

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 Babcock, Dr. Raymond Home

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 96 South Humboldt Street not for publication

city or town Willits vicinity

state California code CA county Mendocino code 045 zip code 95490

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.)

Stephan D. Mitchell 5/6/04
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

California Office of Historic Preservation
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
 - 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 of the Keeper

Date of Action

[Signature]

8/19/04

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	
3 (house, playhouse & garage)		buildings
		sites
1 (wishing well)		structures
1 (bell tower)		objects
5		Total

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

N/A _____

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single-dwelling _____

Health Care/Medical Office _____

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single-dwelling _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th/20th Century Revivals _____

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete _____

roof Asphalt _____

walls Weatherboard _____

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.)

Property is:

- 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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Health/Medicine

Period of Significance

1914-1954 (50year cut-off, Babcock died in 1961)

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Babcock, Dr. Raymond

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Whited, Roy (architect and builder)

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:

Babcock Home
Name of Property

Menlo Park, CA
County and State

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
1	10	469690	4362400	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 Cindy Taylor

organization (Niece of George Akins, owner of home and Dr. Babcock's son-in-law) date November 2003

street & number 812 Rosemount Road telephone (510) 451-0242

city or town Oakland state CA zip code 94610

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 George C. Akins

street & number 96 South Humboldt Street telephone (707) 459-5519

city or town Willits state CA zip code 95490

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

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Babcock Home, Mendocino County, CA

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Description of the Dr. Raymond Babcock Home

The Dr. Raymond Babcock home is a two-story, wood frame residence in the Classical Revival Vernacular style. The home features a long high-pitched main gable facing Humboldt Street and parallel to Mendocino Street, and a lower gable projecting to the right and front of the house, as well as a third gable that faces Mendocino Street over a bay window. There is an "L" shaped veranda, partially recessed, extending from the gable facing Humboldt Street to the gable facing Mendocino Street. The veranda has a small section of its own roof that is supported by round columns. The roof of the house, including the one over the veranda, is finished with boxed cornices, sloped soffit, and a plain wooden frieze. The house is covered in wide ship-lap boards and the corners of the house are marked by end-boards.

Located in the old townsite of Willitsville, the house at the corner of Humboldt and East Mendocino Streets was built in 1905 by Roy Whited, who designed and built many of the lovely Victorian homes along Humboldt and East Mendocino streets during the building boom days of the town. Originally the house was a single story with Queen Anne Vernacular details. Dr. Babcock built a one-room hospital behind the house in 1919 when there was no other hospital in Willits.

In the early 1920s, the adjacent lot was purchased to provide a large landscaped backyard for the residence. At this time a redwood fence with lattice work was put up, and a small wooden playhouse was crafted for the young Babcock daughters.

In the early 1930s, Dr. Babcock added an upper story to his home to provide additional bedrooms, each with a half bath, for his two daughters, Jane and Mary Louise. The dining room of the home was enlarged, and a breakfast room added, with a view to the back yard. The original Queen Anne Vernacular architectural details were adapted to a Classical Revival Vernacular style reflecting the times and the doctors' taste, while retaining the basic features of the original house. The divided pane windows in the original kitchen were copied for the breakfast room and dining room bay. The remodeled home retained its characteristic gables. The house also retained its "L" shaped partially recessed veranda extending from the gable facing Humboldt Street to the gable facing Mendocino Street. Simple round columns support the roof over the veranda. The roof of the house, including the one over the veranda, is finished with boxed cornices, sloped soffit, and a plain wooden frieze in the Classical Revival style.

At the time of the remodel in the early 1930s, Dr. Babcock had a stone well, with a bucket and pulley, constructed in the yard. The well has a pump that switches on and provides water for the lawn and garden. At the same time, he rebuilt the old 'hospital room' and garage, which looks the same today as it did in the 1930s, except for an automatic door added in the 1960s. The only major addition in the yard since the 1930s was the construction of the Bell Tower in 1945, an important structure in the Babcock garden. Originally designed by Dr. and Mrs.

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Babcock, the tower was rebuilt "to the quarter inch" by their daughter Jane Babcock Akins and her husband George Akins in 1984.

No architectural changes have been made to the house itself since the early 1930s when Dr. Babcock remodeled it to suit his needs. However, the wiring has been updated and the roof and fence have been replaced. The redwood fence on the south side of the yard was replaced in 2002. It measures about 55 feet, in 7 sections, and is made of high grade redwood. The old fence was also of redwood, a material highly prized by local residents and ranchers. The wood from the torn-down fence was given to a local rancher for a corral. When a new composition shingle roof was put on in 1996, there were three layers that had to be torn off before the new roof could be installed. What the roofers found under the old layers was not the expected plywood, but a whole layer of redwood, and the new shingles were placed over that. The house itself is built of redwood lumber, which can be seen in the eaves of the attic and in the 17" x 17" redwood timber supports, visible in the basement, that run the full length of the house. Redwood was also used for many of the doors of the home and for the gleaming reddish-brown floors upstairs. Redwood lumber was an important factor in the development of the town of Willits. Early in the 20th century, timber baron A.W. Foster brought in the Northwestern mill and lumber company along with his railroad to transport the redwood lumber to markets throughout California. It is a fitting material for a home located in the heart of the Redwood Empire of Mendocino County.

Although associated with the Willits building boom that followed the arrival of the Northwestern Railroad in 1901, the house is most important for its long association as the residence of Dr. Raymond Babcock who lived there from 1914 until his death at age 71 in 1961. The house has remained in the family and been meticulously maintained since 1914. After Dr. Babcock's death in 1961, his widow Bonnie continued to live in the home until her death in 1982. Then, for almost two years the home was maintained by a caretaker until the Babcocks' daughter, Jane, and her husband, George Akins, took up residence in the Dr. Raymond Babcock Home. Jane and George Akins moved back to their native hometown, Willits, from Sacramento after George, an accountant, retired in 1984. The home now belongs to George Akins, Dr. Babcock's son-in-law. Jane Babcock Akins, George's wife of 58 years, passed away in May 2003.

An abstract of title for the property at 96 South Humboldt Street was compiled in 1919 by Smith, Donohoe & Company, Abstractors, Ukiah, California. It records the Patent of Deeds dating from the United States to Johnson on 15 June 1866 through the deed to Raymond Babcock on 22 November 1919, including the deeds from L.R. Whited, the architect/builder of the home, to W. L. Blodgett on 1 December 1905. Next is Dr. Blodgett's deed to L.W. Babcock, father of Dr. Raymond Babcock, on 6 March 1914. Finally, the abstract shows L.W. Babcock's deed to his son, Dr. Raymond Babcock, on 22 November 1919. The full text of the last entry in the Abstract follows:

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DEED

L.W. Babcock and Annie R.
Babcock, (husband and wife)

- to -

Raymond A. Babcock

DATED October 29th, 1919
ACK. October 29th, 1919, before
Vincent E. Bowser, N.P. of
Los Angeles County, California
RECORDED November 22, 1919, in
LIBER 156 of Deeds, page 334,
Mendocino County Records

For and in consideration of the sum of \$10.00, and also on account of love and affection, do by these presents Grant, bargain, and sell, convey, and confirm, unto the said party of the second part, and to his heirs and assigns forever, all that certain lot, piece or parcel of land, situate, lying and being in the County of Mendocino and State of California, and bounded and particularly described as follows, to wit: -

Commencing at the Southeast corner of Lot 3 in Block 5 as shown on the Official Plat of Willitsville, now on file in the Recorder's Office of Mendocino County, State of California, and running thence North, along the West line of Humboldt Street, 57 feet; thence West and parallel with Mendocino Street, 88 feet and 8 inches to the Western line of said Lot 3; thence South parallel with Humboldt Street, 57 feet to the North line of Mendocino Street; and thence East along said North line of Mendocino Street, 88 feet and 8 inches to the place of beginning.

(Signed) L.W. Babcock [SEAL]
Annie R. Babcock [SEAL]

-1364 -

SMITH, DONOHUE & CO., INC., UKIAH, CAL.

