



NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018  
(Rev. 10-90)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Wort Hotel

other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number: 50 North Glenwood Street, P.O. Box 69 not for publication: N/A  
city or town: Jackson vicinity: N/A  
state: Wyoming code: WY county: Teton code: 039  
zip code: 83001

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ 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  meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_ statewide  locally. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Wendy E. Bredert 10/18/99  
Signature of certifying official Date

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 for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register Edson H. Beall (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): \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall  
Signature of Keeper

12/9/99  
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.): N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions):

Category:	Sub:
<u>Domestic / Hotel</u>	_____
<u>Commerce / Restaurant</u>	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions):

Category:	Sub:
<u>Domestic / Hotel</u>	_____
<u>Commerce / Restaurant</u>	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions):

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revival / Tudor Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions):

Foundation: Poured Concrete  
Roof: Metal and synthetic slate tile  
Walls: Brick, Stone, Wood, and Stucco  
other: \_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Wort Hotel: Commerce

Period of Significance:

Wort Hotel: 1941-1949

Significant Dates:

1941

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Charles, John, Jess Wort

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

Lorenzo Grimmett, Idaho Falls, Idaho

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- 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

Name of repository: Jackson Hole Historical Society & Museum

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 0.6 Acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing		Zone Easting Northing	
1	<u>12 519200 4813936</u>	3	_____
2	_____	4	_____

\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Joan Grever, Researcher; Barry Dennis; Ann Lynn; Kurt Dubbe, Jesse O'Connor, Silver Jacobson, Robert Righter

organization: Teton County Historic Preservation Board      date: 15 April 1999

street & number: P.O. Box 4083      telephone: (307) 732-3266

city or town: Jackson      state: WY      zip code: 83001

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====  
Property Owner  
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name: Lee Riley

street & number: P. O. Box 69      telephone: (307) 733-2901

city or town: Jackson      state: WY      zip code: 83001  
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WORT HOTEL  
TETON COUNTY, WYOMING

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### Architectural Description

The Wort Hotel has been known as "The Heart of Jackson" since 1941 and continues to provide that special Wyoming hospitality to visitors, old timers and newcomers of Jackson Hole.

The Wort Hotel is located at the southeast corner of Broadway and Glenwood Streets, one block west of the internationally recognized elk antler arches on the Jackson Town Square and the southern gateway to Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks. The rear (north) of the building faces onto Deloney Avenue and is directly across from some of the oldest remaining buildings in Jackson. An alleyway is on the eastern boundary of the hotel.

With two stories above ground and a full basement below, the building is an eclectic style reminiscent of Medieval architecture, most significantly Tudor, based on its peaked roof line, gabled wall dormers and decorative half timbers applied to the second story stucco. Locally, it is also described as a Swiss-Alpine style. Decorative wood brackets occur at the break between the second floor stucco and the first floor brick. The first floor exterior walls are primarily constructed of orange-red brick with dark gray accent bricks. The accent bricks are laid in a random pattern throughout the wall. Brick pilasters with cast stone capitals accentuate the Broadway and Glenwood Street brick facades. Most of the roof is synthetic slate tile. The roof on the Deloney Avenue side and the lower quarter of the roof on the Glenwood Street side is standing seam metal.

Fenestration is varied throughout different sections of the building. The majority of the windows are aluminum with decorative (false) 2 x 3 muntins or none at all; these replacement windows are an exact representation of the original wood windows. The southwest corner (though some are now bricked in) has 3 x 5 windows. The Broadway façade windows are 5 x 4. There is one small, diamond-paned, leaded glass window on Broadway, west of the former bar entrance. The Glenwood main entrance vestibule has 5 x 4 windows on the side walls and 3 x 4 windows on the Broadway vestibule's side walls.

The three main wood-frame entry vestibules (two on Broadway and one on Glenwood Street) encase the original five arched doorways. The entry on Glenwood Street is covered with synthetic slate roofing tiles, and this vestibule protects ashlar stone with pilasters in shades of pinks and gray. The double door is topped by a semi-circular fan-light transom and flanked by 4 x 4 sidelights. The four original single-arch doorways on Broadway are enclosed within two vestibules that open into the Silver Dollar Bar and Grill. The exterior walls of the original entrances are faced with sandstone. The three vestibules were added for cold weather control purposes sometime prior to 1980 and do not detract from the structure's integrity.

The main entry into the hotel lobby is located on Glenwood Street; the original entry is a triple recessed sandstone arch flanked by 4 x 4 windows. When the vestibule was added, the fenestration was designed to mirror the original. Upon entry to the lobby, the registration desk is to the left. An axis is created through the arched entry and the two-story stone fireplace. The grand staircase is centered upon this axis and blocks a direct view of the lobby fireplace.

The lobby walls are beaded knotty pine paneling with baseboard trim and crown molding. The hallways have beaded knotty pine wainscoting and painted plaster walls. The doors throughout the hotel have six raised panels. The first-floor stone fireplace is open to the lobby and the Goldpiece Meeting Room. On the lobby side, the fireplace stonework is highlighted with a shallow Gothic arch niche and a flat arch firebox with a keystone. Several meeting rooms open off of the lobby.

