

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instruction 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 Wilson, U. S. Senator James F. House
other names/site number Hamilton House
Fulton House

2. Location

street & number 805 South Main Street [] not for publication
city, town Fairfield [] vicinity
state Iowa code IA county Jefferson code 101 zip code 52556

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u> Total

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

U. S. Senator James F. Wilson Historic Resources

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 sets forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. [] See continuation sheets.

Signature of certifying official [Signature] Date 11/29/90
State Historical Society of Iowa
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:
 entered in the National Register. [Signature] 1/24/91
[] See continuation sheet.
[] determined eligible for the National Register. [] See continuation sheet.
[] determined not eligible for the National Register. [] See continuation sheet.
[] Removed from National Register.
[] Other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)
No Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls Weatherboard

roof Asphalt shingles

other Wooden Porch

Brick chimneys

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The U. S. Senator James F. Wilson House is a single-family, two-story, frame residence. It consists of three major components. The first, the original "I-house" unit (presently serving as dining room and study on the first floor), was built by William Hamilton in 1854. The second, built either by Hamilton or Wilson, comprises the facade unit. It contains an entry hall and living room on the first floor. A third unit, at the rear, might have been constructed by Wilson. It contains kitchen and service areas on first floor. All components are two-storied. Second story contains chamber rooms. A porch at the northeast corner (rear) of the first floor has been enclosed.

The house originally served as residence for William Hamilton's suburban farmstead. The I-house and facade components exhibit some vernacular Greek Revival details like the off-centered front door with sidelights, triple hung 6/6/6 front windows, and wide cornice work. The building faces west.

This house served as an apartment building for many years. This fact reflects in many changes to the interior. On the exterior, the facade wrap-around porch is non-extant (the most notable exterior loss) although another front porch now stands on the facade.

The house sits on a large lot which now contains approximately 2 acres. The farmstead during Senator's Wilson's tenancy comprised more than 41 acres. The balance of this farmstead has been sold off over the years and developed for residential purposes. The property retained a suburban atmosphere during Wilson's ownership although it was incorporated into the City of Fairfield by the Centennial Addition of 1876.

The house sits approximately 100' east of South Main Street, farther back than the standard setback of other residences on the street. This calls attention to the Wilson House predating other homes in the neighborhood. The large lot also provides a somewhat suburban atmosphere to the property today, particularly when viewed from the southwest. This helps define the Wilson House and set it apart from other residences in the neighborhood.

Several other buildings and structures stand on the property. These include a 2-story carriage house

[X] See continuation sheet

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 form instructions) <u>POLITICS/GOVERNMENT</u> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Period of Significance <u>1863-1895</u> _____ _____ Cultural Affiliation <u>N/A</u> _____ _____ _____	Significant Dates <u>N/A</u> _____ _____
Significant Person <u>U. S. Senator James F. Wilson</u>	Architect/Builder <u>Unknown</u>	

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

The U. S. Senator James F. Wilson House is significant under Criterion B because it is associated with one of Iowa's foremost leaders during the early decades of Republic party politics and his business leadership in the commercial life of Fairfield's development. Purchased by Wilson in 1863, he house also calls attention to the private life of Wilson and adds a personal dimension to the properties associated with him as a man of public affairs and business. That Wilson chose to return to Fairfield in 1869 following his terms in Congress shows his regard for the community. A legal career in a metropolitan center would have been far more advantageous financially. Wilson's return to this home follows the tradition of Cincinnatus, the Roman statesman, whose example George Washington had followed after stepping down from public office. Wilson had purchased the house and property from William Hamilton in 1863 and maintained it as his permanent residence while in Congress.

National significance obtains for this property given Senator Wilson's prominent role in Civil War and Reconstruction politics. The potential likelihood of a residence being extant in Washington, D. C. is which would call attention to Wilson's career during this period is very low. The house also has strong potential for listing as a National Historic Landmark and application for this designation should begin.

Wilson prized his private life. It revolved around his family and the enjoyment of the grounds of his home. "Here amid his flowers and trees he loved to spend his spare hours in recreation and study" (obituary). He chose this place above all others in the nation when wishing recreation from public affairs. Wilson had a sensibility to nature which he showed in improvements to his home grounds. These improvements included two artificial ponds. One was stocked with ornamental fish. The other was landscaped with an island and a one-room, frame hut for thinking. "In nice weather he could sit on the [hut's] porch and commune with nature as well as work at his writing" (obituary). The ponds are non-extant.

The Wilson family included the Senator; his wife, Mary A. K. Wilson née Jewett; Rollin J. and James F., Jr, their sons; and Mary B. (Kittie), their only daughter. In later years, Wilson's mother, and his brother and sister, David B. Wilson and Mrs. Mary Blair, moved to Fairfield to live closer to the family patriarch.

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(which dates circa 1900 and also served as a wash house during the Fulton tenancy) It measures 20'x36' and stands about 16' east of the house. A swimming pool, built between 1952-1964, is situated near the rear of the property. It measures approximately 12'x24' with a 6' concrete apron around it. Also at the rear of the property is a small outbuilding. All these improvements postdate Wilson's occupancy. (All of the outbuildings associated with Wilson tenancy are non-extant on the property today).

