

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JUN 13 1975
DATE ENTERED SEP 25 1975

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Wilson Creek State Bank - Citizens State Bank

AND/OR COMMON

Wilson Creek State Bank [Preferred]

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Wilson Creek

STATE

WA

— VICINITY OF
CODE
53

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#4 - Hon. Mike McCormack

COUNTY

Grant

CODE

025

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER Storage

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

E. Roy Mundy

STREET & NUMBER

156 - 1st N.W.

CITY, TOWN

Ephrata

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Washington

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Grant County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

"C" Street N.W.

CITY, TOWN

Ephrata

STATE

Washington

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Washington State Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

1974

— FEDERAL STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

CITY, TOWN

Olympia

STATE

Washington

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Wilson Creek Bank is an abandoned one story corner entrance brick bank building in the town of Wilson Creek, 25 miles northeast of Ephrata, the county seat. Wilson Creek is located near the geographic center of Eastern Washington in a valley surrounded by sagebrush covered hills with rock outcroppings. For years this was primarily ranch and open range country, although irrigation has since brought wheat farming to the area.

The Wilson Creek State Bank Building was constructed in 1906 on a corner lot in the town's diminutive business district. It is a small and compact structure that once housed a one-room bank and a lawyer's office. In plan the building is almost square except that the corner toward the street intersection is truncated to provide a short diagonal wall surface wide enough for the double doors of the main entrance. The roof is almost flat with a low parapet and cornice on the street front facades concealing its slight pitch. On the cornice is a row of dentils and below it along the parapet is a continuous frieze. The front facades are surfaced with two colors of hard fired face brick with a cast stone belt course and lintels over the doors and windows. The walls in back are apparently built from softer construction-grade bricks with segmental brickwork arched doors and windows.

In front, beginning at the foundation, the brickwork is recessed about an inch every fifth course to suggest the linear joints of stone construction. These bricks are dark red, and are separated by a grey belt course from the remaining two-thirds of the wall above. The upper section is light tan brick with red brick at the corners to imitate quoins. At the corner entrance truncation, the transition from the main walls to the diagonal surface is made without cutting bricks to fit the angle. The resulting voids look somewhat like a zipper.

Facing the main street in front there are two pairs of multipane double hung windows each separated by narrow brick mullions. These rest with their sills on the belt course. On the side street there is a similar pair of windows, and in place of the second pair toward the back there is a doorway flanked by single double hung windows of the same type. This is the entrance to the lawyer's office.

Above the transom and double doors of the main entrance is a sign flat against the wall that reads WILSON CREEK STATE BANK. The concrete steps to the entrance are progressively narrower toward the top. Their ends are curved and return to the brick walls. A flagpole is centered on the cornice directly above the doorway. There are two rear entrances, one for the lawyer's office and another for the bank portion of the building.

The interior of the bank is a single room plus the vault. The public area is separated from the teller's cage and bank officer's desk by an "L" shaped counter with translucent glass and ironwork screens. This room contains the original coal stove heater and hanging bare-bulb light fixtures with circular reflectors assembled from trapezoidal pieces of flat mirror. The lawyer's office consists of two rooms, one for the barrister and the other for his receptionist.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1906

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The town of Wilson Creek was once a railroad division point on the Great Northern line from Spokane to Seattle. The railroad had located its roundhouse and maintenance shops there in the early 1890's. On an almost vacant townsite with few inherent qualities other than water and sagebrush, a thriving community grew almost overnight. A number of homes and businesses were built by the turn of the century making Wilson Creek the largest city in Grant County when the county was created in 1909.

The first bank in Wilson Creek was chartered in 1890 as the Citizens State Bank. In 1906 the bank let a contract for the construction of a new brick building for a total cost of \$6,000 including fixtures. The bank was sold with the building, furnishings and accounts receivable in 1912 to the newly organized Wilson Creek State Bank for \$60,228. In 1929, the Wilson Creek Bank increased its capital stock from \$15,000 to \$25,000.

The bank was held up and robbed by a lone gunman in about 1915. The robber was Babe Pruitt, a resident of the area and a man well-known by the townspeople. He fled on foot, and a posse was formed to bring him to justice. He was cornered at the foot of a rock cliff on the east side of the Wilson Creek Swamp. There he was shot and killed.

The bank was again robbed in 1933 by two men named Conway and Davis. They appeared at the bank early in the morning as Fred Mordhorst, the cashier, was opening for business. They forced Mordhorst into the vault at gunpoint and tied him up. Mordhorst pointed out a large amount of silver in sacks, thinking that this would weigh down the bandits and impede their getaway. They fled in a waiting automobile parked across the street, but took the wrong turn onto a dead end road that led to Willow Springs. There they abandoned the car and took to the hills on foot -- across the Coulee to Pinto Ridge.

Mordhorst freed himself from the vault and called the sheriff. But the robbers were long gone and they eluded Morgan Porter, Sheriff and Deputy Vern Adams. During the night Conway and Davis walked to Coulee City and stole a car. They were later apprehended in Spokane and then tried and convicted in Superior Court of armed bank robbery. During their getaway, they stashed the money and it was never recovered. After serving out sentences in Walla Walla State Prison, they were seen by a farmer returning to the hills where they had travelled on foot -- but the local population had already combed the area and it is not known who, if anyone, ever found the stolen money.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Miscellaneous interviews and records in the Office of the Washington State Supervisor of Banking.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM REF OK w.m.
10-6-75

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 1	34, 00, 5, 0	5, 215, 41, 5, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Jacob E. Thomas, Historic Preservation Specialist

ORGANIZATION

Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission

DATE

May 12, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 1128

TELEPHONE

(206) 753-4116

CITY OR TOWN

Olympia

STATE

Washington

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Charles H. Odegaard

TITLE

Executive Director - Charles H. Odegaard

DATE

June 9, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

9/25/75

ATTEST:

Ronald W. Greenberg

DATE

9/24/75

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

The building is now boarded up. Most of the windows were broken out at one time, and much of the plaster has fallen from the ceiling. All the brickwork is in need of repointing, and in back the bricks themselves are deteriorating. However the bank is virtually unaltered, and many of the fixtures remain in place.



The bank vault still contains box after box of records dating to 1890 -- land patents, railroad land grants, cashiers checks, wills, mortgages and 500 penny postcards with three color portraits of President McKinley. Also in the vault is evidence used in the trial of Conway and Davis including such things as the rope and wire used to tie up the cashier. Most of these materials are being transferred to Washington State University for storage and indexing.

The Wilson Creek State Bank left Wilson Creek in 1935 after the Great Northern closed its maintenance operations there. The bank moved to Ephrata, taking with it their cash on hand of \$3,500. The first day's operation in Ephrata brought in \$5,000 in new deposits.

The abandoned building in Wilson Creek survives as a fairly complete example of the structures built by small, independent banks during the early development of cities in the more inhospitable interior regions of Eastern Washington. There is a number of these bank buildings remaining that are very similar in many respects including the corner entrance, but most are altered on the interior. Although somewhat deteriorated the Wilson Creek Bank retains many of its original fixtures. The bank and its records are representative of the important role of banking institutions in the growth and development of small cities.