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Babcock Home, Mendocino County, CA

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Description of The Babcock Bell Tower

Bells of all sizes can be seen high above the fences at the Dr. Raymond Babcock home on the corner of Humboldt and East Mendocino Streets. They are the collection of Dr. Babcock and were gathered between 1930-1960. The bells are displayed on the Babcock Bell Tower, designed and built by Dr. and Mrs. Babcock in 1945. The solid redwood frame supports a diverse collection of town, school, locomotive, ship and team bells. Almost all the bells are from Mendocino County, the exception being the Santa Rosa town bell from Sonoma County.

The project began in 1930 when Dr. Babcock was able to purchase the school bell from his former grammar school, Willow Creek School in Ukiah, a one-room school where his mother, Annie R. Babcock was the teacher. Next he bought the Willits Town Bell, which was no longer in use. Doc loved bells - all sizes, all kinds - and corresponded with people all over the county in running down leads for additions to his collection. Bells were housed in his warehouse until the Bell Tower was put up in 1945. In the early days of WWII, scrap iron was being gathered for the manufacture of military items, and Dr. Babcock thought it would be a shame to destroy these historic creations, and he intensified his search for collectible bells. Each bell is imprinted with the foundry's name and date. Most of the bells were made in Philadelphia and many dated back to 1850.

The largest bell in the Collection is the Santa Rosa Town Bell. Its weight is estimated at 1200 – 1500 pounds. The large bell to its left is the historic Willits Town Bell. Originally located at the corner of School and Wood streets in Willits, the bell resounded far and wide for fire alarms, to call town meetings, and to signal a curfew for Willits children at night. The Willow Creek School Bell is located in the center of the top row, with locomotive bells to its left and ranch bells to its right. The groups of small bells attached to straps along the face of the top beam are unusual and rare. These "team bells" were originally placed on the back of mules which were used to transport tan bark from the woods. Each set of bells has an individual timbre, allowing the rancher to locate a stray animal by the unique melody played by its bells. The lower beam displays ranch bells and smaller ships' bells. A maritime bell on the far right came from the Noyo Harbor on the Mendocino Coast.

In the summer of 1984 the original tower was replaced by a new solid redwood frame, by Dr. Babcock's daughter Jane and her husband George Akins. Dry rot had affected the old frame and, due to the tremendous weight, it had become dangerous. The tower was rebuilt "to the quarter inch" by the Jane and George Akins. Mr. Akins described the process of rebuilding the Bell Tower:

"We lined up two or three guys from Ukiah, primarily George Brewer and his son John Brewer who are carpenters. They took the measurements and told me what materials to get. I searched for the 2 large posts and finally found a Willits man who was interested in the project who was able to locate two large timbers for the main support posts. The carpenters had to tear out two sections of the fence on the south side and build up 2 ramps from the street across the

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sidewalk. Then they built a platform so they could drive in a fork lift to the center of the yard where the Bell Tower stood. The fork lift was needed so they could take down the heavy bells, one at a time. Each was numbered and stored in the garage so it could be put back in exactly the same place when the new structure was up. George Brewer did the whole job in one week."

All bells are in excellent shape and can be rung. It is a family tradition to ring them and celebrate the 4th of July, birthdays and New Year's Day. Many groups of school children have been welcomed into the Babcock's backyard to see and ring the lovely bells. The Babcock Bell Tower has been featured as a local point of interest on a walking tour of Willits sponsored by the Mendocino County Museum.

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The District

The Dr. Raymond Babcock Home in Willits, California, is located in the old townsite of Willitsville, whose growth began in 1861 when Hiram Willits established a Post Office on his homestead there. In 1877 Hiram Willits filed a plot map of the city of Willitsville, laying the lots and blocks and naming streets. A few houses remain from the first building era about 1880. In 1888 the town's 197 voters shortened the town's name to Willits. A surge of growth came to the town with the arrival of the railroad in 1901. Population was then 700. With the ensuing population increase came rapid and shoddy construction of houses for the newly arrived railroad workers and supporting service industries. Lack of housing was a pressing problem that was exacerbated by a fire that swept through the town in June 1901 burning down many businesses and homes. A building boom followed with construction of new homes, many in the Queen Anne cottage style and the Craftsman's Bungalow style, styles which remained popular in Willits long after they died out in the bay area. The majority of houses of this type were built between 1908 and 1914, during a period of railroad growth.

In 1901 with the arrival of the railroad the town had begun to prosper. Some newly affluent citizens displayed their wealth in ornate buildings, such as the Bowen House, two doors up from the Dr. Babcock Home, on Humboldt, and the L.J. Roach house on State Street. People with less money emulated such houses, but on a smaller scale.

Dr. Babcock's home at 96 South Humboldt, built in 1905 by Roy Whited, was originally the mirror image of the home next door at 84 South Humboldt Street, the Fred Whited home, a Queen Anne Cottage vernacular style home built in 1904. Other homes nearby include the Peter Gustafson house at 175 South Humboldt Street, a Craftsman Bungalow built in 1912, the Barney Schow House at 156 South Humboldt Street, a Vernacular Neo-Classical home built in 1912, the George Upp house at 259 South Humboldt Street, a Queen Anne Cottage built in 1905, and the grand H.W. Bowen House at 72 South Humboldt Street, a Vernacular Queen Anne Cottage built in 1904. Another building of note, on Humboldt Street at the other end of the same block from the Dr. Babcock Home, is the red brick Carnegie Library, built in 1915.

Humboldt Street, in the heart of the original downtown district of Willits, is in an area of town of particular historic merit for the time period during which many of these architecturally significant homes were built, and for and the importance of the arrival of the railroad in the town.

The Dr. Raymond Babcock Home is currently listed in the California Register of Historical Resources. It was part of a district that was evaluated during a Federal Highways project in 2000. The district was found eligible for listing in the National Register.

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Biography of Dr. Raymond Babcock

Dr. Raymond Arthur Babcock, revered country doctor of Mendocino County in Northern California, was a towering figure in the history of Willits. Dr. Babcock was instrumental in establishing Howard Memorial Hospital and was a founder of the Frontier Days Celebrations that brought business to Willits even in the midst of the Great Depression. When Dr. Babcock died in 1961 at the age of 71, the front page story in the *Willits News* referred to him as "Willits' own beloved doctor." And so he was. Quite possibly no other person in the community contributed so much, to so many people, over so many years as Dr. Raymond Babcock.

Dr. Babcock was a big man physically, standing six foot three inches tall and weighing 220 pounds. Practicing in a serious profession, always on the precipice of tragedy, he was known as a fun-loving man with a boisterous laugh and a tremendous sense of humor. He was affectionately called "The Cowboy Doctor," "The Horse and Buggy Doctor," or just plain "Doc."

Looking at the records now, it hardly seems possible that one man could have covered the territory, and tended to the numbers of people, that this man did. He was an expert surgeon who tended to the medical care of thousands of people all over Mendocino County for nearly five decades. He went as far as Covelo, Laytonville, Fort Bragg, and all the small communities in between, often during times of flood or snowstorm. Although many stories are told of his house calls on horseback, Dr. Babcock's favorite mode of transportation was his trusty black Buick. He drove all over the back roads, fording rivers and climbing hills, and when he had pushed the car as far as it would go, he would complete the journey on foot to get to his patients.

Raymond Babcock was a Mendocino County native son, with deep roots in the county he would spend his life serving. His mother, Annie R. Pullen, was born in Little River, on the Mendocino coast. She married Lyman W. Babcock, a native New Yorker, in 1884, and both of them became prominent early-day educators in the county, with Lyman serving as the Mendocino County Superintendent of schools from 1907-1915. Their son, Raymond Arthur Babcock, was born on 18 November 1889 in Ukiah. In 1907, Raymond graduated from Ukiah High School, where his father was principal. He attended Hahnemann Medical College in San Francisco, graduating in 1913.

On July 24, 1913, in Ukiah, Raymond married Bonnie Moore, daughter of Ukiah minister Rev. Jeremiah Early Moore and Blanche Baskerville Moore of Virginia. The newly-wed Babcocks moved to Willits, about 20 miles north of Ukiah, after the young doctor was convinced by Ralph Duncan, a Willits pharmacist, that his services were greatly needed in the northern part of the county. At the age of 23, Dr. Babcock opened his medical practice in Willits.

