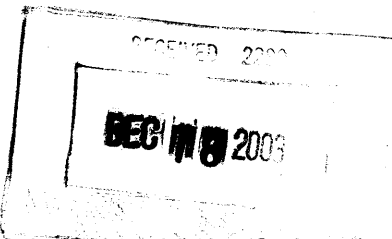


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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 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 10-9000a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Wilson Downtown Historic District #3 - Southside
Other name/site number _____

2. Location

Street & number 400 block of 27th Street aka Old Highway 40 not for publication
City or town Wilson vicinity
State Kansas Code KS County Ellsworth Code 053 Zip code 67490

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.)

Richard D. Parkatz DSHPD 12-15-03
Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____
Kansas State Historical Society

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 official /Title _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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:)

Edson W. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action 1/28/04

Wilson Downtown Historic District #3 - Southside
Name of property

Ellsworth County, Kansas
County and State

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	
6	2	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
6	2	total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter Categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: music facility, sports facility,
theater and auditorium

COMMERCE: specialty store and department store

SOCIAL: meeting hall

HEALTH CARE: medical business/office

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: auditorium and museum

COMMERCE: specialty store

SOCIAL: meeting hall

HEALTH CARE: medical business/office

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: ~~No subcategory~~; Italianate;
and Queen Anne
LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY AMERICAN
MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style

~~No Style~~

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation LIMESTONE, CONCRETE

walls LIMESTONE, BRICK, WOOD, METAL

roof METAL, ASPHALT, SYNTHETIC

other LIMESTONE, BRICK, METAL

Narrative Description

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

Downtown Wilson Historic District #3 – Southside
Name of Property

Ellsworth County, Kansas
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register)

- 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 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 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)

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1887-1905

1925-1935

Significant Dates

1887, 1905, 1925

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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:

Wilson Czech Opera House Museum

Wilson Downtown Historic District #3 – Southside
Name of Property

Ellsworth County, Kansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property Approximately 1.25 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	4	5	4	5	6	5	0	4	2	9	7	4	4	1	3	1	4	5	4	5	7	2	7	4	2	9	7	3	6	1	
	Zone		Easting			Northing			Zone		Easting			Northing																		
2	1	4	5	4	5	7	3	8	4	2	9	7	4	2	0	4																
	Zone		Easting			Northing			Zone		Easting			Northing																		
3	1	4	5	4	5	6	4	5	4	2	9	7	3	7	1																	
	Zone		Easting			Northing			Zone		Easting			Northing																		
4	1	4	5	4	5	6	4	5	4	2	9	7	3	7	1																	
	Zone		Easting			Northing			Zone		Easting			Northing																		

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 Brenda R. Spencer

Organization Preservation Consultant Date 22 August, 2003

Street & number 10150 Onaga Road Telephone 785-456-9857

City or town Wamego State Kansas Zip code 66547

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 SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name See Continuation Sheet

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Wilson Downtown Historic District #3 – Southside
Ellsworth County, Kansas

Section Number 7 Page 1

DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

Location, Setting, and Configuration

The Wilson Downtown Historic District #3 – Southside is located in the City of Wilson, Ellsworth County, Kansas. Wilson is a rural community of approximately 800 in population situated about one and a half miles north of the Smoky Hill River in central Kansas. The community is located between Salina and Russell, just off of Interstate 70 in the northwest corner of Ellsworth County.

The City of Wilson is bisected by the Union Pacific Railroad (running southeast /northwest). The town proper is situated on the west half of the northeast quarter of Section 19, Township 14, Range 10. The city limits are generally bounded by 21st Street on the north and 31st Street on the south; it extends from Avenue B on the east to Avenue J on the west, north of the tracks, from Avenue D on the east, and Avenue H on the west, south of the tracks. The district is part of Wilson's central business district, the sole concentration of commercial businesses in the City which is primarily located along Main Street (formerly known as Michigan Avenue and Avenue E) and Old U.S. Highway 40 (aka 27th Street and formerly known as Front Street). The central business district too, is bisected by the railroad tracks separating the commercial area into two parts north and south of the tracks. The railroad tracks create a physical separation within the commercial area that is emphasized by the fact that the railroad right-of-way extends a full city block parallel to the tracks. There are numerous structures located on the railroad right-of-way in the block west of Main Street, comprised primarily of grain elevators. The right-of-way on the east side of Main Street is the former location of the depot (demolished in the 1980s); the land is now vacant. The grain elevators and vacant land that comprise the railroad right-of-way present a sharp contrast to the commercial structures located on Main Street, north of the tracks and along Highway 40, south of the tracks. The railroad tracks and right-of-way is a dominant geographic feature that serves to define three distinct parts of the commercial area in downtown Wilson. The downtown historic districts follow this same definition.