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WORT HOTEL  
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The Silver Dollar Bar and Grill faces Broadway on the south and can also be entered by a hallway leading from the lobby. Jackson's famous watering hole got its name in 1950 when a hand-crafted elongated "S" shaped bar, inlaid with 2,032 uncirculated 1921 silver dollars was installed. Mounted above the bar, echoing its "S" shape are 13 panels of a burnt leather mural by well-known western artist, Paul Clowes. Each of the panels depicts an authentic episode of Jackson Hole history. The Bar and Grill's walls also are shown with pine wainscoting and painted plaster and the rooms are decorated with historic pictures, ranching implements and cowboy articles. Additionally, in 1996, new bar table tops were branded with over 100 Wyoming brands by the ranchers themselves. The grill area has been changed somewhat through the years but is still noted as the local place "to meet, to eat, and be seen."

The lobby staircase has wood treads with carpet runners, turned wood balusters, wood handrails, square wood newel posts and a landing approximately three-quarters the way up from the lobby which splits the staircase to continue to the right and left. The second-floor lobby has beaded knotty pine wainscoting and painted plaster walls. The stone fireplace has a protruding arch above the firebox. Both the firebox and the arch have keystones. The vaulted ceiling is supported by glue-laminated beams that bear on the side walls and are terminated with wood pendants. Several wainscoted halls lead from the second floor lobby to the hotel rooms.

The basement is used primarily for administrative offices, mechanical systems, storage, and some miscellaneous unfinished areas. The building foundation is comprised of reinforced poured concrete perimeter walls, with some stone rubble interior walls.

The building is serviced from a series of service access points along the north (Deloney Avenue) side and from the alley along the east side.

During the past 58 years several minor changes have occurred to the exterior and interior of the Wort Hotel, none of which have altered the basic integrity of the structure. The most changes took place after the devastating August 5, 1980, fire which extensively damaged the second floor and roof structure and caused the ground floor portion to sustain water and smoke damage. To the credit of the owners who had purchased the hotel from the Wort brothers in 1960, the famous Wort Hotel was rebuilt in the exact style and design of the original building. The only façade change was to add some additional hotel rooms by extending the original design of the west façade of the upper floor over the protruding ground floor building. This ground floor protruding portion had been added to the original structure, reflecting the exact design and materials, in 1950 to house the gambling rooms adjacent to the Silver Dollar Bar. The only façade alteration was an entry door into the gambling rooms at the corner facing Broadway. After gambling was outlawed, the door entry was closed with similar stone. Essentially, all of the most significant exterior character defining features have been respectfully maintained.

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WORT HOTEL  
TETON COUNTY, WYOMING

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Summary

The Wort name has been one of the most prominent names in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, for over a century. It continues to be held in high regard by old-timers and newcomers alike. The Wort Hotel was the first luxury hotel in the valley and remains today a famous Jackson landmark. The Worts, among a handful of other early entrepreneurs, are credited with having the foresight to entice visitors by providing them with accommodations and activities that make Jackson Hole the tourist mecca it is today.

The Wort men, Charles, John and Jess, made substantial contributions that had major effects on the socio-economic development of the town of Jackson and the Jackson Hole area. They were respected business leaders who were involved in numerous and diverse enterprises; ranching, livery stable, automobile garage, hunting, fishing, boating, outfitting, skiing, polo games and cutter horse racing, fishing resort operation, and the flagship of all of their endeavors – the Wort Hotel. The Worts have left an unmatched mark in Jackson Hole, and the community has benefited significantly from their farsighted tourists' business enterprises and civic achievements.

As a permanent local landmark and the centerpiece for the Wort family's business, the Wort Hotel is eligible for listing on the National Register under Criteria A and B.

### Background

Perhaps as early as 40,000 years ago, it is speculated that wandering "Early People" crossed the land mass called Berengia from Asia to present day Alaska. As the Pinedale glaciation of the most recent ice age slowly receded 12,000 years ago, the mountain passes surrounding what would become known as Jackson's Hole began to receive seasonal and transitory visitors. The early 19<sup>th</sup> Century saw summer hunting use of the Hole by Shoshoni, Bannock, Arapaho, Gros Ventre, Nez Perce, Crow, Sheepeaters and Blackfoot Indians. One might say that Jackson Hole has a long history of attracting visitors.

In 1807, John Colter, a member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, is reported to be the first white man to enter the Hole. His reports of plentiful beaver, in great demand at the time, encouraged fur traders and explorers to visit the Hole, including David Edward Jackson, cousin of U. S. President Andrew Jackson and uncle of General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson of Civil War fame. The Hole, its largest lake, and the county seat are all named for David E. Jackson, who probably first arrived here in 1826. Two expeditions visited Jackson Hole during the last half of the 1800's. The first was the U. S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers in 1860, led by Capt. William Reynolds, and the second was the famous Hayden Expedition in 1872, led by Ferdinand V. Hayden. The Hayden Expedition is noted for naming some of the Hole's lakes after certain group members and local figures; Jenny, Leigh, Phelps, Taggart, and Bradley.

Wilson Price Hunt, member of John Jacob Astor's trapper group called Astorians, first named the famous towering peaks in the Hole, "Pilot Knobs," due to their aide to navigation from great distances. French trappers called the peaks "Les Trois Tetons," the three breasts. Later, others simply referred to them as the Tetons.