In February 1914, Lyman Babcock bought Dr. Walter Blodgett's home at 96 South Humboldt Street in Willits and Bonnie and Raymond moved in. Later, in October 1919, following Raymond's return from overseas duty, Lyman and Annie deeded the home to their son.

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World War I had interrupted Dr. Babcock's budding practice, but it gave him an extraordinary post-graduate education in surgery, often performed at dressing stations near the front lines. Captain Babcock, age 28, commanded the 364th Masonic Ambulance Corps in France and Belgium. Like all the men of the Masonic Ambulance Corps, he was a volunteer. In the Battle of the Argonne Forrest in September 1918, he tended to the injured and managed sixteen liaison officers, all under heavy shell-fire. His bravery earned him a Silver Star from General Pershing. After the Armistice, he came back to California to give the last commands to his company. On May 12, 1919, Captain Babcock returned the American flag to the Mayor of San Francisco in a ceremony at the Civic Center following a grand parade on Market Street.

After a two month vacation on the Mendocino coast to recuperate from his war experiences, Dr. Babcock returned home to Willits with his wife and their 2-year-old daughter, Jane. In August 1919, he resumed his medical practice. Doc hung out his shingle at home and established the first 'hospital' in Willits, a tiny clinic in back of his Humboldt Street house, which he furnished with a few beds and basic equipment. He bought a Buick ambulance for emergency use and had it garaged at the Little Lake Garage on Main Street. Later Dr. Babcock moved to an upstairs office at the Mercantile Building on Main and Commercial Streets. But no matter where his office was, people insisted on coming to his home at all hours of the night, and no one was ever turned away. On a holiday or a weekend, there might be a block long line of people, each in turn knocking on the door to ask for "Doc." And frequently that meant he would have to make a long trip into the back country to set broken bones, tend to the dying, or deliver a baby.

Dr. Babcock was officially assigned to the mill hospital at Northwestern, a lumber town a few miles northwest of Willits. The town was owned by railroad and timber baron A.W. Foster and consisted of a cluster of redwood shack houses surrounding a mill and mill pond near the end of the railroad line. The rustic hospital was there for treatment of the lumber personnel and their families only. Private patients were not admitted, and there was no other hospital in all of Northern Mendocino County. There were many tragic accidents in the mill, on the railroad, and in the woods. Men fell out of trees from great heights; huge trunks rolled or fell on men working on the ground; wooden bridges collapsed under loaded lumber cars, and arms and legs were mangled in saws or machinery. Initially hired as an assistant to Dr. Woelffel, Dr. Babcock took over completely when the older doctor retired. The hospital became know as "Doc Babcock's", and rightfully so. Doc personally paid for most of the equipment, and it was at his insistence that the hospital was finally opened to use by all of the residents of Willits. In January 1920, Raymond and Bonnie's second daughter, Mary Louise, was born at Northwestern. Sadly, the baby was born handicapped.

Dr. Babcock's office hours were dawn to dusk, with house calls all hours in between. Traveling to remote and lonely areas, he'd work all night with a woman in labor, or an old timer just dying of old age, giving encouragement and understanding. Frequently, when Dr. Babcock knew the

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family didn't have any money, on the way out he would quietly leave a few dollars on the kitchen table. A lot of people couldn't afford to pay Doc, at least not in cash, but they'd come around to his house with baskets of fresh vegetables or fruits or deer meat, or an apple pie.

Tales abound of his extraordinary efforts to reach patients in the most remote areas of Mendocino County, often in miserable weather with drenching rains and mudslides. One trek in 1937 involved a car, horse, railroad speeder-car, and even slogging through mud on foot to reach two critically ill people in a cabin on Bald Mountain. Ninety-four year old Grandma Elder had passed away before Dr. Babcock arrived with a rescue crew, but with super-human effort and the help of several backwoods volunteers, Doc was able to bring her son, Charles Elder, down to the hospital in Willits in time to save his life. Asked about it the next day by a local reporter, Dr. Babcock answered, "It was nothing unusual - just typical of any country doctor's practice."

Medical care was evolving in California after WWI. Emergency and surgical procedures, once performed routinely in doctors' offices or at home, were now available in modern, well-equipped hospitals in larger cities. World War I had given the young physician a wider perspective. Doc envisioned Willits with a real hospital, and he was not shy about sharing his dream. In 1926, he approached a group of Willits businessmen with the idea of sponsoring a community activity to raise funds to build a hospital. With the American Legion Post, of which Dr. Babcock was a prominent member, they began to organize a rodeo and 4th of July celebration, which they called Frontier Days.

The Frontier Days celebration was still in the planning stages, when Dr. Babcock was called to the scene of an accident early one Sunday morning in May, 1926, at Ridgewood Ranch, 11 miles south of Willits. The legendary tale of Dr. Babcock's involvement in the building of Howard Memorial Hospital is the story of a country doctor, a teen-age boy and a wealthy man who came together under the most tragic circumstances to make a positive contribution to their community. The doctor, of course, was Raymond Babcock. The owners of the ranch were Dr. Babcock's friends, Fanny Mae and Charles Howard, who lived in their country home at Ridgewood most of the year. One of the wealthiest men in Northern California, Charles Howard owned the Buick dealership in San Francisco as well as a famous racehorse named Seabiscuit. The Howards had four sons. One of the younger boys, Frankie, was fifteen years old. Charles took Fanny Mae to the opening of the new Del Monte Hotel on the Monterey Peninsula on the week-end of May 8 and 9, leaving the boys at the ranch. Early that Sunday morning, Frankie and two friends set out in an old ranch truck to go fishing. The boys were driving home about 9 a.m. when a boulder fell in the path of their truck. Frankie tried to swerve around it but lost control. The truck pitched headlong into the canyon. His friends were thrown clear, but the steering wheel pinned Frankie under the open truck. The ranch foreman called Dr. Babcock, who rushed to the scene of the accident. Doc climbed through the wreckage and tried to revive Frankie, using what minimal equipment he had. But his efforts to save Frankie were in vain.

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The Howards arrived by special charter train from Del Monte, to be told their son was dead, his skull and spine crushed.

When Dr. Babcock called on the grief-stricken parents to offer consolation, he found Charles Howard struggling to find a way to memorialize his son. Dr. Babcock told him that Frankie might have had a better chance to live if he had been able to receive treatment in a modern hospital. When Howard looked to Doc for a solution, Dr. Babcock proposed building a hospital in Willits. Howard asked, "How much?" The proposition put to Howard was a donation of \$30,000 to build a hospital building that would bear his son's name. Howard agreed to underwrite the entire cost and supply the hospital with food from Ridgewood's orchards and dairy. The ground-breaking ceremony took place on the 4th of July 1927, and on May 21st 1928 the Frank R. Howard Memorial Hospital opened and the facility at Northwestern was closed.

Dr. Babcock moved all of his equipment from Northwestern to Howard Memorial, and donated the necessary furniture. The new ten-bed hospital had a surgery, nursery, delivery room, and kitchen. Charles Howard named Dr. Babcock the Medical Director, and Doc became the driving force behind constant improvement of the facility over the next thirty three years. A south wing was added in 1938, a new surgical suite in 1956, and the X-ray equipment was updated in 1960. Dr. Babcock remained the devoted guardian and promoter of the hospital right up until his death in 1961.

Meanwhile, the Frontier Days Celebration, now no longer necessary as a fund-raiser for building a hospital, had taken on a spectacular life of its own. All profits went to community causes such as equipping the hospital. Doctor Babcock was truly a cornerstone of the Frontier Days Association, donating his time and talents over the years to develop the 4th of July extravaganza. Though at first not a great money-maker, the rodeo would grow to attract people from the entire county and beyond. Despite a nationwide economic depression that hit the country in the 1930s, the rodeo became a tourist attraction for the town and a financial boon for the whole community.