Wilson Downtown Historic District #1 – Main Street is approximately four blocks (nine acres) in area, bordered on the south by 26th Street (the north edge of the railroad property). Wilson Downtown Historic District #2 – Soukup Grain Elevator is located on the railroad right-of-way on the west side of Main Street, between the two commercial areas. Wilson Downtown Historic District #3 – Southside is comprised of one block (1.25 acres), the remaining concentration of historic commercial buildings that comprised the "Southside" business district in downtown Wilson since the 1880s. This district is bordered on the east by Main Street and on the north by Old Highway 40. A number of contemporary metal buildings are located west of Main Street and the railroad right-of-way is located north of the district. There are no structures on the railroad right-of-way east of Main Street, north of this district. The district is surrounded by a residential neighborhood on the south.

The Union Pacific Railroad bisects the City of Wilson (and the central business district), running southeast to northwest. The city is platted on a basic grid pattern that follows the railroad in the south half of the city (the grid jogs to a true N/S/E/W grid at 24th Street on the north and Avenue D on the east, in the Main Street Historic District). Old Highway 40 was originally called Front Street and is currently known as 27th Street. The streets in downtown Wilson were renamed; the historic and current names are noted on the attached maps. Current names are used throughout except when using historic references.

The Southside business district historically extended one block on each side of Main Street. However, there are only two existing historic commercial buildings west of Main Street, south of Highway 40. The majority of historic structures have been lost and replaced by contemporary metal buildings. Due to the lack of contiguous historic buildings west of Main Street, the Southside historic district is comprised of a single block east of Main Street, encompassing the only contiguous grouping of historic commercial buildings remaining on the Southside.

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Wilson Downtown Historic District #3 – Southside
Ellsworth County, Kansas

Section Number 7 Page 2

U.S. Highway 40 was paved in 1934. The Southside historic district is comprised of one block, located Southeast of the intersection of Old U.S. Highway 40 and Main Street. The block is 400 feet in length and is bisected by a 20' wide gravel alley that runs east/west at mid-block. The block includes sixteen lots each 25' x 150'. Eight buildings were constructed in this block between 1887 and the mid-1930s. The commercial buildings occupy rectangular lots that vary in width, loosely based on 20-25' increments. The layout of the district does follow that of traditional historic commercial areas. The front facades maintain a common setback, abutting a public sidewalk and the buildings typically occupy the full width of the lots, generally sharing party walls with adjacent buildings. A vacant lot is located at the east end of the block; no record could be found to document the presence of a building(s) on this site (the lot is not included in the district boundary). The district maintains its historic density, achieving its existing configuration by the mid-1930s. The district's setting and configuration of buildings reflect its late nineteenth and early twentieth century development. The total count of resources in the district is eight. Of the eight resources, there are six contributing buildings, 75% of the total resources.

Historic Associations

In its heyday, the Southside offered all basic goods and services including grocery, drug, hardware, implements, a bank and hotel, matching most basic goods provided on Main Street, north of the tracks. The district was historically comprised of a variety of commercial uses including an implement dealership, grocery, hardware, furniture, a drug store, automobile dealerships, a monument business and a bank. One of the most prominent uses in the block was Turner Hall, the Opera House which also served as a meeting hall for three area Bohemian Lodges. The composition of the district today is representative of its historic functions retaining its historic diversity of uses. The specific nature of commercial uses has shifted away from primary goods such as groceries and hardware to include secondary services and recreational uses. Some of the properties are vacant and others underutilized.

Physical Description

The district properties include eight buildings constructed between 1887 and the mid 1930s. The majority, five of the properties (63%), are two story stone buildings constructed between 1887 and 1905. The remaining three buildings are one story structures constructed around 1930. There are two non-contributing properties; only one of which is non-contributing due to loss of integrity. The other non-contributing structure is a block building constructed circa 1930 on the east end of the block; the building is non-descript and clearly distinguished from surrounding buildings by its construction materials and lack of stylistic influences.

