

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUL 14 1987

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page k

RESUBMISSION WILLCOX MRA

Crowley House (175 S. Railroad Avenue)
Cochise County
ARIZONA

Summary

This property was returned for substantive reasons. The Register's reviewer stated that criterion "C" was justified but that criterion "B" was not. The reviewer asked that a clarification of Crowley's roles in Willcox be expanded since the argument for criterion "B" is lacking in context. The reviewer felt that the expanded discussion should show how any of his roles contributed substantially to local growth and development. The reviewer wanted to know exactly how important the position of sheriff was in early Willcox. Also, the reviewer wanted to know what particular events in military history affected the region and how his hospitality related to these events and their effect upon Willcox. This document is an addendum to the original nomination that justifies significance under criterion "B" for the significance area of exploration/settlement. This addendum does not change the boundary of the nominated property.

John F. Crowley was an active citizen within the community of Willcox and the surrounding area. His leadership was instrumental in settling the area. With his help, Willcox evolved from a rambunctious railroad and mining town to a state center of prosperity and commerce. He and his family located in Willcox on May 19, 1883, from San Francisco, California, and he opened up a liquor store. However, before his arrival in Willcox, Crowley was a collector for W. E. Bridge, the owner of a livery business in San Francisco. He also was employed with United Carriage Company, also in San Francisco, for four years as a foreman.

Law and Order in Willcox

Willcox was not unlike any other frontier Arizona town for it also had its share of robberies, worthless peace officers, and shootouts. For example, in 1897, Constable Bert Appel willingly resigned from his position because of the growing disrespectfulness for the law. He resigned knowing that part of this was due to personal antipathy towards him on the part of certain cowboys. Burt Alvord, a fearless peace officer from Pearce, was asked to alleviate the situation in Willcox. While he turned out to be ruthless and dishonest, he did have the support of the townspeople. One of Alvord's deputies was Bill Downing, who was believed by some to be named Jackson and a member of the Sam Bass gang of train robbers in Texas. Downing caused a great deal of trouble around Willcox.

JUL 14 1997

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Another of Alvord's deputies was Matt Burts who, although not charged with killing anyone, seemed to enjoy shooting up the local establishments.

Many of the shootings which took place were the result of excessive drinking and short tempers. An example of this was the killing of Warren Earp (who had not participated in the famous Tombstone feud with the Clantons), who had lived around Willcox for a number of years. One night in July, 1900, he quarrelled with another cowboy. Although he was armed with only a pocketknife, apparently Earp dared the other man to shoot him; the man willingly met his request.

Naturally, robberies were not uncommon to Willcox. The most humiliating account was the theft of guns from some soldiers from Fort Grant. The men were inside a saloon getting a drink, and they left their guns on their horses. Consequently, their guns were stolen.

On September 10, 1899, a passenger train was robbed near Cochise station by masked men. The express and baggage cars were uncoupled from the train and were taken some distance away where the safe was dynamited. Since it was the day before payday at the Pearce mine, the robbers were expecting to find \$75,000 or more; instead, they found only \$2,000 to \$3,000 since the payroll had been taken off the train at Willcox and was being hauled across country. When the news arrived in Willcox, Bill Downing organized a posse, but after a short while he suggested that they turn back and gather reinforcements for the next day. Mainly through the evidence of Wells-Fargo agents, evidence was produced leading to the arrest of the entire gang, which included Downing, Alvord, and Burts.

John F. Crowley: Peace Officer

Crowley's service as sheriff and deputy sheriff reflects the rugged frontier conditions of Arizona, which was subject to lawlessness frequently. Crowley served in the earlier years of Willcox and was an excellent peace officer who maintained law and order judiciously. In late 1883, Crowley was serving as sheriff in Bisbee when, in December, five men robbed the Castenada store that was filled with shoppers. The robbers fired indiscriminately into the crowd and killed three men and one woman. A posse was quickly formed to capture the criminals. One member of the posse was a saloon-keeper named John Heath, who tried to lead the posse on a false trail. The members of the posse became suspicious of Heath and questioned him. He admitted to planning the robbery and named the actual perpetrators, who were eventually all brought in. Crowley brought in two of the robbers, Red Sample and Texas Howard. Sheriff Ward, from Willcox, brought in Kelly, alias Yorky. The five men were hanged March 4, 1884. Crowley hung Kelly at Kelly's request.

