic cornerstone of High Point's Washington Street area.

John Kilby was born in Alamance County in 1873. In 1895 he married Nannie Pennix, who was born in 1877.<sup>1</sup> Sometime in the middle 1890s the Kilby's moved to High Point, a city which proved attractive to area blacks in the latter part of the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> John Kilby worked for Southern Railroad for twenty five years. His wife was a nurse, a hairdresser, and even sold fish from a horse drawn wagon. From these modest beginnings the Kilbys became business leaders in the community. "By strict economy, he [John Kilby] saved his earnings and with his wife invested it in real estate."<sup>3</sup> In 1913 they purchased a 9,690 square foot lot from Lone and Rosa Seachrest for \$1,100.<sup>4</sup> Nannie Kilby made numerous other purchases in the area. She acquired approximately thirty dwelling houses in the Washington and Leonard Street areas. Part of the Kilby Hotel was used during its early period as an Amusement Center, serving as the neighborhood's social center.<sup>5</sup> It has been said that "Mrs. Kilby bore the name of being the hardest working woman in the city during this period. Figuratively speaking, everything she touched turned to money."<sup>6</sup>

Nannie Kilby died April 24, 1921. The High Point Review described her as "well-to-do" and "one of the city's best known Negroes."<sup>7</sup> She and her husband had only one child, a daughter, Ora, who married an influential physician Joseph Alfred Martin.<sup>8</sup> Although John Kilby lived until 1940, Mrs. Martin took over the operation of the hotel shortly after her mother's death. She maintained the Kilby Hotel's status as one of the social and economic centers of the black community. Mrs. Martin was a civic leader of note. "She received . . . notable awards, pins, and letters of appreciation for activities in groups and organizations from the City of High Point and surrounding cities."<sup>9</sup>

Ora Martin died in 1972. She and Dr. Martin had two children, Mrs. Josephine Ingram Harris Smith and Mrs. Marion McElrath. Mrs. McElrath inherited the hotel from her mother. She is the present owner and operates the hotel along with her children. Mrs. McElrath has remodeled the hotel in recent years, adding new wiring, electrical heating, and new tile.<sup>10</sup>

With the McElrath children assisting in the running of the hotel, it is now in its fourth generation of family operation. Throughout its history it has served a number of functions. The hotel's guests have been both permanent residents and also guests serving High Point's black business community. The hotel has also served as a social center for the Washington Street area. It is the cornerstone for the proposed Washington Street renovation project and is one of High Point's most important black owned businesses.<sup>11</sup>

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## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Guilford County, North Carolina, Population Schedule.

<sup>2</sup>Undated obituary of John Kilby, copy in file, hereinafter cited as John Kilby obituary. Freed blacks began to move into High Point shortly after the Civil War. By 1890 one-third of High Point's 3,000 people were black. Dr. Holt McPherson (ed.), High Pointers of High Point (High Point: Hall Printing Company, 1976), 90.

<sup>3</sup>John Kilby obituary; High Point Normal and Industrial Club (compilers), History of the Negro in High Point, N.C., 1867-1950 (High Point: Creative Print Shop, 1950), 38, hereinafter cited as Negro in High Point.

<sup>4</sup>Guilford County Deed Book 252, p. 623.

<sup>5</sup>Telephone conversation with Miss Bernice McElrath, March 5, 1981, notes in file, hereinafter cited as McElrath conversation; Negro in High Point, 39-41; High Point Review, April 27, 1921.

<sup>6</sup>Negro in High Point, 41

<sup>7</sup>High Point Review, April 27, 1921.

<sup>8</sup>Mrs. Marion McElrath, "High Point Kilby Hotel History," Unpublished paper, copy in file, hereinafter cited as McElrath, "High Point Kilby Hotel." The Kilbys had another child, who died in infancy.

<sup>9</sup>McElrath, "High Point Kilby Hotel"; John Kilby Obituary; Guilford County Deed Book 323, p. 286.

<sup>10</sup>McElrath, "High Point Kilby Hotel"; McElrath conversation.

<sup>11</sup>High Point Enterprise, January 1, 1978.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

See continuation sheet.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

Quad: High Point West  
Scale: 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,7	5,9,0	1,3,0	3,9	7,9	9,1,0	B					
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		
C							D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property included in this nomination is the Kilby Hotel and the lot on which it stands located at the northwest corner of Washington and Hobson streets.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
<u>N/A</u>		<u>N/A</u>	
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE JoAnn Williford, Survey Specialist  
Jim Sumner, Researcher

ORGANIZATION Survey and Planning Branch DATE April 9, 1981  
Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section

STREET & NUMBER North Carolina Division of Archives and History TELEPHONE (919) 733-6545  
109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN Raleigh STATE North Carolina 27611

**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

*William S. Price, Jr.*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE March 10, 1982

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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Guilford County Records. Deed Books, Will Books. Microfilm copies. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History.

High Point Engerprise. January 1, 1978.

High Point Normal and Industrial Club (compilers). History of the Negro in High Point, N.C., 1867-1950. High Point: Creative Print Shop, 1950.

High Point Review. April 27, 1921.

Kilby Obituary, John. Undated. Copy in file.

McElrath Interview, Miss Bernice. Telephone Interview, March 5, 1981. Notes in file.

McElrath, Mrs. Marion. "High Point Kilby Hotel History." Unpublished paper. Copy in file.

McPherson, Holt (ed.). High Pointers of High Point. High Point: Hall Printing Company, 1976.

United States Census Office. Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900. Guilford County, North Carolina. Population Schedule. Microfilm copy. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History.