Buildings in the district have two predominant building materials, native limestone and brick. The majority of buildings constructed in downtown Wilson between 1880 and 1905 were built of 'greenhorn' limestone, quarried from one of many local quarries. These buildings were two stories in height and represented the first permanent commercial buildings constructed in the community. Decorative elements on these limestone buildings included cut or tooled stone, pressed metal (and some wood) cornices, pressed metal window hoods and some cast iron columns on storefronts. After 1905, the dominant building material throughout downtown Wilson was brick (although some buildings were constructed of stone or block with a brick facade). The first brick buildings broke the former tradition of using native stone as the dominant construction material and represented the transition to one-story commercial buildings. There were no buildings constructed along Highway 40 between 1905 and the late 1920s although the commercial area along Main Street did experience limited construction activity during this time. It was not until around 1930 that the Southside experienced the second phase of construction activity that extended from the early 1900s until 1953 in downtown Wilson as a whole. Throughout this period, ornamental features on the brick buildings including limestone detailing, corbelled brick cornices, and later, some variation in brick color and patterns created by using two colors of brick. With few exceptions, the date of construction before or after 1905, determined the dominant building material (limestone or brick) and the date of construction before or after the mid-1920s determined the height (1 story or 2-story) of the buildings in downtown Wilson.

Architectural Type and Style

The majority of structures in the district are commercial building designs with subtle stylistic references, typical of small, rural Kansas downtowns. Stylistically, the early commercial structures would be best categorized by the term vernacular.

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**National Register of Historic Places
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Wilson Downtown Historic District #3 – Southside
Ellsworth County, Kansas

Section Number 7 Page 3

The most distinguishing characteristic of the commercial buildings constructed between 1880 and 1905 in downtown Wilson is the use of native limestone as the primary construction material. As is typical in most rural Midwest communities, the design of buildings is influenced heavily by the availability of products and materials. This does not infer that the buildings are void of the influence of architectural styles popular throughout the nation. However, the stylistic influences are often limited in their application and rarely are the most distinguishing characteristic of the building's design. Building designs are commonly influenced not only by available regional materials such as the native stone in Wilson, but also the readily available products such as cast iron columns, windows and metal cornices that were mass produced and readily available for order.

The Southside commercial buildings fall into two stylistic classifications. The vast majority, five buildings, or approximately two-thirds of the district's commercial structures, are examples of high style architecture and fall under the Late Victorian classification. The majority of these structures are Italianate style and feature elements characteristic of the style including pressed metal cornices, often with paired brackets, arched window openings and/or decorative lintels, as well as some cast iron storefront columns. The most ornate building in the district, Zeman Drug, is a classic example of the Late Victorian style with its use of ornamental pressed metal and cast iron on the upper facade, very similar to the Shermerhorn and Lang Building on Main Street. The Opera House demonstrates Italianate influences on the upper facade but clearly incorporates Queen Ann influences on the lower facade as illustrated by the tripartite windows and arched openings. Similarly, the Weber Peirano Building on the corner combines the Italianate influence with a colonnade of Romanesque arched openings on the upper facade that was characteristic of modern commercial design in larger cities as early as the 1870s. This prevalent combination of architectural styles is characteristic of vernacular architecture and quite common in rural historic commercial districts. All of the stylistic influences fall under the Late Victorian classification.

Two of the district's commercial structures, both constructed around 1930, are characteristic of the Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movement Commercial Style. These buildings are both one story buildings with brick facades distinguished by their general lack of ornamentation, limited to subtle brick detailing. There is one final, non-descript property that must be given a "No Style" classification because it lacks obvious stylistic influences and does not fall within any of the standard stylistic classifications.

Property Listing

Identification of building names and numbers, date of construction and contributing/non-contributing

#	Name	Address	1880-1905	1906-1953	Contributing
1	Weber Peirano Building	2711 Main Street	1904		C
2	Cobb Ford Agency	2715 Main Street		c.1930	C
3	F.Zeman Building	427 27 th Street	1887		C
4	Tampier Building	423 27 th Street	1887		C
5	Tampier Building-Legion	419 27 th Street	1905		NC
6	Wilson Czech Opera House	415 27 th Street	1901		C
7	Weber/Warta Motor Co.	411 27 th Street		c.1930	C
8	Thompson Monument Bldg.	409 27 th Street		c.1930	NC

**United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Wilson Downtown Historic District #3 – Southside
Ellsworth County, Kansas

Section Number 7 Page 4

ELABORATION

Properties

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. Weber Peirano Building
2711 Main Street
Lot 16 & W23' of Lot 15 in Block 8, Original Township & Bosland Addition | Contributing |
|--|---------------------|

Date of Construction: 1904

Current Function: VACANT

Architectural Classification: LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

Documentation: Figures #1-4; Photos #1-4, and 10.