Jackson Hole, originally known as Jackson's Hole, was once a pristine environment with few inhabitants. Trapping, farming/ranching and guiding were the main enticements for settlers to stake their claim and become permanent homesteaders. The Homestead Act of 1862 allowed a person to claim 160 acres and required a dwelling to be built on each 160 acre allotment, as well as making improvements. In 1884, trappers John Carnes, his wife Millie, and John Holland became the first permanent settlers on the Little Gros Ventre River, now known as Flat Creek within the Elk Refuge. In 1888, Martin Nelson, his wife Berthe, and four-year-old daughter Cora, was the first white

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family in Jackson Hole, homesteading in the swampy part of Flat Creek. By 1889, 40 bachelors had settled in the valley. Also in 1889, the first wagon train carrying five Mormon families arrived, including Sylvester Wilson, Selar Cheney, Ervin Wilson and Elijah "Uncle Nick" Wilson and their wives and children. All but Uncle Nick Wilson settled in 1890 in Big Flat, known today as South Park, in southern Teton County. Other homesteaders continued to arrive, including Stephen Leek in 1888 and his half-brothers Charles and Ham Wort in 1893, and they all homesteaded in South Park. In 1885 Bill Bierers settled on the west side of the Gros Ventre River near Sheep Mountain, and the area later became the community of Kelly. James May, wife Ann, and Jim and Nan Budge, in 1896, were the first to farm and homestead land now known as Mormon Row, a three-mile straight line road east of Blacktail Butte.

The Town of Jackson began in 1892 as a post office called Marysvale, named after the postmistress, Mary White, and was located five miles north of the present-day town. Several years later, a new postmistress, Maggie (Mrs. John) Simpson, living near the current downtown Jackson, changed the name to Jackson, citing David Jackson's association with the Hole. The National Elk Refuge, located just north of the Town of Jackson and where the Marysvale Post Office had started, traces its history to the turn of the century. The creation of the refuge is mainly due to the untiring efforts of Charles Wort's half-brother, Stephen Leek.

Tourism in Jackson Hole is thought to have begun in 1888 when Edward Hoffer brought some travelers down from Yellowstone Park. By the turn of the century settlers in Jackson Hole had purchased almost all of the open land in the valley and had become cattle ranchers. But because of the valley's remote location, relatively few people had heard of Jackson Hole before the 1920's, with the exception of a few big-game hunters and "dudes."

The idea of dude ranching dates to about 1890, when a 10-room ranch house was constructed to accommodate guests. The ranch, called Merry Mere and located on the northeast shore of Jackson Lake, was never opened, but the idea appealed to residents. However, getting the dudes to the Hole (and the supplies to accommodate them) limited the business to mostly hunters and fishermen. In 1908, ranches were also built specifically for the purpose of housing wealthy Easterners as guests, or "dudes" as they were referred to. The tourist appeal of the Hole was based partly on its reputation as a former hideout for highwaymen, cattle rustlers, and horse thieves and on its physical beauty and recreational aspects. By the 1920's many working ranches began to accept dudes in order to survive, finding it more profitable than wrangling cattle. At the same time the American West was becoming the focus of a nostalgic interest among the growing middle class. The popularity of the automobile and the construction of many new roads encouraged people to move around more. Overnight, facilities known as "cabin courts" or "auto camps" became popular, and the dude ranch business began to suffer.

As tourism began to increase so did commercialism of the valley and there was deep concern that this treasure of a valley might be lost. In 1882, only a decade after the establishment of Yellowstone National Park, General Philip Sheridan suggested the extension of the Park's boundaries to include the adjacent Jackson Hole region. It was the first of many proposals to preserve the valley. The primary effort came from Horace Albright of the National Park Service. His efforts, combined with those of local interests, led to the creation of Grand Teton National Park in 1929. However, this small park included only the mountain range, leaving the valley to the mercy of chance development. To save Jackson Hole, Albright solicited philanthropist John D. Rockefeller, Jr. to purchase over 30,000 valley acres for inclusion in the park. However, in the 1930's many local opponents bitterly fought their efforts. Finally, in 1943, President Franklin Roosevelt proclaimed Jackson Hole National Monument, protecting northern Jackson Hole from unwanted development. Again, many local people opposed this action, but in 1950 an enlarged Grand Teton National Park was created and the valley was saved by people working many years for a noble cause.

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WORT HOTEL  
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The grand majesty of the Teton Range and the preserved natural beauty of the valley has changed Jackson Hole from an agricultural and ranching economy to a major tourism center for world-wide visitors to enjoy such activities as fishing, hunting, boating, skiing, rodeos, cutter races, and mountain climbing.

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WORT HOTEL  
TETON COUNTY, WYOMING

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Charles J. Wort (pronounced WERT), at age 19, came to the valley in 1893 from his home in Nebraska to visit his brother Hamilton Wort and half-brother Stephen Leek (the Worts and Leeks had the same mother and were raised together). Charles was born on August 23, 1874, in Harvard, Illinois, and was the son of Mr. and Mrs. John F. Wort. His family moved to Buffalo County, Nebraska, when he was a small boy. Upon Charles' visit to Jackson Hole, he decided to remain and shortly thereafter homesteaded in the South Park area of Teton County. The acreage of his homestead is uncertain, but his log-and-frame home still stands near the southeast corner of South Park Loop Road and High School Road.

In 1899, Charles went back to Nebraska to marry his childhood sweetheart, Luella Perkins, on June 18<sup>th</sup>. At the time of their marriage, Charles was 24 and Luella was 22 years old. Luella was born October 5, 1876, in Belleview, Wisconsin, and, like her husband, moved with her family to Buffalo County, Nebraska, when she was several years old.

Charles returned to Jackson Hole very soon after the wedding, but Luella waited several weeks before making the trip alone by train to Roberts, Idaho. From there she traveled by buggy via Rexburg to Victor, Idaho where she was met by her husband. Together they traveled over Teton Pass on horseback. Stephen Leek met them on the Wyoming side of the pass at the west bank of the Snake River with a small rowboat. They removed the saddles from their horses so the animals could swim the river. The Worts made several trips across the river in the rowboat, carrying groceries and Luella's belongings which even included her telescope – certainly evidence of a worldly-thinking pioneer lady.