Dr. Babcock took an active part in the Frontier Days Parade and Celebrations every year of his life. He rode in the annual parade, sometimes in a horse and buggy, sometimes on his golden palomino. Doc was honored as a Grand Marshall of the Frontier Days Parade, and in 1950 when the Fire Department turned over management of the enterprise to the Willits Frontier Days Association, Dr. Babcock was named President. In 1958 Frontier Days dedicated their show to Dr. Babcock. Frontier Days continues to run as a non profit production, donating the now substantial proceeds to worthy community projects.

In 1939, Seabiscuit and jockey Red Pollard spent a year together on Ridgewood Ranch, both nursed back to health by Dr. Babcock, before going on to win the \$100,000 Santa Anita Handicap in 1940. Dr. Babcock filmed that famous race with a camera given to him by Charles Howard. Years later, in July 2003, when the movie "Seabiscuit," was released, some of Dr. Babcock's footage was used in the film. Dr. Babcock's Seabiscuit films can now be seen at the

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Babcock Home, Mendocino County, CA

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Mendocino County Museum in Willits, along with other fascinating reels from this collection. Dr. Babcock was intensely interested in Indian culture, and had a fine collection of Indian artifacts. Sometimes he was paid for his medical services with a basket or baby cradle. In 1939 and 1940 he made two films of Elsie Allen and other Pomo Indian women demonstrating their crafts and exhibiting dozens of intricately made baskets. Those films, also at the Museum, are a valuable record of Pomo Indian crafts and their makers.

Another labor of love was Dr. Babcock's collection of bells, beginning with the acquisition of the Willow Creek school bell from the one-room school in Ukiah where Raymond had been taught by his mother. In 1945, Raymond and Bonnie designed and built a huge redwood tower in their back yard to display the growing collection of bells, including the Willits and Santa Rosa town bells, the largest weighing over 1200 pounds.

In his 60s, when many men retire, Dr. Babcock was still hard at work serving the medical needs of his many patients. In 1958, at age 68, Dr. Babcock built his own medical offices under the redwood trees in front of Howard Hospital. At the same time, he also purchased the large lot next to his offices and protected it from commercial development by landscaping the parcel and keeping it as open space. Later, Dr. Babcock's widow, Bonnie, deeded the land next to Doc's old offices on Main Street to the city of Willits. Just in time for Christmas 1968, Babcock Memorial Park was officially opened to the public with a lovely rock fountain, flowers, and evergreens adorned with colorful Christmas lights.

On the 14th of December 1959, Dr. Babcock delivered a baby boy in Willits, recording the last entry in his "baby book". Over nearly 46 years, he had carefully documented over 2200 babies he had delivered, starting with a baby girl on the 16th of January 1914. Those amazing chronicles of his medical career remain intact.

Dr. Raymond Babcock died on Tuesday, June 6, 1961 at the Howard Memorial Hospital. Funeral Services were held at the Ukiah Methodist Church on the following Friday. He was buried at the Ukiah Cemetery.

Saturday, November 18th, 1961, was designated "Dr. Babcock Day" by the Willits Chamber of Commerce. On December 15, 1995, Dr. Raymond Babcock was selected to receive the city's Annual Memorial Award, an honor given to "true citizens" of Willits who have made extraordinary contributions for the betterment of the community. Willits could not have designated a more worthy recipient.

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Babcock Home, Mendocino County, CA

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Historical Context for the Dr. Raymond Babcock Home

Dr. Raymond Babcock literally brought medicine in Mendocino County, California, from the era of the horse and buggy into the modern technological age. In 1913, at 23, the young physician set up a small clinic in the back of his home. This little clinic was the first hospital in the town of Willits. At 27, Dr. Babcock volunteered to serve in WWI with the Masonic Ambulance Corps. Captain Babcock came home a hero in 1919, with innovative ideas. Automobiles were replacing the horse and buggy, and the young doctor purchased a brand new Buick ambulance for emergency use in Willits.

Dr. Babcock's home at 96 South Humboldt Street had been constructed in 1905 during a Willits building and population surge precipitated by the arrival of the Northwestern Railroad in 1901. With the Northwestern Railroad had come the Northwestern Redwood Company, a large lumber operation. These Northwestern enterprises, both owned by timber baron A.W. Foster, were the primary businesses in the area. The company town, called Northwestern, was located up the hill slightly northwest of Willits. A rustic 'hospital' there was operated solely for the use of mill employees and their families. Dr. Babcock was officially assigned to the Northwestern hospital, and as time went on, the hospital became known as "Doc Babcock's." Eventually, at his insistence, that hospital was finally opened for use by all the residents of Willits. But the rustic facility was a far cry from the modern well-equipped hospital Dr. Babcock envisioned for his community.

In the early decades of the 20th century, there were epidemics triggered by lack of proper sanitation and water facilities. An epidemic of diphtheria swept throughout the Mendocino County in the 1920's. Dr. Babcock, weakened by overwork and lack of sleep, fell victim to the disease in August, 1923. He very nearly died, and his heart was permanently damaged. But as soon as he was well, he was back to tending others. A variety of infectious diseases ran rampant in the county. Dr. Babcock made house calls to treat measles, mumps, scarlet fever, and chicken pox. Homes with sick children were often quarantined for much of the winter. The best cure for tuberculosis at the time was simply bed-rest.

But medical care in this country was changing in the 1920s. At one time, people went to hospitals only if they couldn't afford to pay for care in their own homes. Technology was improving. Emergency and surgical procedures, once routinely performed in physician's offices, were now being centralized in hospitals equipped with modern life-saving instruments. Dr. Babcock clearly saw the need for such a hospital in Willits and he was instrumental in the building of Howard Memorial Hospital which opened in 1928. As its Medical Director, Dr. Babcock was the driving force behind constant improvement of the hospital over the following 33 years. A south wing was added in 1938, a new surgical suite in 1956, and the X-ray equipment was updated in 1960.

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Babcock Home, Mendocino County, CA

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Dr. Babcock promoted these improvements for his community through hard times as well as prosperous ones. The early years of his practice had seen great economic hardship in the community. In 1924, the Northwestern Redwood Company closed the mill at Northwestern and discontinued its operations, with a predictable negative effect on the economy of the town. Several hundred people had been employed by the mill, and they were suddenly out of work. Some moved away, but many stayed. Not many people in Willits owned their homes. Most rented, especially those in transient situations, like loggers and railroad workers. There were a few boarding houses. Hotel Willits on Main Street operated as a boarding house, renting by the week or the month. There was a good dining room at the hotel. Meal tickets were sold at a discount, and people ate there.

Wall Street crashed in 1929, but few in Willits owned any stock, and so were not immediately affected. But the ripple effect of the nationwide depression that followed the market collapse eventually hit hard. Unemployment in Willits was even higher than usual. Money was scarce. There was some aid from the county, but not very much. A lot of people just wandered around. Young people, especially. Some of the women in Willits took in washing, and men did handy jobs. They didn't earn very much, but at least they got by. There were a lot of charge accounts with the local merchants that weren't enforced very stringently. The merchant would often "let them ride for two or three months, even up to a year sometimes." When Willits youngsters went to the movie theater and saw news-reel pictures of the soup lines in big cities, they were glad they lived in Willits. In their hometown, with the wonderful quality of small town people who band together to help each other during times of tragedy and stress, people tried to work together and help each other out.

People often didn't get a balanced diet during those days. A number of people around Willits hunted and fished, and even bagged deer out of season. The Game Wardens tended to look the other way "if they weren't over doing it." Folks traded food for services. Farmers provided food if somebody came in and did a job for them. They would pay in food, rather than in cash. They didn't have much cash.

Many people couldn't afford to pay cash for medical care. Dr. Babcock was sometimes paid with a basket of fresh vegetables or fruits. One man made Doc a beautiful handmade vest of buckskin and raccoon pelts. A young Pomo Indian couple paid for the delivery of their baby with a basket. A carpenter repaid him in trade when he had work done on his house in the early 1930s.

During WWII, various industries began to move into Willits, improving the economic outlook. The Frontier Days celebrations, of which Dr. Babcock was a founder, had grown right through the depression era to become a large-scale annual community event, as well as a major tourist attraction. Frontier Days is still run as a non-profit organization with a tradition of donated labor, and proceeds go to worthy community causes. It's a family Fourth of July celebration in the tradition of small towns everywhere, but, uniquely, in Willits the continuity of Frontier Days remains unbroken since 1926.

