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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 an item does not apply to the property being nominated, 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 Bonita Store  
Other name/site number DuBois Mercantile Co.

2. Location

1 mi. NW of junction of AZ 266 w/ Arizona Industrial School Road  not for publication  
city/town: Bonita  vicinity  
state Arizona code: AZ county: Graham code: 009 zip code: 85643

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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).

James W. Gammari AZSHPD 27 JAN 1998  
Signature of certifying official Date

ARIZONA STATE PARKS  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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
- 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): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] 3/6/98  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Property Name

Bonita Store

County, State

Graham County, Arizona

**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**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

		Contributing	Noncontributing	
1.....	0.....			buildings
0.....	0.....			sites
1.....	0.....			structures
0.....	0.....			objects
2.....	0.....			total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

Warfare Between Indians and Americans in Arizona,  
1846 - 1886

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

none

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: dept. store/general store

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: dept. store/general store

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Cobble stone  
walls Adobe  
roof Orig. wood shingles/cur. - sheet metal  
other

**Narrative Description**

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

Property Name

Bonita Store

County, State

Graham County, Arizona

**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.
  - D 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.
- Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

C

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

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

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Military  
Commerce

**Period of Significance**

1882 - 1945

**Significant Dates**

1882

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Andrew Johnson and Barney Knowler

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(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:

.....

Property Name

County, State

Bonita Store

Graham County, Arizona

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM References on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	12	596760	3606060	C		
B				D		

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.) See Continuation 10-1

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.) See Continuation Sheet 10-1

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Don W. Ryden, AIA - Historical Architect/Doug Kupel, Ph.D. - Historian

organization Ryden Architects date January 1997

street & number 902 W. McDowell Road telephone 602/253-5381

city or town Phoenix, AZ 85007

**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 FHPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

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

name Jim DuBois

street & number Route 1, Box 137A telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city & town Bonita state Arizona zip code 85643

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number   7   Page 1

Bonita Store  
Bonita, Graham County, AZ

## NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

### SUMMARY

### DESCRIPTION

The Bonita Store is a tall, one-story adobe building constructed on a cobble stone foundation. It was erected in 1882 by Andrew Johnson and Barney Knowler who operated the building as a general store. It is located in the small community of Bonita on the edge of the Fort Grant Military Reservation, some three miles from the location of the post itself. The building is rectangular in shape, and measures 75 1/2 feet long by 25 1/2 feet wide.

The store has seen some modifications over its more than 100-year history, but with the passage of time these changes are now considered to be an important part of the building's history. When first constructed in 1882, the adobe walls of the building were sheathed with a false-brick siding in order to make the store look more substantial. This material soon deteriorated and was not replaced. The building remained as raw adobe until approximately 1964 when Jim DuBois covered it with plaster stucco. This change has not had an effect on the appearance of the building and was undertaken in an attempt to preserve the deteriorating adobe.

As originally constructed, the building had a simple side-gabled roof sheathed with wooden shingles. In the 1960s the roof was covered with tin sheeting in order to reduce leaks. The original wooden shingles remain beneath the tin sheeting. This change has not had an appreciable impact on the appearance of the building. When first

constructed, the building had an impressed metal facade on its primary elevation and a short shed roof covering the porch. In the 1920s, in conjunction with other changes engineered by Marc DuBois who purchased the property in 1920, the shed roof was removed and the side-gable roof extended fifteen feet. This porch extension covered a gasoline pump installed at that time. The pressed metal facade remains intact.

The interior of the building retains its original appearance. The ceiling is sixteen feet above the floor and is constructed of redwood strips (the wood is punctuated by a few bullet holes). The building contains hardwood floors and a seven-foot deep basement. A bar runs along the west side of the building. The east side of the building is covered with shelves that contain merchandise. A rail-and-ladder assembly, used for stocking shelves, still remains. The rear of the building once contained the Bonita Post Office, but this has since been removed. A small dance floor and pool table now occupy the space.