Hardworking Charles cleared his land of sagebrush and dug irrigation ditches by hand. He planted and harvested hay for his cattle and was considered a successful homesteader and rancher. Luella's pioneering spirit made her a remarkable partner, wife, homemaker, and mother. Throughout her life she was also known for her beauty, style and horsemanship. They operated the ranch for the first quarter of this century and their three sons were born there. (1) John Clark Flanders Wort, born May 28, 1900, was one of the first white children born in Jackson Hole; (2) Jess Wort was born April 16, 1903; both of these sons were delivered by a midwife because there was no doctor in Jackson Hole as yet; (3) Russell Wort, probably born in 1911, has little written about him as he died of acute appendicitis at age 21 in Jackson's St. John Hospital.

In the early 1900's, Charles became an avid hunter and fisherman, which resulted in another livelihood for him. He became a noted outfitter, which he continued throughout his life, and was joined by his sons on guide trips as soon as they were old enough to help. This early assistance from John and Jess established a strong partnership in all of their future business operations.

Charles Wort, in 1915, commenced action to fulfill his dream of building an elegant hotel in Jackson Hole – he bought four lots in the "old town" of Jackson. He paid a total of \$100, at \$25 a lot. The four lots comprised the west ½ of Block 8, which is bordered on the east by North Cache, on the south by West Broadway, on the west by North Glenwood, and on the north by West Deloney (an alley divides the east ½ from the west ½ of Block 8 and forms the eastern boundary of the Wort Hotel property). The residents of Jackson Hole scoffed at him when he told them he would someday erect a luxury hotel on the site to house tourists and visitors to the area. His extraordinary vision of things to come was most unusual for the time and conditions of the Hole. His sons, John and Jess Wort, made his dream come true when they built the Wort Hotel in 1941; eight years after their father's death in 1933 at age 59.

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WORT HOTEL  
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There were very few tourists and travelers in 1915 that desired grand accommodations, so Charles built the Wort Livery Stable and Corral on the lots and operated the business until 1932. He had a lifelong interest in horses and housed his own, along with others in the stable. Charles was known as an outstanding horseman, often racing in the Roman style (one man straddling two racing horses) and in wheeled chariot races, which were the forerunner of the 50 year old Annual Cutter (using runners instead of wheels) Race in Jackson Hole. He also rode in the town's holiday parades and local and state rodeos. He had purchased property at the southwest corner of Broadway and Cache and built the Wort Garage which was in operation at least as late as 1932. Charles and a good friend, Dick Winger, went into an automobile sales business in 1915. They had purchased three Model T Fords for resale, the first Model T's for sale in Jackson Hole.

Also, about the time he bought the four (hotel) lots, Charles and his sister, Belle Wort Flanders, purchased a large tract of land, bordered on the north by West Broadway, in the east by South Cache, on the west by South Jackson, and approximately on the south by present day West Kelly. Upon his sister's death in 1918, her will provided that 40 acres (part of the above tract) be donated to the Town for a park, titled "Frontier Park." The town government never finalized her generous gift because they favored instead the creation of a park in the very center of the town, which became the present day Town Square Park. However, oldtimers remember a large, granite stone being erected near the southwest corner of West Pearl and South Cache. The stone stated "Frontier Park," presented to the people of Jackson Hole, Bell (missing the e) W. Flanders, 1917. In 1980, the stone was found buried on the Deloney side of the Wort Hotel site. The mystery of the stone continues as it has not been located since then. Her gift, unfortunately thwarted, demonstrates another contribution by the Wort family to the community.

In 1917, Charles and Luella made their first venture into the hotel business when they purchased the Jackson Hotel, which Luella helped operate. The small hotel had modest accommodations, was adjacent (to the east) to the 4 lots, and stood at the southwest corner of North Cache and West Deloney, across from the present Town Square (the building no longer exists). Even though his association with the Jackson Hotel was for only a year or two, Charles became even more determined to someday build his own Wort Hotel, so luxurious the whole community would be proud.

It is likely about 1925 Charles and Luella built a home on West Broadway, directly across the street from the four lots. They then moved to town, ending their ranching career. Luella died in this home on her 85<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1961. It was moved to 1480 North West Street in Wilson a few years after her death and it is scheduled to be moved again this year to a lot on Wenzel Lane, near Wilson. The existing Pink Garter Plaza was built on the site of Luella's last home. Also, at some period Charles and Luella had acquired the historic Frontier Saloon building, which sat immediately to the east of their home. Since 1962, John Wort's only child, Lila Lou "Skippy" Wort Boyer, has operated her Indian jewelry store, Boyer's, in the historic saloon building. It is the oldest store of its kind in Jackson and is the only business still operated in Jackson Hole by a Wort family member as Skippy's son, John Boyer, is the general manager.

Charles, Luella and their sons had continued to operate the homestead ranch until their two elder sons, John and Jess, were in their early-to mid-twenties. When the boys became high school age, they had to travel to Jackson daily where the high school was located – they had attended grade school in the first school in Jackson Hole, a log structure still standing (but in moldering condition) in South Park. Because of the distance to town by horseback, short winter days and inclement weather, John and Jess were often prevented from returning home to the ranch after school. Charles and Luella built a small log building on their parcel at the corner of Broadway and Cache and their sons spent the night in town. This building became known as the Wort boys' cabin. The cabin later was used by Jackson attorney, Will Simpson, as his law office. The cabin was later moved on to the Town Square's southwest corner and was used as the Stage Stop office for stagewagon rides in town. Unfortunately, the cabin fell into disrepair and in 1996 the Town of Jackson determined it was neither financially feasible to restore it nor to enlarge

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WORT HOTEL  
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it. Amid strong protests by the public to preserve it because of its association with two very prominent pioneer families, the Worts and the Simpsons, the Town gave the cabin to Will Simpson's grandson, Alan Simpson, then the U. S. Senator of Wyoming. It is believed to have been moved to Cody, Wyoming, by Senator Simpson.