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Dr. Babcock played a large role in originating and developing Frontier Days. He was a key player in getting Howard Memorial Hospital built in 1928. Howard Hospital was the first 'real' hospital in Willits and is still serving the community round the clock. Prior to that, a room behind Dr. Babcock's residence on Humboldt Street served as a make-shift hospital for the community. The horse and buggy era of frontier medicine gave way to the modern era of sophisticated technology during his lifetime. Dr. Babcock's vision and energy facilitated the evolution of medical care in Willits. Most importantly, from 1914 to 1961, the family home on Humboldt Street served as the home-base from which the beloved Dr. Babcock served his community so long and so well.

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MaryIn Lortie, Historian, Registration Programs, California Office of Historic Preservation.

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Babcock Home, Mendocino County, CA

Section number 10 Page 1 of 1 Legal Description / Boundary Description

96 South Humboldt Street, Willits, Mendocino County, CA 95490-3539

Legal Description:

Residence located at 96 South Humboldt St., Willits, California and more particularly described as all those certain lots, pieces or parcels of land situate, lying and being in the City of Willits, County of Mendocino, State of California, bounded and particularly described as follows:

Commencing at the Southeast corner of Lot Three (3) in Block Five (5), as shown on the Official Plat of Willitsville, now on file in the Recorder's Office of Mendocino County, State of California, and running thence North along the west line of Humboldt Street, 57 feet; thence West and parallel with Mendocino Street, 88 feet and 8 inches to the western line of said Lot 3; thence South, parallel with Humboldt Street, 57 feet to the north line of Mendocino Street; and thence East along said north line of Mendocino Street, 88 feet and 8 inches to the place of beginning; and

Commencing at the southeast corner of Lot One (1) in Block Five (5); according to the survey of the Town of Willits, Mendocino County, California, and now on file in the Recorder's Office of said county, which said point of commencement is also at a point on the north line of Mendocino Street in said city; running thence North 100 feet to the southeast corner of Lot 2 in said Block 5; thence West along the south line of said Lot 2 in said Block 5, a distance of 55 feet 8 inches; thence South parallel with the east line of said Lot 1, a distance of 100 feet to a point on the north line of said Mendocino Street in said City; thence East along said Mendocino Street 55 feet 8 inches to the place of beginning. The same being the most easterly 55 feet 8 inches of said Lot 1.

Assessors Parcel Number: 005-211-09.

**Note. The house is located on the first parcel described above, and the back yard and bell tower are located on the adjacent second parcel described above.*

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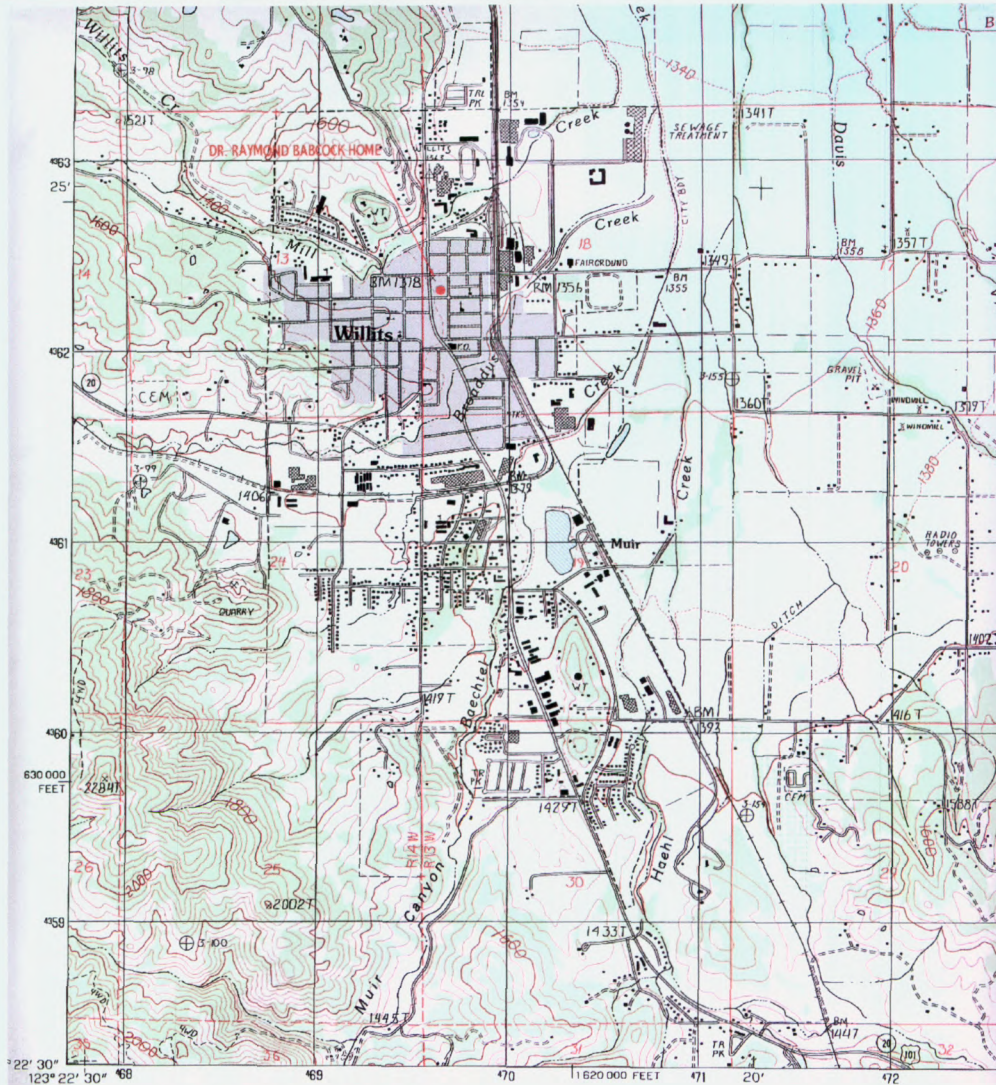
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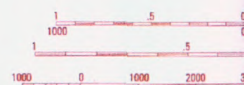
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Additional Documentation - USGS Map

U.S.G.S. Willits Quadrangle- California- Mendocino Co. *Scale: 1:24,000*Date of Map: 1991



PRODUCED BY THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY CONTROL BY: USGS, NOS/NOAA AND USCE
 COMPILED FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN: 1957
 REVISED FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN: 1985
 FIELD CHECKED: 1986. MAP EDITED: 1991
 PROJECTION: LAMBERT CONFORMAL CONIC
 GRID: 1000-METER UNIVERSAL TRANSVERSE MERCATOR, ZONE 10
 10,000-FOOT STATE GRID TICKS, CALIFORNIA, ZONE 2
 UTM GRID DECLINATION: 0°12' WEST
 1991 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION: 16°30' EAST
 VERTICAL DATUM: NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
 HORIZONTAL DATUM: 1927 NORTH AMERICAN DATUM
 To place on the predicted North American Datum of 1983, move the projection lines as shown by dashed corner ticks (15 meters north and 95 meters east)
 There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of any Federal or State reservations shown on this map
 No distinction made between houses, barns, and other buildings
 Gray tint indicates area in which selected buildings are shown



PROVISIONAL MAP
 Produced from original manuscript drawings. Information shown as of date of field check.