Description: Built in 1904, this large two story building is constructed of native stone and is among the last of the two story buildings constructed in downtown Wilson. Located on a prominent corner (Highway 40 and Main Street), the building is a two part vertical block commercial structure distinguished by the arcade of large vaulted window openings on the upper facade. Stylistically, the building has Italianate influences as evidenced by the storefront bays and metal cornice. The overall building design and in particular the upper facade is representative of the influence of modern commercial building design such as that occurring in Chicago following the fire in 1872. This influence is indicated by the colonnaded Romanesque arches that create a vertical component to the two story building and the steel upper windows. With segmented stone arched surrounds, the original upper floor windows were a unique style; the center portion was a large double hung window with an arched fixed transom flanked by sidelights with horizontal members that did not line up with the horizontal members of the center window. All upper level window openings were blocked-in as a result of the 1963 remodeling, downsized to accommodate a small square window in the center of each opening. The building is capped by an ornamental metal cornice with a gabled pediment at the center of the north and west facades inscribed "1904." A simple metal frieze extends below the cornice and has ornamental lion heads at each pilaster; it is inscribed "Weber & Peirano" at each entry bay. Three courses of stone divide the upper and lower facades. The symmetrical facades are defined by the stone piers, forming the arcade of window openings on the upper facade dividing the facades into multiple vertical bays - three bays on the front facade, seven bays on the west facade. The center bay on the front (north) facade is a recessed entrance. On the west facade, the central bay is a garage door (built as an implement dealership). The limestone base, spans between the piers to form the bulkhead. Large display windows with three pane transoms are in place. Exposed steel beams span each bay above the transom and it appears that the transom glass has been painted. Individual metal slat awnings are in place beneath the transom at each bay on the west facade. The storefront bays appear to reflect their original configuration and materials. In the 1930s, a one story brick structure was built at the southwest corner of the building to serve as a garage for the Cobb Ford Agency. The new addition shared the south wall of the original building. For the purpose of this nomination, the one story brick "addition" is treated as a separate structure— See Property listing #2.

History: The Weber Peirano was constructed in 1904 and stands today as a representative of early commerce in the community and native stone architecture. However, the predecessor to the existing building on this site was also a prominent building in Wilson's history. The Wilson House/Hotel which stood unfinished south of the tracks, opposite the depot, was completed in 1875 by A.J. Jellison and later traded to Isaac Wilson. The large and substantial stone building may have been the first two-story stone building in Wilson. The Wilson House became an early stopping place for settlers and travelers, and was quite popular with the railroad workers. C.J. Claussen came to Wilson in 1877 and took charge of the Wilson Hotel, which became known as Pop Claussen's. John Tobias, also arrived in Wilson in 1877 and engaged in the general merchandise business out of the hotel building. The fate of the original structure (The Wilson House) is unclear; the property was sold by Wilson to Frank Zeman in 1893 (Zeman built his drug store east of this building around the same time). In 1904 Zeman sold the property to Nick Weber and Andy Peirano. It is unclear if the original building was in place at the time of either sale.

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Continuation Sheet**

Wilson Downtown Historic District #3 – Southside
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Nick Weber and Andy Peirano built the existing building in 1904. The building was built to serve a variety of functions, primarily a hardware and implement dealership. A large freight elevator/left was installed in the building to accommodate large implements on the second floor. Weber and Peirano also dealt in coal and grain, owning the elevator south of the tracks, just north of this building (1902 elevator ad in *The Wilson Echo*). At the time the building was constructed, Weber and Peirano also formed the Farmer's State Bank. In the September 15th edition of *The Wilson Echo*, a notice was published that, "A new bank was to be started – The Farmer's Bank, with a temporary location in the storeroom of the elevator... The bank will be moved to the new building on the corner when it is completed." The first ad for the bank ran the following week - Nick Weber served as president; Andy Peirano as Vice-President and directors included John Weber, Frank Zeman (owner of Zeman Drug), and W.F. Sekavec (owner of Sekavec Grocery) – all prominent Southside businessmen. A 1905 ad for Weber/Peirano advertised furniture, hardware, farm vehicles and implements. By 1914, Peirano was no longer involved in the enterprise; the building was called the Weber block and the businesses were under the ownership of the Weber Co. An April 9, 1914 article in *The Ellsworth Reporter* stated that Weber Co. operated the largest enterprise in Wilson including lumber, grain elevators, coal yards, an electric light plant and, through this building, were selling hardware, implements, vehicles, saddlery and auto lines. An advertisement in the same paper featured the 1914 Maxwell automobile, available at Weber Co. (In 1925 that Leo Weber rented the storeroom of John Rezabek on Main Street, and opened Weber Motor Co. to sell Essex and Hudson automobiles; they apparently moved from this location at that time).