A small addition was placed on the east side of the building in the mid-twenties. It contains a small kitchen for the building. This addition has not had a visible impact on the property. In 1968, a skirt of adobe bricks was placed around the building to reduce problems with basal coving. This modification has had little effect on the building's appearance. The property also contains a windmill dating to the mid-twenties that was placed over the original well for the site. This windmill is considered to be a contributing resource.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Bonita Store  
Bonita, Graham County, AZ

## NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### SUMMARY

The Bonita Store is significant under National Register Criterion A for its association with the broad patterns of military history in Arizona. It is specifically associated with the historic context of "Impact of Warfare on American Settlers and Indians in Arizona, 1846-1886," as defined in the Multiple Property Documentation Form submission titled "Warfare Between Indians and Americans in Arizona, 1846-1886." Although the inclusive dates of the associated context ends in 1886 with the cessation of hostilities, the significant dates for the Bonita Store extend to the fifty-year time limit of the National Register in 1945. The Bonita Store continued to be significantly related to the military context until Fort Grant was transferred to the State of Arizona in 1912. After 1912, the Bonita Store is significant under Criterion A as an example of a rural Arizona general store.

The Bonita Store was constructed in 1882 by the partnership of Andrew Johnson and Barney Knowler. The store took advantage of its location adjacent to the Camp Grant Military Reservation. Camp Grant, established in December of 1872 at the foot of Mount Graham and at the head of the Sulphur Springs Valley thirty-five miles north of Willcox, was a major military installation in southeast Arizona. In 1874, Knowler and Johnson had opened a predecessor to the Bonita Store, a short distance away from its present location. Military regulations prohibited the sale of alcoholic beverages on the reservation, ensuring a steady supply of customers for the store owners. The firm prospered, and constructed the present building in 1882.

Historic Context 1: The Bonita Store and the Impact of Warfare on American Settlers and Indians in Arizona, 1846-1886

The Bonita Store is a representative example of the types of civilian enterprises that prospered from the presence of the U.S. military in Arizona. Regimentation governed Army life on the frontier. Only necessities were provided by the military to its enlisted men and officers. A post sutler might supply some of the few luxuries such as canned goods, but to purchase liquor or other items not sold on the reservation, military personnel had to travel to the nearest town.

In the case of Camp Grant (designated Fort Grant after 1879), the nearest town in 1872 was over fifty miles away. Willcox was not founded until the railroad passed through in 1880. In this instance, the town came to the military reservation. Shortly after the establishment of Camp Grant, a number of businesses were started just outside the boundary of the military reservation. The community of Bonita developed, some three miles from the post itself.

When the post was manned with troops, Bonita was one of the wildest, roaring towns in the Arizona Territory. It had a dozen saloons and a population of saloon keepers, gamblers, prostitutes, and hangers-on of all description. The normal population of Bonita is said to have been around one thousand souls, but come payday at the fort the population swelled with gamblers and call girls who arrived to liberate the soldiers of some of their hard-earned pay. Bonita did a thriving business until the soldiers were broke.

The Bonita Store served the soldiers of Fort Grant as a

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Bonita Store  
Bonita, Graham County, AZ

general store. Men could buy drinks on one side of the building which was equipped with a bar, but the main purpose of the facility was to sell merchandise that might not otherwise be available on the post. If the store did not carry an item, it could be ordered for delivery. The Bonita Store also served the residents of the remote upper Sulphur Springs Valley. The building contained the post office where residents picked up their mail. The residents also purchased items at the store, or dropped by to have a drink.

Bonita also stakes a claim to western history as the location where Billy the Kid killed his first man. On August 17, 1877, Frank P. Cahill was shot and killed in George Adkin's saloon in Bonita by William Bonney, also known as Billy the Kid. Cahill and Bonney got into an argument, which degenerated into a wrestling match. Bonney went for his gun and shot Cahill. Bonney was arrested by Miles L. Wood, who also served as justice of the peace. The Kid was taken to the dungeon at Camp Grant, where he managed to escape. This incident is typical of the rough and tumble atmosphere of Bonita, one of the wildest camps near a military reservation in Arizona.

Shortly after its construction, the Bonita Store was purchased by Andrew Johnson from his partner Barney Knowler. Johnson then sold the store to H.A. Morgan from Willcox. Miles L. Wood, a prominent homesteader in the Sulphur Springs Valley, then purchased the property from Morgan in 1906. Marc DuBois, who was Wood's son-in-law by virtue of marrying Jessie Wood, ran the store as its manager.