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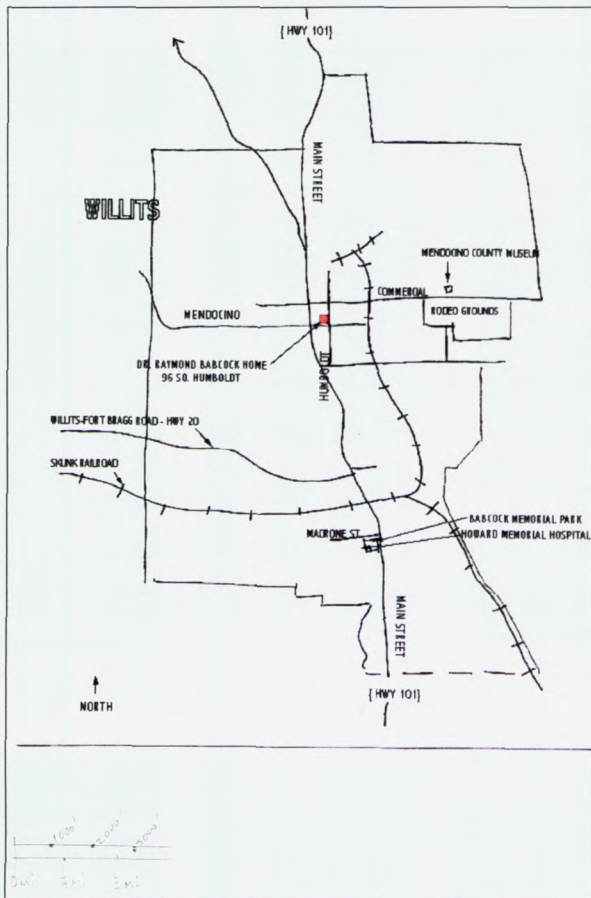
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Additional Documentation – Sketch of Willits

Sketch Map – Town of Willits

Sketch of Town of Willits showing location of Dr. Raymond Babcock Home in relation to other Willits locations important in the life of Dr. Babcock:

- Dr. Raymond Babcock Home
- Babcock Memorial Park
- Howard Memorial Hospital
- Frontier Days Rodeo Grounds



Drawn by: Cindy Taylor Date: October, 2003

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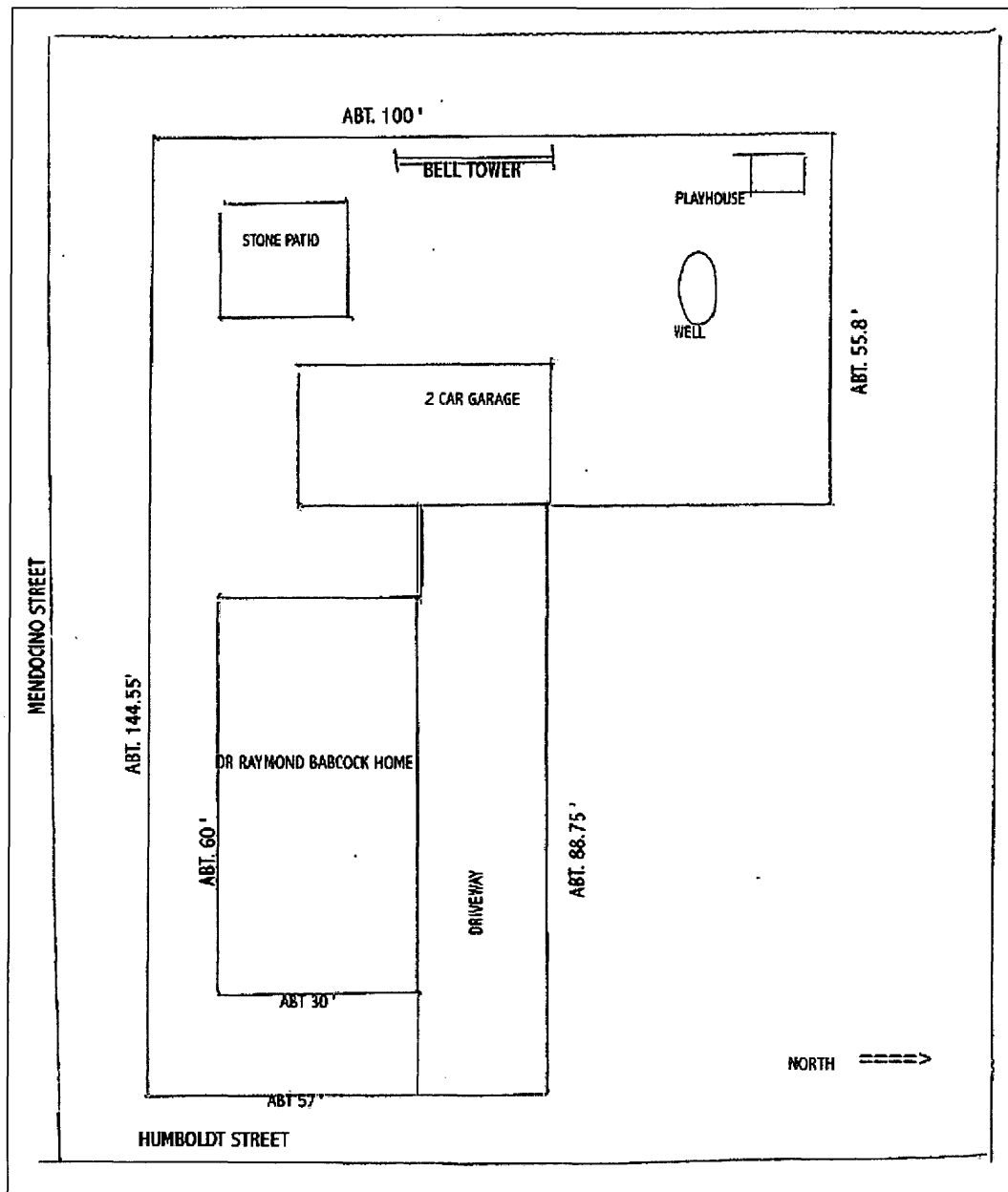
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Additional Documentation - Sketch Map of Site

Not to scale. Distances are approximate. Drawn by Cindy Taylor, 2003.



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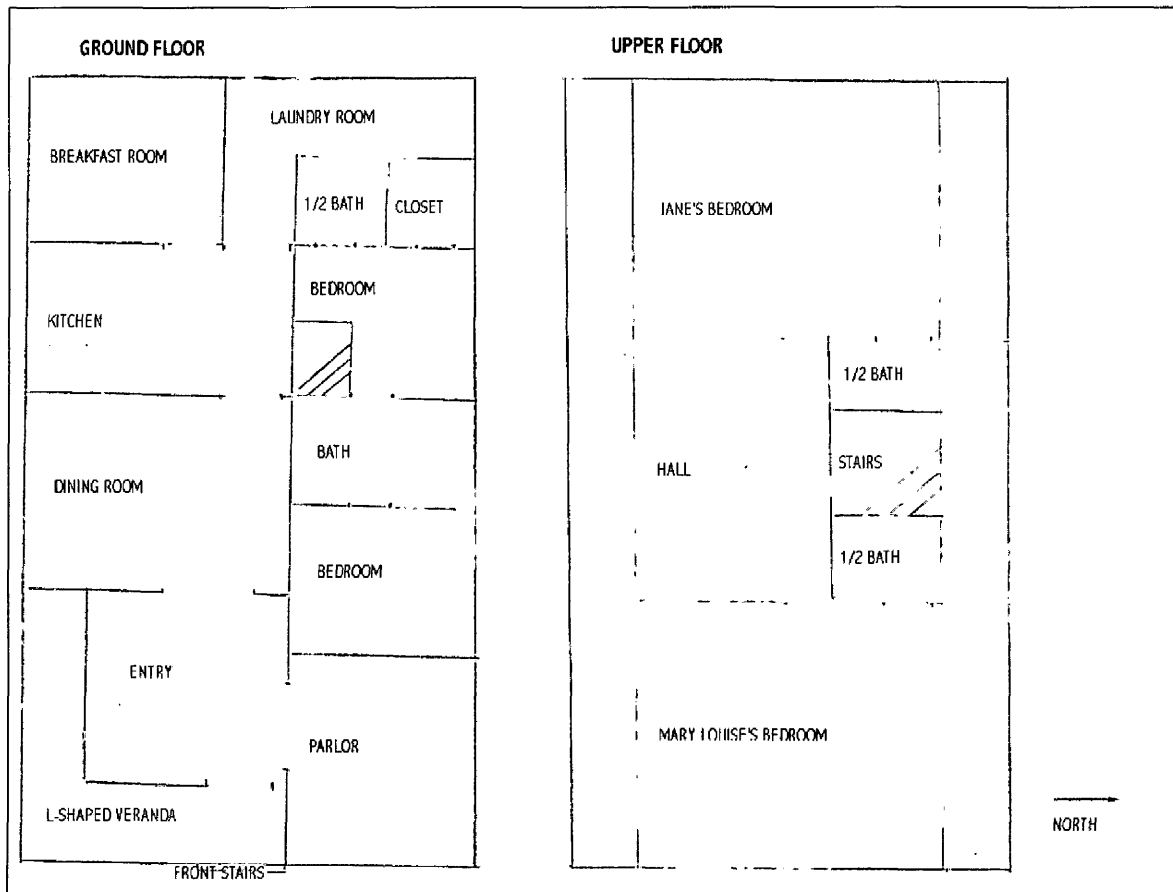
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Additional Documentation - Floor Plan

Sketch Map – Floor Plan of 96 So. Humboldt Street



Note: NOT TO SCALE. House is approximately 30' wide by 60' long.