The Wort family is credited as being a leader in promoting tourism in order to strengthen the economic base of the area. In the mid-1920's, Charles, John, and Jess obtained a concession permit from the U.S. Forest Service to operate a fishing and boating business on Jenny Lake, located at the foot of the Tetons. The Wort's Jenny Lake concession is the oldest concession in Grand Teton National Park and predates the park itself. Boating and fishing activities soon became very popular with the tourists who were beginning to frequent the area due to the vastly increased popularity of automobile travel to the West. Prior tourists had come primarily to Jackson Hole to be a "dude" at a dude ranch or for big game hunting. The wooden Wort boathouse remains today on the southern shore of the Lake and is in a deteriorated condition. The Wort overseer's cabin and several outbuildings are gone from the site and it is unknown if they were moved or demolished.

All the years that the Wort family ran their ranch as their primary livelihood, they had gradually expanded their hunting and fishing guide business into one of the most prominent and successful outfitting operations in the Hole, catering to the growing number of tourists. The Jenny Lake operation was primarily run by Charles and Jess. John specialized in backcountry hunting expeditions, particularly in the Gros Ventre Mountains. He had many wealthy Eastern clients, including Eastman-Kodak and General Motors executives. During the 1930's, John had the Wort Hunting Camp, which included a log cabin and several outbuildings in the Gros Ventre Mountains as a base operation. The Wort cabin is also known as the Gap Puche Cabin (name of a later owner) and is listed on the National Register partly because of its association with John Wort. It is thought to be the oldest surviving historic building connected to the outfitting industry in the area. The National Register nomination was made by the Bridger-Teton National Forest Agency and was enrolled June 18, 1990.

In 1932, the successful lake boating and fishing concession greatly expanded when Charles, John and Jess Wort purchased the Ole Warner Camp on the southeastern shore of Jackson Lake. The Worts operated tourist businesses on the two most famous lakes of Grand Teton National Park for over a dozen years. The Worts enlarged the small Warner Camp into a large, first-class fishing and boating resort, the Wort Lodge and Camp and was the first resort of its kind in the Hole. During this period in the Hole, most camps offered only the crudest of accommodations. Not so with this Wort operation. The Wort cabins established a record in those days for comfort and service. Tragically, Charles Wort died just a year after the acquisition and did not live to see the outstanding resort John and Jess created. Many prominent tourists stayed at the Wort Lodge and Camp, including "Gone with the Wind" actress Ann Rutherford who was in the Hole making the movie "Bad Men of Wyoming" (a.k.a. "Wyoming") in the spring of 1940. John and Jess sold the popular Wort Lodge and Camp resort, now known as the Signal Mountain Lodge, in late 1940. Unfortunately, the lodge building was either moved or demolished not too many years ago, and it is thought that a few of the original Wort cabins still remain on the current resort property. John and Jess used the funds from the sale to build their father's dream, the Wort Hotel.

In 1940, John and Jess Wort decided to sell their highly successful Wort Lodge Resort on Jackson Lake, which they had started with their father in 1932, in order to build the luxury Wort Hotel in honor of their father. They utilized the four lots which measured a total of 140' x 200'.

The brothers selected Lorenzo "Ren" Grimmatt, a builder and amateur architect from Idaho Falls, Idaho, to design and build the Wort Hotel. Mr. Grimmatt had built a house for Jess and his wife Lillian in Jackson in the late 1930's, (their Gros Ventre stone and wood frame home originally stood near the northeast corner of South Millward and West Pearl where the Pony Express Motel now stands and was later moved to 165 N. Gros Ventre Street where it sits today) according to Mr. Grimmatt's son, Larry (John Lorenzo), who lives in Idaho Falls. Larry Grimmatt stated

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in an interview that his father, Ren, was not a professional architect, but had taken a correspondence course in architecture and possessed a keen sense of building styles and proportions. Ren had developed his design expertise by working with his father, John H. Grimmert, who was a noted Idaho builder. The most important building that John Grimmert helped to build is the famous Paris Stake Tabernacle of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, located in Paris, Idaho, near Bear Lake. According to a Tabernacle pamphlet compiled and printed by the Paris, Idaho Stake Missionaries, "doors were hand-made by John H. Grimmert, who also constructed and erected the top pinnacle." Construction on the Tabernacle was first begun in July, 1884, and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, in the name of Bear Lake Stake Tabernacle, on December 8, 1972. Ren Grimmert was born in 1901, in Dingle, Idaho (located near Paris), and died in 1975, in Idaho Falls. Ren and a brother moved from Paris to Idaho Falls in 1928 and started their Grimmert Building and Supply Co. Ren Grimmert, according to his son, Larry, was influenced by the Tudor style and used a variation of it to design the Wort Hotel's Tudor/Alpine Chalet style, which was the specific style requested by John and Jess Wort. In 1946, Ren Grimmert designed a "twin" to the Wort, the Stage Coach Inn in West Yellowstone, Montana. It was completed in 1948 and is considered to be a historic landmark in the area. The Stage Coach Inn's manager, Mr. Peter Simon, stated he intends to initiate its nomination to the National Register in the near future. Mr. Simon also said Montana architects refer to the Inn's style as "Western Swiss Chalet." The Grimmetts were three-generation builders of homes and commercial structures in Idaho. Ren and his son Larry operated their building company in Idaho Falls from the late 1920's to 1994 when Larry sold it. The business is now called Grimmert Millworks and is no longer in the building business. Larry Grimmert considers all three Grimmetts as master builders. However, the Idaho SHPO and the Idaho Falls Planning Department have no evidence that they were master builders in the same context of the National Register's Criteria C Standards. Skippy Wort Boyer states Ren Grimmert designed, but did not build, her present home in 1958, located at 360 E. Gill in Jackson. Ren Grimmert also designed and remodeled the Wort's newly named Silver Dollar Bar and the building addition in 1950.