In spite of these changes, it seems likely that the home property would engender immediate recognition by Wilson were he to see it today, particularly since the size of its lot distinguishes it from other residences which have grown up in the neighborhood. The property contains one contributing and three non-contributing resources. Since the contributing resource dominates the site and the non-contributing elements are at the rear of this building, the non-contributing elements are not intrusive.

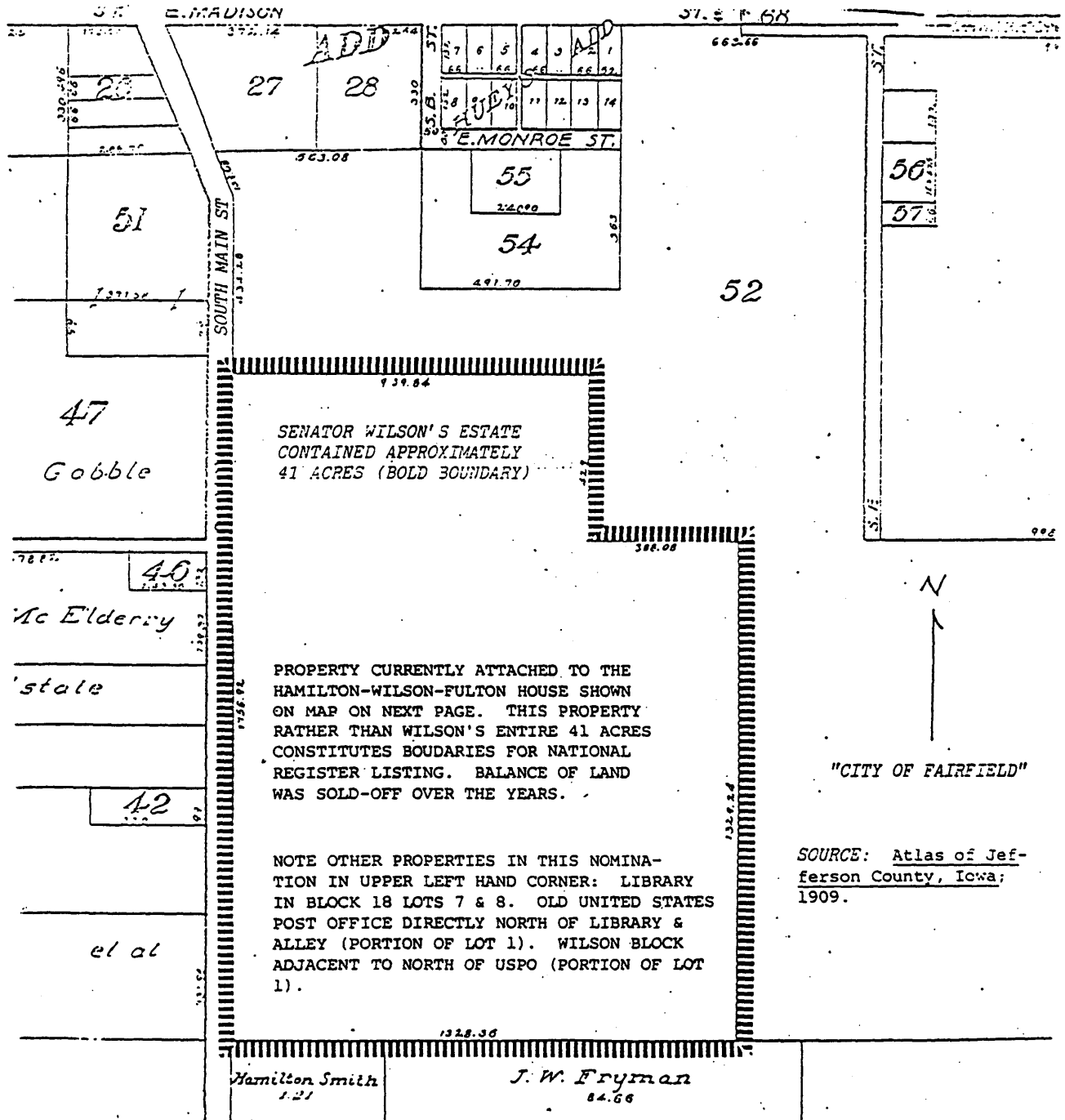
Land slopes from the house to the south. A flower garden is located in this area. It includes a wooden arbor along with garden furniture from the 1920s and is a readily visible element from the street. In earlier years, this slope was alive with daffodils in early Spring. A site plan, attached as a continuation sheet, locates the improvements on the property.

South Main Street in Fairfield also serves as Iowa Highway #1. The neighborhood was a residential showplace during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. Homes here have been well maintained. Several properties are already listed on the National Register and an historic residential district is a possibility.

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In addition to a rural retreat for his family, the home property also served a practical purpose as a small, working farm. Wilson's sons did much of the work with the help of a farmhand. At its height, the property comprised about 41 acres. The house had its own gasification system for lighting and a steam system for heating.