Ten years after being referred to as the largest enterprise in Wilson, on October 1, 1925, a headline in *The Wilson World*, announced the closing of Farmers State Bank, noting that a special examiner of the State Bank Commission closed the bank after an investigation. The article went on to say that the bank was a closed corporation, the stock being held in the Weber family with the exception of James Wesely, who was the only outside director. Nick Weber was the President and Henry W. Weber, the cashier. The closure was a severe blow to the community. The following week, on October 8th, it was announced that Henry Weber (the cashier), had been arrested for embezzlement. There were no advertisements in the local paper for any of the Weber Co. businesses for a couple of months but on December 3, 1925, a Weber Co. ad was back in, advertising the hardware/implement store. In January of 1926, it was announced that Henry Weber had plead guilty to eleven counts of embezzlement; he was later sentenced to a prison term. On March 25th, 1926, an advertisement in *The Wilson World* announced that Schwartz Brothers (Michael and George) had purchased the Farmers Elevator Company, including their entire stock of hardware, farm implements and farm supplies. The notice also stated that Mr. Veat Dolecek, had consented to remain with Schwarz (Dolecek later owned and operated Dolecek Implement out of this building). It appears that the elevator and farming side of the business was separated from the hardware. The following month, it was announced that Weber Co. had gone into the hands of a receiver and that an auditor was taking inventory. Nick Weber was still manager of the store at this time. The article stated that when the affairs had been straightened out, the receiver would be discharged and the store would go back into the hands of Weber Co. (4/22/1926). The August 19th edition of the local paper carried an ad for the reopening sale (Weber Co.). By late 1927, the name of the business had changed to Weber Hardware and Furniture Co. and sometime after the closure of Schermerhorns in 1932, Weber Hardware moved to the Schermerhorn Building at the north end of Main Street.

By 1948, the building was occupied by Murphy Implement, and later by Dolecek Implement (International Dealership). In 1964 Jerry Klema of Klema IGA, bought the building from Dolecek and turned the building into the Wilson Recreation Center offering bowling, skating and a cafe. The recreation center closed last year and the building is now vacant. It was recently purchased and the new owner is said to have plans to reopen the recreation center.

Integrity: The building is significant as a representative of two-story native stone commercial buildings constructed during the district's first period significance. The building stands in a prominent location at the corner of Highway 40 and Main Street in downtown Wilson and housed major Southside businesses throughout its nearly 100 year history. The only significant alteration is the blocking- in/ downsizing of the upper floor windows which is a reversible treatment. The original configuration is evident on the entire building and intact on the ground floor. The building still conveys its original commercial associations and retains a high degree of architectural integrity. It is a contributing property to the district.

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Wilson Downtown Historic District #3 – Southside
Ellsworth County, Kansas

Section Number 7 Page 6

- 2. Cobb Ford Agency** **Contributing**
2715 Main Street
Lot 16 & W23' of Lot 15 in Block 8, Original Township & Bosland Addition (Included in legal description of #1)

Date of Construction: 1930

Current Function: VACANT

Architectural Classification: LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style

Documentation: Figures #1-4; Photos #2-4

Description: This one story block building was constructed in 1930 as an addition to the Weber Peirano building on the corner of Highway 40 and Main Street. The building has a brick facade on the front and rear of the building. The building was constructed by Rolland Cobb to serve as a garage for the Cobb Ford Agency. The structure is simple in design with a stepped parapet and simple brick cap. There is a raised brick panel on the facade below the stepped parapet in the center of the building. The facade is not representative of the traditional commercial storefronts. It is asymmetrical with a center garage door opening flanked by a single window on the north side and a single door and single window on the south. The windows are rectangular steel windows with an operable hopper panel in the center. Windows extend along the entire south side of the building. The south wall of the Weber Peirano building serves as the north wall of this building. No historic photos have been found to document the original appearance of the building. The garage door is an obvious contemporary replacement and the north window is boarded up. No other alterations are evident.