During the past 58 years at the Wort Hotel, the important features that have made it an institution in the community have never changed; its Old West spirit and that it is still the gathering place to eat, drink, and discuss the events of the day. However, a few old Wyoming aspects have disappeared from the town and the hotel; fewer gun-toting cowboys with spurs, no slot machines or crap tables, no horses tied outside or John Wort riding his favorite horse into the bar, and certainly no guests tobogganing down the hotel's grand stairway.

"When we built the hotel all the streets were dirt in town and they said we were crazy when we tried to borrow money in Jackson to build the hotel," stated John Wort during a local newspaper interview in 1980. John and Jess Wort wanted the Tudor/Alpine Chalet style building to have beauty and grace, and certainly that the Wort Hotel would be a credit to their community.

During the summers of 1939-40, the brothers took steps to fulfill their father's dream of a luxury Wort Hotel in Jackson. They personally quarried the beautiful red rock, used for the hotels' trim, from the Gros Ventre Mountains, boated the stone across Slide Lake where it was loaded in their truck and hauled to town. No physical labor was too great an effort for these outdoorsmen in order to create their Wort Hotel. It is reported by oldtimers that the brothers worked longer hours than their laborers and everyone wondered when they took time out to sleep. Since the railroad never reached Jackson Hole, they hauled by truck, materials from the railroad siding just over the Tetons in Victor, Idaho. They also hauled materials from as far away as Denver, over a 1,000-mile round trip. They had ordered all the furnishings and fixtures out of catalogs.

The Wort Hotel, largest building then in the area, was completed several months before World War II's freeze on materials and labor. There are conflicting amounts mentioned as to the hotel's original cost. However, \$150,000 is the amount listed in a local newspaper article published the week the hotel opened in September 1941. The Wort Hotel's foundation was begun early March 1941 and only six months later had its Grand Opening on Labor Day

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Weekend. And what a Grand Opening Party it was! Invitations to the three-day event were mailed by John and Jess, and over 2,000 guests attended, many from neighboring states. One highlight of the weekend events was a wedding of an Idaho couple who were the first to stay in the hotel's Bridal Suite.

The Wort brothers were fearful that they might be broke in six months as the locals had predicted. However, three months after the hotel opened, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, and soon the Wort became popular for servicemen on furlough. In fact, during World War II the Wort had more business than it could handle. John and Jess personally managed the Wort during the entire 20 years that they owned it. It was open year-round, and, in the beginning, \$2 was the nightly cost of a room.

The Wort Hotel contained a two-story, pine-paneled lobby with a massive floor-to-ceiling fireplace and a grand staircase, café, cocktail lounge, banquet-sized meeting room, card/gaming room, full basement and 40 guest rooms. Two additions to the building have increased the number of guest rooms to 60, and some interior rooms have been reconfigured to accommodate today's visitor requirements of a AAA four-diamond rated hotel. Yet the Wort Hotel has intentionally and successfully retained its Old West atmosphere and its physical integrity.

The first floor of the dramatic lobby contained the Hotel's reservation desk and a lounge/seating arrangement centered around the fireplace. During the early years a Western Union Office or a real estate office occupied the very small enclosure under the grand staircase. The lobby's floor was wood planking and scattered with Navajo rugs. The Wyoming Room, the large meeting room seating 250 guests, opened off the lobby. During the late 1950's-early 60's John Wort's daughter, Skippy Wort Boyer, started her Indian jewelry business in a corner of the lobby. Boyer's Indian Jewelry and Art is still in operation, but located on Broadway across from the Wort. It is managed by her son, John Boyer, and is the oldest business of its type in the Hole today.

The wooden grand staircase leads to the upper lobby, which is an open mezzanine overlooking the lower lobby. The mezzanine also contains a similar floor-to-ceiling fireplace and cozy seating area. The pine paneled walls served early on as an art gallery backdrop, displaying local artist Conrad "Connie" Schwiering's paintings, which have now become highly collectable. The Hotel guestrooms are reached by hallways off the mezzanine.

A hallway leads from the lower lobby to the original Alpine Café, cocktail lounge and card/gaming room. The Alpine Café, first operated by Jack Moore who had previously run a popular eating place in Jackson, was one of the first restaurants to be open year-round. The café had a fully equipped, modern kitchen. Mr. Moore set the standard for outstanding food, including local game, and friendly service that has made the Wort a noted place to dine in the "social hub of the Hole." Originally the Alpine Café had a counter and stools, along with dining tables. The Mayor's Table, a tradition in the restaurant, still serves today as the place for the community leaders to have breakfast and discuss local issues. The Worts bought the Wilson Ranch in South Park to raise cattle, pigs, chickens, lambs, and vegetables for use at their Alpine Café starting during World War II when food was scarce. During its first several years of operation, the Wort had limited refrigeration equipment. The Wort brothers cut large blocks of ice from Jackson Lake in the winters, hauled the ice to town and stored it, covered in sawdust to retard melting, in an icehouse.