The U. S. Senator James F. Wilson House remained his home throughout his national career. The building gains additional significance since it is his only documented home in Fairfield. Senator Wilson's residence prior to 1863 remains unknown. This house in Fairfield served as his home from 1863 until his death in 1895 and as home to his widow until her death in 1916. To identify and document an earlier residence associated with Senator Wilson in Fairfield is most unlikely given the widespread loss of housing stock from this first phase of the city's upbuilding and the scarcity of archival resources for this period. Such a building would call less direct attention to the significant period of Wilson's career than that at 805 South Main.

The U. S. Senator James F. Wilson House was built in 1854 for the William L Hamilton, a lawyer, by an unknown builder. Charles Fulton bought this property sometime after the Wilsons' tenure. Fulton was Secretary Treasurer of the Fairfield based Loudon Machinery Company. He is also remembered as a local historian whose two volume work, History of Jefferson County, Iowa, was published in 1912. Because the Wilson House calls attention to Fulton's importance as a local historian as well as to Wilson, Fulton's name is also included in that of the property.

There is a minor uncertainty concerning date of construction of the Wilson House. Oscar Herring states, in a 1933 newspaper article, that it is 1854. The property's Abstract of Title indicates William L. Hamilton's purchase of the property in 1858. Herring probably erred by four years concerning the date. He would not have erred about the first owner's name. Other sources of documentation, such as newspapers, have not survived in Fairfield from this early time to corroborate a rural building's date of construction.

There remains some potential for historical archaeology on the site. Such study might document improvements made during Wilson's period of occupancy, the artificial ponds and one-room frame hut, for example. This potential would be based on the potential that there are intact subsurface features that have a high likelihood of yielding information important to understanding the former configuration of Wilson's facilities on the site.

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Howe, Samuel Stoops; "James F. Wilson;" Annals [of State Historical Society of Iowa]; New Series; Vol 1 No 1; January 1882; pp 26-27. "He (Senator Wilson) has constructed a large fish-pond eighteen feet deep, so that fish can live through the winter. A smaller pond supply he has made to water his select stock, so that by turning a faucet he can supply his herd. He makes his own gas of gasoline, cheaper than the city can furnish it, at the distance which he lives from town. But he pays all town taxes, and warms his house with steam from his own furnace...It would be improper, in a periodical of this sort and space, to speak of his family, a precious wife and three children, dear to him as the apple of his eye. Nor can the writer forget, when leaving their hospitable mansion, how a can was offered him, and he has it now to use when sickness and other cause will allow its contents to be opened to guests." [The reference to "can" is baffling. Typographically, there is an extra em after the word at this point in the publication. Was an "e" accidentally removed? A "cane" might be offered a guest. Some canes do open to reveal vessels for liquor inside, but would this come from Wilson, the temperance advocate? Others have suggest the "can" refers to a container for maple syrup, a present oftentimes given in the past.]

Souvenir of Fairfield, Iowa; Portland, Maine; Chisholm Brothers (published for Clarke & Junkin and McElderry, Fairfield, IA); 1891. Pictures Hamilton-Wilson-Fulton House looking east w/original front porch extant.

Herring, Oscar H.; "The Homes of Fairfield;" *Fairfield Daily Ledger*; 3 January 1933: "This house was built in 1854 by William L Hamilton, lawyer. Acquired by James F Wilson in 1867 and his home until the end of in 1895." "The Homes of Fairfield" was an ongoing series in *Ledger* during the 1930s. Herring's data is usually correct. He was a sometime Jefferson County Assessor.

Welty, Susan Fulton; Letter of Correspondence; January 1964; Beloit, Wisconsin. Contains much information about this house which was home of the writer during her childhood.

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A part of Block Fifty-three (53) Centennial Addition to the city of Fairfield, Iowa, consisting of a part of the Northeast quarter of the Northwest quarter of Section 36, Township 72, Range 10 and described as follows: Commencing at the Southwest corner of the Northeast quarter of the Northwest quarter of Section 36, Township 72, Range 10, thence East 33 feet for the place of beginning, thence North 321.75 feet, thence Southeasterly on a curve along the East line of the present concrete driveway and through a point 50 feet East and 17.2 feet South of the Northwest corner, also through a point 90 feet East and 60 feet South of said Northwest corner and to a point 106.1 feet East and 79.8 feet South of the Northwest corner, thence South 87 degrees 26 minutes, East 166.1 feet, thence South 76 degrees 48 minutes East 235.6 feet, thence South 180.75 feet to the South line of the Northeast quarter of the Northwest quarter of Section 36, Township 72, Range 10; thence West 501.5 feet to the place of beginning. Subject to easement for driveway purposes set forth in deed recorded October 29, 1948 in Deed Record Book 111 at page 535 in the records of the Jefferson County Recorder's Office.

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LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

1. U. S. Senator James F. Wilson House
805 South Main Street
Fairfield, IA 50112
Photographer: W. C. Page
Date: March, 1990
 1. Looking Northeast
 2. Looking Northwest
 3. Looking Southeast