History: Rolland Cobb built this structure as an addition to the Weber Peirano Building in 1930 when he moved his car dealership – the Ford Agency from its location in the former Berger Grocery building where the Senior Center is now located. It is not clear if the Cobb Agency also occupied a portion of the Weber Peirano Building. It appears that later occupants of the corner building including Murphy and Dolecek Implement also occupied this rear addition.

Integrity: The building is significant example of the second period of significance of the district, characterized by the construction of one-story buildings with brick facades. It is representative of the impact the emergence of the automobile on this block of buildings that front U.S. Highway 40. The building retains a high degree of architectural integrity with only minor alterations evident. It is a contributing property to the district.

- 3. F. Zeman Building** **Contributing**
727 27th Street
Lot 14 & E2' of Lot 15 & W9' of N75' of Lot 13' in Block 8. Original Township & Bosland Addition

Date of Construction: 1893

Current Function: HEALTH CARE: Medical business/office

Architectural Classification: LATE VICTORIAN

Documentation: Figures #1-3; Photos #1-2, 4-5, and 10

Description: Constructed in the early 1890s, this two story building is a two part commercial block structure and is a classic example of the High Victorian era. It is distinguished by its ornamental upper facade, similar in design to the Shermerhorn and Lang Building at 25th and Main Street, also built in 1893. The style represents an increase in the amount of ornament used on a facade and the incorporation of cast iron and stamped metal on the upper facade. The building is capped by a decorative metal cornice with brackets and a gabled pediment in the center of the building inscribed with 'F.Zeman,' the original owner. The upper facade had four double hung windows framed by decorative metal pilasters and an ornamental metal frieze. The upper windows have been boarded up and at least one component of the metal cornice is missing; otherwise the upper facade resembles the original appearance. The existing storefront is a contemporary replacement. The storefront was originally a traditional configuration with an entrance to the 2nd floor on the west end and a central entrance flanked by display windows with transoms on the east. The existing storefront is

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brick and retains similar proportions and configuration as traditional storefronts, but is obviously contemporary. The existing door is a solid replacement door and the transom windows are glass block. The original openings on the rear facade have not been altered but the windows are boarded up and there is parging on some of the stone.

History: The land was sold in 1893 by James H. Wilson (Wilson House) to Frank Zeman. The date of construction is unclear, reported in appraisal records to 1887, but more likely to correspond to Zeman's ownership in 1893. Zeman was another early settler prominent in the business community of Wilson. Frank Zeman built the building and opened the drug store, known over the years as Southside Pharmacy, City Pharmacy and Zeman Pharmacy. Following Frank Zeman's death, the business was passed to his sons Del and Richard. Under their management, the drug store became affiliated with the national chain Rexall Drug. Del Zeman died and Richard went into partnership with his brother-in-law Emil Kasper. As early as the 1930s, the drug store had fountain service. The business continually operated as a drug store (by the Zeman family) for more than eighty years, closing in the late 1970s. The building was later home to a hardware store, a flower shop, beauty shop and is now a rehabilitation center.

Integrity: The building is historically and architecturally significant as one of the more ornate structures among the early permanent commercial buildings on the Southside. Although the storefront has been altered and the upper windows boarded up, the alterations reflect changes common to traditional commercial structures. Despite the alterations, the building retains a considerable degree of architectural integrity. The building was home to a prominent Southside business serving the community for more than eighty years. It is a contributing property to the district.

4. J. Tampier Building **Contributing**
423 27th Street
E24' of Lot 13 in Block 8 Original Township & Bosland Addition

Date of Construction: 1887
Current Function: VACANT
Architectural Classification: LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate
Documentation: Figures #1-3 and 5; Photos #1, 4-5, and 10.

Description: Constructed in the late 1880s, this two story structure built of native stone is a two part commercial block structure with Italianate stylistic influences. The upper facade has three double hung windows with stone sills and ornamental shaped metal hoods. The glass in the upper window has been replaced with wood panels but the windows appear to be intact. The building is capped by a metal cornice with brackets and a gabled pediment in the center inscribed '1887 J. Tampier,' the original owner. A simple metal lower cornice is in place with one of the end brackets missing. The original lower facade has four cast iron columns dividing the storefront into three bays. It had a recessed central entrance with double doors and a single pane transom. The entrance was flanked by large 2/2 display windows with no transom. Early images indicate a metal shed awning supported by wood posts. Vertical wood siding covers the transom area and the display windows have been downsized. The original openings have not been altered on the rear facade but window openings have been covered and an overhead garage door installed in the center opening on the ground level. With the cast iron columns and configuration intact, the storefront alterations are considered reversible.