The cocktail lounge and card/gaming room were adjacent to the café, and all three rooms faced Broadway, with entrances from the street. In 1950, the cocktail lounge and the card/gaming room were combined to become the large Silver Dollar Bar and it retains that name today. The Wort Hotel Bar has always been a favorite "watering hole" in the community.

Gambling, although illegal in Wyoming, thrived everywhere in the state. Most, if not all, bars had card games and slot machines, as did most business establishments. Even some drug stores had "one-arm bandits." Gambling was a

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popular attraction for locals and visitors alike and was an important part of the history of Wyoming's towns. However, when a Jackson native, Milward Simpson, became Governor in the early 1950's, he declared there would be no more gambling. In some establishments the gambling still existed, but quietly. At the Wort Hotel, it literally went underground. The gambling tables and machines were moved to the hotel's basement Teton Room, commonly called the "Snake Pit," where the activities continued until gambling died in the mid-1950's. One of the hotel's famous blackjack tables, with a deck of cards spread beneath the glass top, is exhibited on a hall wall.

The Wort brothers were strong supporters of community and civic groups and allowed all charitable groups to have events, free of charge, in the hotel's elegant Wyoming Room. The first meeting of Jackson's newly established Rotary Club was held at the Wort in November 1941; Jess Wort was a charter member of the club and remained a member until his death. The Annual 49er's Ball (its 103<sup>rd</sup> Ball occurred this year) has been held often at the Wort, as have numerous school proms, square dances, State Stockmen's Meetings, weddings and receptions, conventions and State and local meetings. It is reported that the Wort Hotel has hosted more important civic and social functions than any other building in Jackson Hole.

Outstanding entertainment has always been an attraction at the Wort. The Wort brothers scouted the West for suitable entertainers to feature at the hotel. The Wort was the first place locals could enjoy the out-of-town performers. Early on some were unknowns, such as clean-shaven Willie Nelson before he grew long hair and beard; others were well-established individuals such as Roy Clark, Hank Thompson, Homer and Jethro, the Diamonds, Sons of the Pioneers, Rusty Draper, James Cotton and the Chicago Blues, Vaughn Monroe, and the touring Glenn Miller Band. And their guests' entertainment was not limited to the hotel. They operated a 27-foot cabin cruiser on Jackson Lake for their guests' boating pleasure. Movie stars and celebrities, then and now, frequent the Wort. Jackson Hole has been a popular site for a number of movies and stars, including Alan Ladd, Robert Taylor and Wallace Beery, who have made the Wort their favorite hangout.

Both Wort brothers, after 20 years of running the popular and highly successful hotel, were tiring of the day-to-day responsibilities and duties. In November 1960, Jess and John Wort announced the sale of their Wort Hotel to a Nebraska group of investors, incorporated as the Teton Motor Hotels and Management Corporation. The sale amount was reputed to have been about \$500,000. This organization owned and operated the Wort Hotel (in the mid-60's they started calling it the Wort Motor Hotel) until 1984 when it was sold to Somerset Wyoming Properties who have continued to operate it to the present time.

Planning and building the Wort Hotel by John and Jess was a labor of love to honor their father. Upon its completion, the Wort immediately became known as the social hub for locals and tourists alike. Of the two brothers, Jess was the more retiring, introverted one and preferred the "behind the scenes" management of the hotel, whereas, John had a charming, outgoing personality and was the consummate cowboy – tall, dark and handsome. The two Wort brothers operated the hotel from opening day, September 5, 1941 to 1960 when they sold it and retired. John and Jess made the Wort Hotel the "Heart of Jackson Hole" and it remains today a legendary landmark and a fitting tribute to their father's dream. A local author, Floy Tomkin once wrote, "without the steadfastness of one man, who said he was going to build a big hotel where his livery stable stood, there might not have been a Wort Hotel."

Charles, John and Jess were active in civic and community development for over 70 years. Charles served on the Board of Directors of Jackson's first bank, Jackson State Bank, for several years commencing in early 1917. He also was a Jackson Town Councilman for at least one term prior to 1920. Jess was one of twenty-five charter members of the local Rotary Club, founded in 1941 and its first meeting took place at the Wort in November, 1941. Jess remained an active member of Rotary for the next twenty years. In 1941, John helped to start the Annual Cutter Races in Jackson Hole, racing often and winning at least once with his prize cutter horses. The Cutter Races were originally held in February on snowy West Broadway in front of the Wort Hotel, but were later moved to the South

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Park area due to many more participants and fans. John's Cutter Race win in 1953 made Time Magazine's March issue and quoted him, "I'd rather win the All-American Cutter Races than win at Santa Anita." Several General Motor's officers, John's hunting clients, saw the article and decided to give him a "rocket" cutter sled. Harvey Earl, head car designer of GM, constructed the special sled out of airplane metal, fiberglass and stainless steel at a cost of \$15,000, quite a sum 46 years ago. The sled was unveiled on the popular Arthur Godfrey TV Show in New York. The publicity made cutter racing a more popular sport in many snowy, western towns and the Jackson Hole Annual Cutter Races continue today. John was also instrumental in bringing polo games to the Hole. For a few years in the late 1920's/early 1930's, John and his wife Gladys worked winters in Santa Barbara, California where John also played polo. John became an expert polo player and played with the best of the international players. For a short period, John trained and managed the polo horses of the famous entertainer, Will Rogers, in California. Like his father Charles and mother Luella, John was a superb horseman and was a charter member of the Cowboy Hall of Fame. John also used his impressive influence in supporting the creation of Grand Teton National Park. John is reported to have stated "he did not want to see hot dog stands clear up to Yellowstone." John's daughter, Skippy Boyer, says "his greatest fear was that all you might see north from Snow King (Jackson's town mountain) would be billboards and houses." John was also an excellent skier. He skied Snow King Mountain, which was first developed in 1939 when a towrope was installed to take skiers to the mountaintop. In 1946 the Jackson Hole Winter Sports Association was formed and John served on the Board of Directors. The Association sold shares to about two dozen prominent residents, including John, Jess and Luella. The Association's funds were used to erect the first ski lift with chair seats in the Hole. Snow King is one of the two ski mountain operations in the Hole. Today Jackson Hole is a noted ski destination throughout the world.