Drawn By: Cindy Taylor
Date: October 2003

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Section number 11 Page 6 Additional Documentation - Photograph Record

Photograph Record 1 – DR. RAYMOND BABCOCK HOME

Camera Format: Canon Powershot G2 Digital Camera. All digital image photographs taken by recorder in June and July 2003.

Mo.	Day	Time	Exp./Frame	Subject/Description	View Toward
07	19	10 AM	1/640	1. Front of home facing Humboldt Street.	west
06	20	10 AM	1/400	2a. Divided pane windows of breakfast room, kitchen and dining room bay on Mendocino Street side of home.	northeast
06	20	10 AM	1/400	2b. Mendocino side with windows, veranda.	north
06	20	10 AM	1/200	3. Back yard of home showing shed where former 'hospital' was located behind house.	east
06	20	10 AM	1/640	4. Front & driveway on north side of home.	southwest
06	20	10 AM	1/320	5a. Front entry of Dr. Babcock Home.	west
06	20	10 AM	1/50	5b. Detail of screen door, "Dr. Babcock."	west
07	19	4 PM	1/400	6. Childrens' playhouse & well in back yard.	northwest
06	20	10 AM	1/320	7a. Redwood fence along Mendocino Street side of home.	(north) west
06	20	11 AM	1/60	7b. Redwood visible in eaves of attic.	Interior
06	20	10 AM	1/500	8a. Babcock Bell Tower.	west
06	20	10 AM	1/500	8b. Willits & Santa Rosa Town Bells.	West
06	20	11 AM	1/60	9a. Upstairs hallway, detail of stair railings.	Interior
06	20	11 AM	1/60	9b. Art Deco hardware, redwood door detail.	Interior
07	19	10 AM	1/30	10a. Parlor of Dr. Babcock Home.	Interior (northeast)
06	20	11 AM	1/60	10b. Kitchen of Dr. Babcock Home.	Interior (south)

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Photo 1



**Front of Dr. Raymond Babcock Home at 96 South Humboldt St., Willits.
Facing West.**

Recorded by Cindy Taylor, 2003

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Photos 2 A & B



A. Mendocino Street Side of home showing divided pane windows in breakfast room, kitchen, and dining room bay. Facing northeast.



B. Mendocino Street Side of home showing dining room bay and veranda with its roof detail. Facing north.

Recorded by Cindy Taylor, 2003

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Photo 3



Back yard of the Dr. Raymond Babcock Home showing the area where Dr. Babcock's one room 'hospital' was formerly located and in use from 1919-1928. Facing east.

Recorded by Cindy Taylor, 2003

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Photo 4



Front and driveway of Dr. Raymond Babcock Home. Showing double gable and soffits. Facing Southwest.

Recorded by Cindy Taylor, 2003

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Photos 5 A & B



A. Front Entry of Dr. Raymond Babcock Home. L-shaped veranda extends around to left.



B. Detail of screen door on front entry of Dr. Raymond Babcock Home at 96 So. Humboldt St.

Recorded by Cindy Taylor, 2003

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Photo 6



Children's playhouse and working "Wishing Well" in yard of Dr. Raymond Babcock Home.
Facing northwest.

Recorded by Cindy Taylor, 2003

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Photo 7 A & B



A. Redwood fence along Mendocino Street at Dr. Raymond Babcock Home. Facing (North) West.



B. Redwood also visible in eaves of the attic in Dr. Raymond Babcock Home.

Recorded by Cindy Taylor, 2003

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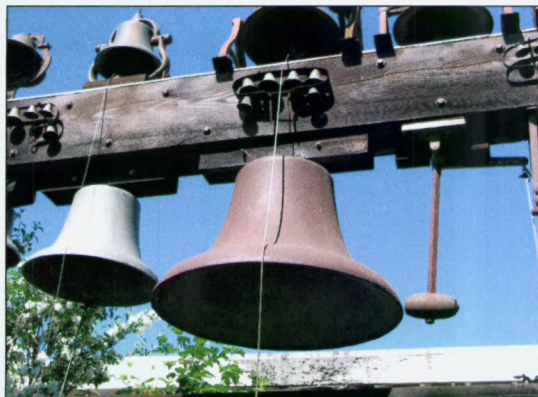
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Photos 8 A & B



A. Dr. Raymond Babcock's Bell Collection was gathered from 1930-1960. The Bell Tower was designed and built by Dr. Babcock and his wife Bonnie in 1945 and rebuilt "to the quarter inch" by Dr. Babcock's daughter and son-in-law in 1984.



B. The largest bells in the Babcock Collection are the Willits Town Bell and the Santa Rosa Town Bell, est. at 1200 pounds.
Recorded by Cindy Taylor, 2003

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Photo 9 A & B



A. Detail of custom-made stair railing, part of the early 1930s remodel when second floor was added by Dr. Babcock. Some of his Pomo Indian basket collection can be seen here.



B. Art Deco Hardware and redwood doors are found throughout the home.

Recorded by Cindy Taylor, 2003

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A. Parlor of Dr. Raymond Babcock Home.



B. Kitchen of Dr. Raymond Babcock Home.

Recorded by Cindy Taylor, 2003

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Additional Documentation – Photograph Record

Photograph Record 2 – DR. RAYMOND BABCOCK BIOGRAPHY

THESE PHOTOGRAPHS ARE SCANNED FROM PRINTS IN THE AKINS-BABCOCK FAMILY COLLECTION. USED WITH PERMISSION OF GEORGE AKINS. DATES ARE ESTIMATED.

Subject/Description	Estimated Date
11. Dr. Raymond Babcock with one of his ambulances in Willits, California.	c. 1920s/30s.
12. E.K. Safford, Ridgewood Ranch Foreman, Charles S. Howard, Seabiscuit, and Dr. Raymond Babcock, Ridgewood Ranch.	c. 1939
13. Dr. Raymond Babcock on his palomino in a Frontier Days Parade, 4 th of July, Willits.	c. 1950s.
14. Dr. Raymond Babcock in top hat and buggy, Frontier Days Parade, 4 th of July, Willits.	c. 1930s or 1940s.

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Photo 11



**Dr. Raymond Babcock and one of his ambulances, c. 1920s - 1930s.
Willits News photo by Rena Lynn-Moore from Akins-Babcock Family Collection.**

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Photo 12



E.K. Safford, Foreman of Ridgewood Ranch, Charles S. Howard, Seabiscuit, and Dr. Raymond Babcock. c. 1939. Ridgewood Ranch, California. Photo from Akins-Babcock Family Collection.