Heath, who had not participated in the actual robbery, was sentenced to twenty years in jail. However, the residents of Bisbee took offense at this, marched on the Tombstone jail, took Heath to a nearby telephone pole, and hung him. Despite the fact

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUL 14 1987

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page m

that a photograph showed the dead man and the crowd around him, a coroner's jury accepted the recommended findings of the coroner, Dr. George E. Goodfellow: "We the undersigned find that J. Heath came to his death from emphysema of the lungs -- a disease common to high altitudes -- which might have been caused by strangulation, self-inflicted or otherwise."

Crowley sold his liquor business in 1884 and was appointed deputy sheriff under J. L. Ward. During this time (1884 - 1886) he also served as deputy assessor for two years under Burk, the first territorial assessor. He also served as deputy tax collector during this time. Bob Hatch served as Willcox's sheriff after J. L. Ward, and John Crowley served in similar positions under him for two years also (1886 - 1888).

John F. Crowley: Citizen

Following his employment in the Willcox Sheriff's Office, Crowley was employed by the Southern Pacific Railroad for three years as a clerk under Agent E. A. Nichols (1888 - 1891). He returned to the liquor business until 1893 when he became general manager to Nichols in his lumber company until 1902. In 1898 he was appointed Notary Public by Governor McCord. From 1902 until 1912 he was appointed U. S. Coroner at Willcox.

John Crowley had a vested interest in Willcox. Besides owning a liquor business, he also owned and operated a transfer business. Plus, he held mining investments around Willcox. For example, the Dos Cabezas Mining District, probably the most important mine to the economy of Willcox, is located about twelve miles southeast in the Dos Cabezas Mountains. There, the first important claim was the Juniper, located by John Casey in 1878. Although Casey did not have the capital to develop the mine, he refused to sell or lease it for many years. Finally, in April, 1903, the Chicago and Arizona Copper Company was organized by a group of local businessmen with Thomas B. Chattman of Dos Cabezas as president. Crowley also served as president for a number of years. Others interested in the venture were W. F. Nichols, Pablo Soto, and James J. Riggs. After developing the mine, they leased it to different outfits who worked it with varying degrees of success.

Crowley was a stockholder in the Willcox Bank and Trust Company. On November 2, 1908, the company was incorporated. It opened for business on January 18, 1909, with H. A. Morgan as president; Horace Dunlap, cashier; and John H. Norton, Thomas Allaire, and A. Y. Smith, directors.

Crowley had also been the first fire chief in Willcox. In 1900 the volunteer fire department was organized with twenty-one members, and subscriptions were taken for the purchase of equipment. Buckets and axes were stored at strategic locations around Willcox.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUL 14 1987

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page n

Crowley was also interested in civic and political affairs. He was affiliated with the Bisbee Lodge, No. 671, B. P. O. E. And, he took an active interest in Republican politics, as most concerned citizens did in those days.

Thus, John F. Crowley played a vital role in transforming the wild and woolly frontier town of Willcox into an important business center of southwestern Arizona. In whatever role he served Willcox, whether as peace officer or as concerned citizen, Crowley contributed substantially to Willcox's local growth and development.

Bibliography

Chapman Publishing Co. Portrait and Biographical Record of Arizona. Chicago: Chapman Publishing Co., 1901.

Faulk, Odie B. Arizona: A Short History. Norman, Oklahoma: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1970.

McClintock, James H. Arizona: Prehistory -- Aboriginal: Pioneer -- Modern, Vol. III, Biographical. Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing, Co., 1916.

Schultz, Vernon B., with 1980 Update by Don Dale. Southwestern Town: The Story of Willcox, Arizona. The Board of Regents of the Universities and State College of Arizona, 1964.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUL 14 1987

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 0

I concur with the statements as presented in this resubmission:

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Shereen Arner

Title SAPO

Date 7/6/87