Today, the Wort Hotel is a AAA four-diamond rated hotel and its modern features include fitness rooms and Jacuzzis. Just as six decades ago, "a millionaire or a cowhand can still walk into the Wort in dusty range clothes for a drink or hamburger without attracting a second look," stated Jackson Hole writer, Frank Calkins.

Two building additions to the Wort have occurred during the past fifty years in order to accommodate the tremendous increase in tourism in Jackson Hole. There was also a fire that destroyed the roof damaged and much of the second story in 1980. The first addition was in 1950. Fifteen new guestrooms were added to the west side of the Wort that faced Deloney; this 2-story section, covered the rear parking lot. They also added the "Showroom" which contained the gambling casino, dance floor and orchestra stand, and doubled the size of the bar. These alterations were needed because of the overwhelming success of the Wort in just ten years. The bar, newly named the Silver Dollar Bar and the name remains today, has a 48 ft. large "S" shaped bar and its top embedded with 2,032 uncirculated 1921 silver dollars which the brothers obtained from the Denver Federal Mint. Mounted above the bar, echoing its "S" shape, are 13 panels of a burnt leather mural by well-known western artist, Paul Clowes. Each of the panels depicts an authentic episode of Jackson Hole history. A large fire exit door was required from the Showroom and it faced onto Broadway. The Showroom addition extended the building's first floor wall facing Glenwood out to the sidewalk and eliminated the original landscaped area. All exterior walls were of the original brick design and the new addition exactly duplicated the Tudor/Alpine Chalet architectural style.

The second addition occurred due to the fire damage, which was largely confined to the hotel's roof and second floor. Few of the first floor room ceilings experienced any burn damage, just water and smoke harm. In fact, the bar's murals weren't damaged and no liquor bottles broke from the heat. However, the town's people were concerned over the Silver Dollar Bar top, so they removed it, cut it into several sections and it was stored in the vault at the Jackson State Bank. Ironically, the fire was caused by a bird's nest being too close to a neon sign's transformer. The Wort's damaged area was restored to its original condition and the five new guest room addition on Glenwood has also duplicated the original Tudor design. The building's integrity has always been preserved during its subsequent improvements and additions.

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*The Jackson Hole News*, 7 November 1990.  
*The Jackson Hole Guide*, 2 October 1991.  
*The Jackson Hole Guide*, 22 July 1992.  
*The Jackson Hole News*, 29 July 1992.  
*The Jackson Hole Guide*, 29 July 1992.  
*The Jackson Hole News*, 19 January 1994.  
*The Jackson Hole Guide*, 16 March 1994.  
*The Jackson Hole News*, 8 June 1994.  
*The Jackson Hole News*, 28 September 1994.  
*The Jackson Hole Guide*, 10 April 1996.  
*The Jackson Hole News*, 24 April 1996.

Interviews (Conducted by Joan Grever, Teton County historic Preservation Board Member):

*Lee Riley*, Manager, Wort Hotel; Personal interview at the Wort Hotel, 11 September 1996.  
*Lila Lou (Skippy) Wort Boyer* (John Wort's Daughter) and *Virginia Rylands* (Wort family friend); personal interview conducted at the Wort Hotel, 17 October 1966.  
*John Lorenzo (Larry) Grimmett*; Telephone interview, Idaho Falls, ID, (202) 522-3182, 29 May 1997.  
*Peter Simon*, manager, Stage Coach Inn, W. Yellowstone, MT., Telephone interview, June 4, 1997.  
*Burt Bedeau*, Historian, ISHO, Boise, ID, Telephone interview, January 27, 1998.  
*Steve Bartek*, Telephone interview, Jackson, WY, 27 February 1999.  
*Nancy Tadeka*; Personal interview and review of the Wort Hotel Scrapbook, at the Wort Hotel, 11 February and 4 March, 1999.  
*John Boyer*, Telephone interview, Jackson, WY, 5 March 1999.  
*Virginia Huidekoper*, Telephone interview, Jackson, WY, 5 March 1999.

Photographs, Newspaper Films, and Files Research:

Reviewed all information pertaining to the Wort Hotel and the Wort Family available at the Jackson Hole Historical Society & Museum, Jackson, WY.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

WORT HOTEL  
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### Geographical Data

#### Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundaries of the nominated area coincide with the legal boundaries of the property defined as: Lots 17, 18, 19, 20 of Block 8 of the original townsite of Jackson, Teton County, Wyoming, according to that plat recorded July 18, 1901 as Plat No. 100.

### Boundary Justification

The boundary for the Wort Hotel includes the historic Wort Hotel building on its original site along the main road through downtown Jackson. The boundary excludes more recent additions into the downtown area. Recent room additions to the building are considered noncontributing by date and would not be eligible for tax credits.