Fort Grant survived the cessation of hostilities after 1886 because of its healthful location and extensive improvements. It continued to see use as a training

location. With the start of the Spanish-American War in 1898, most of its soldiers were dispatched to Cuba. By 1905, in the aftermath of the war, Fort Grant was closed. It saw re-occupation in 1908 when President Teddy Roosevelt sent Col. William F. Stewart to the post as a type of punishment for not retiring. Stewart's troops consisted of a caretaker and a cook. In 1912, the post was transferred to the State of Arizona for use as an industrial school for wayward boys.

The Bonita Store continued to be a focal point of the Bonita community throughout this period. In 1920, Marc DuBois acquired the property from his father-in-law. Marc continued to run the store until his death in 1953. At that time, the store passed to his wife, Jessie, who continued to run the store until her retirement in 1955. Jim DuBois, Jesse's son, then took over operation of the store. He and his wife Dottie purchased the property in 1968. The two operated the store together until Jim's death in 1979. The store is now owned and operated by Jim DuBois, Jr.

Historic Context 2: The Bonita Store as an Example of a Rural Arizona General Store, 1882-1945

There are few comparative academic historical studies on the role that general stores played in the commercial development of the American West, perhaps for the reason that few questioned that these enterprises formed a significant part of commerce in small towns. However, amateur historian Herman Schweikart has examined the importance of general stores in Arizona towns such as Bonita, driving over 9,000 miles and visiting 272 communities in the state. Schweikart found that general stores such as that operated by the DuBois family formed a central link in the commerce of small towns in the state.

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Bonita Store  
Bonita, Graham County, AZ

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These stores had a limited stock of staple merchandise and a few luxuries.

As the logical center for important commercial activities, the small retail store also assumed the role of a clearing house for social activities. Schweikart observed that this was a by-product, and not a prime function of the commercial activity. People came to talk, to exchange ideas, gossip, complain, and keep up on the local news. They formed ideas on how to better their community, to work together, and set standards for young people to follow. In a sense, the small stores were a "good place" for social interaction in a small town, as opposed to the saloon. The small stores welcomed women and children, and appealed to the family man. Store owners were aware of the social functions of their enterprises, and helped by providing diversions for all. The Bonita Store served all these functions for the small community. Its significance thus continues after its association with the military ended.



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Bonita Store  
Bonita, Graham County, AZ

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Bonita Store  
Bonita, Graham County, AZ

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### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the nominated property at the Bonita Store is shown by the line marked on the accompanying sketch map.

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The National Register boundary for the Bonita Store property is drawn to include the building itself and the closely adjacent landscaped area next to the store. On the east side the boundary includes the well and windmill which historically supplied the water supply for the store. to the north, south, and west of the building, the boundary follows the inside edge of dirt roads which separate the store area from the surrounding property.

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Section Number PHOTOS Page 7

Bonita Store  
Bonita, Graham County, AZ

Photographer: Don W. Ryden, AIA

Date: 11 November 1995

Location of Original Negatives: Ryden Architects  
902 West McDowell Road  
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

<u>Photo #</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
1.	Historic photo of the Knowler & Johnson Store (now the Bonita Store), circa 1885. The brick-patterned tarpaper siding covering the long elevation of the building was installed originally to protect the adobe bearing walls and to give the building greater stylistic sophistication. [Photo courtesy of the Arizona Historical Society, Tucson, #50747.]
2.	Historic photo of the Knowler & Johnson Store (now the Bonita Store), circa 1885, shows the original pressed metal parapets and cornice at the front facade. [Photo courtesy of Jim DuBois.]
3.	Historic photo of the Knowler & Johnson Store (now the Bonita Store) with a two-horse carriage in street, circa 1885. [Photo courtesy of Jim DuBois.]
4.	Modern three-quarter view of the Bonita Store showing the 1920s alteration of the facade to create a gabled facade and a canopy for a gasoline pump. The associated historic windmill can be seen to the left of the building.
5.	The storefront windows and entry doors of the Bonita Store are virtually unchanged since built in 1882. A concrete step and masonry veneer to the storefront were added in the 1960s.
6.	The rear of the Bonita Store shows some of the minor modern alterations to the building including the adobe-veneer water table, the plaster on the original adobe walls, and the steel casement windows.