History: An 1885 article in *The Wilson Echo*, stated that J.L. Tampier came to Wilson from Michigan five years ago (1880) and engaged in the grocery business on the south side of the railroad in 1884. This property was sold in 1885 by F.E. Waith to Joseph Tampier and Tampier built this building in 1887. Ads from 1889-1894 indicate that Tampier sold groceries and queensware. In the early 1900s, old phone books and postcards indicate the name changes to Tampier & Knakel and Tampier & Somer with products including grocery, queensware, hardware, and builders' supplies. By 1929, there was no Tampier listing in the phone directory. In the 1930s, Dick and Mary Soukup purchased the property and opened Southside Grocery which served the community for twenty years. Later, Klema purchased the building and

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processed chickens in the building; it also housed a bar, auto parts store (Wilson Supply), and a sporting goods store. The current owner, Abercrombie, bought the building from the bank; it is currently vacant.

Integrity: The building is historically and architecturally significant as a representative of early commerce in downtown Wilson and the construction of permanent native stone buildings south of the railroad tracks. Continuing its original function as a grocery, the building housed a prominent local business, Southside Grocery for more than twenty years. The building retains a significant degree of architectural integrity despite the storefront alterations and retains its historic commercial associations. It is a contributing property to the district.

5. J.F. Tampier Building/American Legion **Non-Contributing**
419 27th Street
Lot 12 & W17' of lot 11 in Block 8 Original Township & Bosland Addition

Date of Construction: c.1905

Current Function: SOCIAL: Meeting Hall

Architectural Classification: LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

Documentation: Figures #1-3 and 6; Photos #1, 4, 6, and 10.

Description: This building is a large two story structure constructed of native stone just after the turn of the century. It is a two part commercial block structure with Italianate stylistic influences. The upper facade is capped by an ornamental metal cornice with scroll brackets and a center extension inscribed 'J.F. Tampier.' There are three sets of tripartite windows with segmented stone arched lintels. The original windows were double hung with arched transoms; wood panels have been installed to replace the glass. A steel beam separates the upper and lower facade. The original storefront was traditional with large display windows and a multi-paned transom. The storefront was asymmetrical with an entrance to the 2nd floor on the east end. The American Legion purchased the building between 1948 and 1952 and replaced the original storefront. The storefront has been infilled with a solid stone wall that has small multi-paned square windows and a set of contemporary glass doors for the entrance. The original openings are extant on the rear facade but windows have been covered. An arched doorway in the center has been infilled to accommodate a standard solid door.

History: The land was purchased by Joseph Tampier - Lot 12 from F.E. Waith in 1885 and lot 11 from Samuel Tose in 1900. J.L. Tampier came to Wilson from Michigan in 1880 and engaged in grocery business (he built the building west of this one in 1887). The date of construction is recorded as 1905 by appraisal records. The building clearly shares its east wall with the adjacent Opera House on the east and Tampier owned the land when the Opera House was built to the east. One account states that Tampier donated his east wall when the Opera House was constructed in 1901 suggesting that this building had to be in place in 1901. However, some locals report that Tampier donated land for the wall but his building was not yet constructed, thus supporting the 1905 date of construction. This appears to be the case as illustrated by a photo of the Opera House under construction. A 1907 phone directory lists two Tampier businesses: Tampier & Knakal (the grocery store to the west) and Tampier-Somer-Kyner. This building is more commonly know as the home of the Daylight Dry Goods Company, opened by J.W. Somer in 1906 (later operated by J.H. Baum). Daylight Dry Goods Co. went out of business in 1926. The building was later occupied by Dolezal Clothing store, operated by Joe Dolezal (listed in 1938 phone directory) who later had Kasper & Dolozal Clothing on Main Street. Around 1950 the American Legion purchased the property; they remodeled the storefront and continue to occupy the building today.

Integrity: This building is significant as a representative of early commerce on the Southside in downtown Wilson, and early native stone commercial architecture. The upper facade of the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity however, the storefront has been replaced. The existing storefront has no relationship to the historic configuration and therefore renders the building a non-contributing property to the district.

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6. **Wilson Czech Opera House (Turner Hall)** **Contributing**
415 27th Street
Lots 9-10 & E8' of Lot 11 in Block 8 Original Township & Bosland Addition

Date of Construction: 1901

Current Function: RECREATION AND CULTURE: auditorium and museum

Architectural Classification: LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate and Queen Anne

Documentation: Figures #1-3 and 6-7; Photos #1, 4, 6-7, and 9-10.