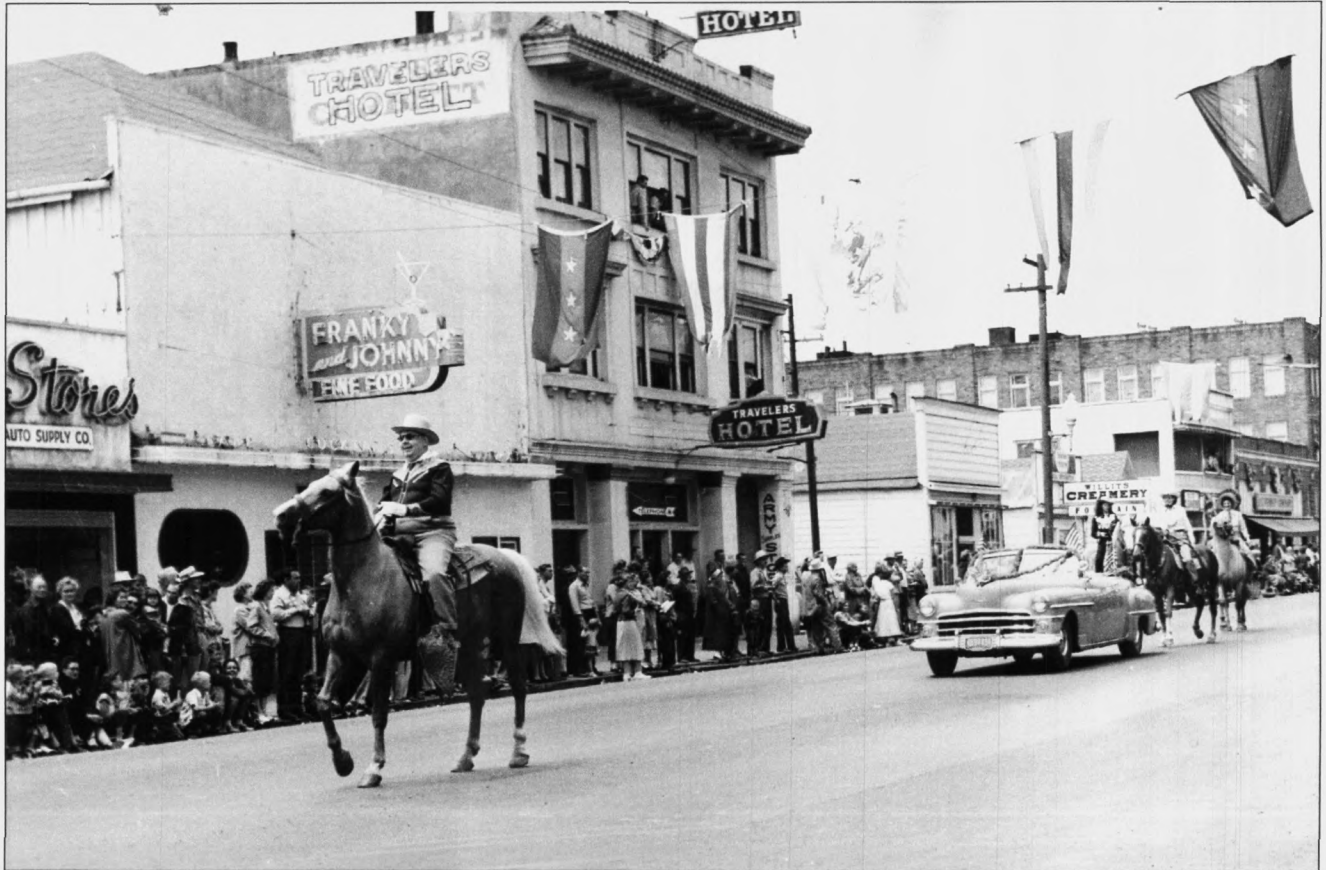
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Photo 13



Dr. Raymond Babcock riding in Frontier Days Parade on the 4th of July in Willits, c. 1950s.
Photo from Akins-Babcock Family Collection.

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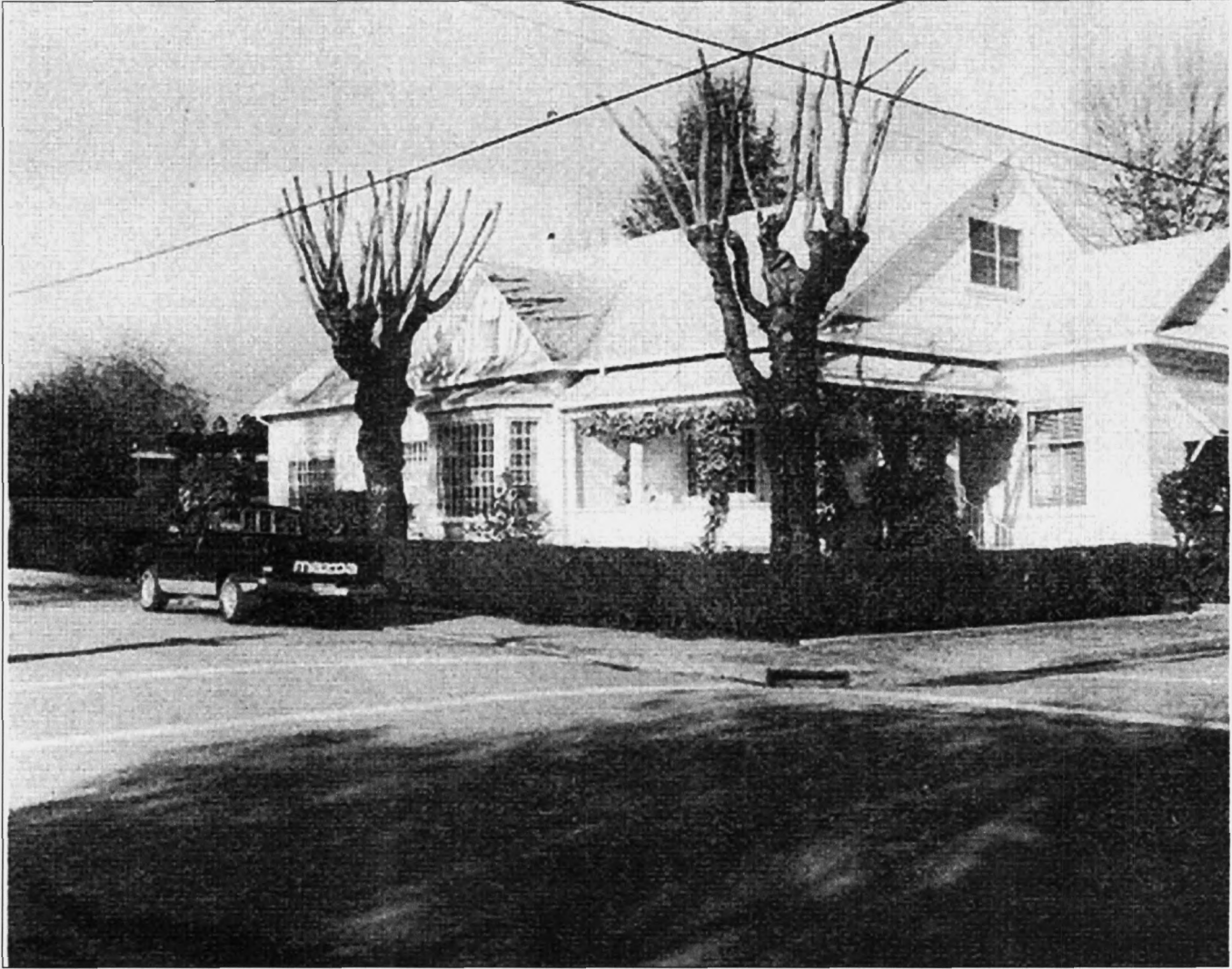
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Photo 14



**Dr. Raymond Babcock in top hat riding in buggy in Frontier Days 4th of July Parade in Willits,
c. 1930s or 1940s.**

Photo from Akins-Babcock Family Collection.



Dr. Raymond Babcock Home

Photograph of home from collection at Mendocino County Museum, Willits, California, featured in "The Architectural Heritage of Willits" published by the city of Willits in 1988, page 33.

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National Park Service**

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Babcock Home, Mendocino County, CA

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Black and white photos:

All photos taken by Cindy Taylor in December, 2003. Location of negative: 812 Rosemount Road, Oakland, CA 94610

Photo 1: Facing southwest

Photo 2: Facing west

Photo 3: Facing northwest

Photo 4: Facing east

Photo 5: Facing north

Photo 6: Former location of "home hospital" ; now part of the backyard garden

Photo 7: Bell collection

Photo 8: Wishing well in backyard

Photo 9: Playhouse in backyard with sign from Dr.'s old office