Description: The Opera House is a two-story building constructed of native limestone in 1901. Stylistically, the building is classified as Late Victorian with Italianate and Queen Anne influences. The building is symmetrical, topped by an ornamental metal cornice with brackets. The cornice originally had a center pediment that has been removed. There are five double hung windows on the upper facade, the center window wider than the other four. The windows have rusticated flat stone lintels. The upper facade illustrates the building's Italianate stylistic influence while the lower facade is clearly influenced by the Queen Anne style. The only division between the upper and lower facades was a limestone panel, inscribed 'Turner Hall'; the panel was severely deteriorated and has been removed. There are single doors on each end of the lower facade, leading to the second floor and basement. Three arched openings dominate the lower facade. The openings have unique segmented arched stone lintels comprised of two courses of stone (a similar detail is found on the Midland Hotel). The central arch frames a recessed central entrance, raised one half story above grade. The arched openings flanking the central entrance are tripartite windows, common to the Queen Ann style. These openings extend beyond grade to incorporate a panel of basement level windows. The tripartite windows are double hung windows on the sides, flanking a wider, center fixed panel with fixed arched transoms. The transoms have infilled panels but the original configuration is visible. The existing doors are replacements. The openings on the rear facade have been covered and two small shed additions are located at the rear of the building. The roof form is unique; flat at the front and back with a gable roof over the ballroom in the center section of the building. A new membrane has been installed over the entire roof. The west wall of the building is shared with the Tampier Building; the east wall is full exposed with a narrow walkway between the Opera House and the Weber/Warta Motor Building to the east. The building measures 53 x 100 feet and upon opening, boasted a 20x50' stage with a curtain opening of 14x22'.

The basement originally housed the gymnasium, a dining room also used as a meeting hall for several Czech lodges, a kitchen and restrooms. As evidenced in a 1910 photo, a barbershop was also located in the basement. Upstairs was the Cultural Hall, a ballroom with a stage, balcony with high arched ceilings, and kitchen and restrooms. A 1905 clipping described the ceiling – "an elegant steel ceiling painted sky blue with the borders of the panels bronzed." A 1925 clipping noted that the Opera House would have a new floor for dancing by next spring. In 1937, the first air-conditioning system was installed. Eventually the Cultural Hall became a community hall.

Around 1971, improvements were implemented. The gymnasium was no longer being used for the exercises, but rather for a meeting place, so it was filled with stones, sand and cement to twelve and one half feet, the same level as the rest of the basement flooring, and wood panels were put on to cover the stone walls that were losing their mortar. It became the Gentlemen's club, where games and cards were played. Also during the 1970s, the walls in the meeting and dining area were covered by sheets of wood panels to preserve the interior walls. By the 1970s, a movement was gaining force to establish a museum in the basement. In the early 1980s, Mayor Eleanor Hunter lead an effort to get the lodges who owned the opera house (losing membership through old age and illness), to sell the opera house to a group to restore the building and use it as a museum. The three lodges were allowed to continue to hold their meetings in the building free of charge. The restoration program, begun in the 1980s, is ongoing. Accomplishments to date include: installation of a new roof, rest rooms redone, the kitchens updated, heating and a new air conditioning system installed, over seventy gallons of paint used to paint the balcony and ballroom, a new white oak floor replaced the worn pine floor in the ballroom and a new floor installed on the stage.

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History: The building is significant historically as the Bohemian Meeting Hall and Opera House, and architecturally as a quality representative of a native stone community building. The Opera House was built by the Bohemian Sokol Club in 1901 at a cost of \$15,000, the west wall (or land for the west wall) being donated by Tampier who owned the property to the east. In raising these funds, the Turners were liberally assisted by the businessmen of Wilson and the Bohemian farmers in the western part of the county. A retired Lucas farmer recalled the construction of the Opera House in a 1974 interview with *The Wilson World*, Ralph Kvasnicka said about fourteen hard working men built the limestone structure "stone by stone." Kvasnicka's father, Frank was a contractor stone mason in charge of the construction. Stone for the building came from five miles north of Wilson on the Hay Canyon Road.

In his book, *History of Wilson*, Frank Sibrava noted that, "probably the Bohemians greatest contribution to the culture and social life of Wilson was the erection of the Wilson Opera House in 1901." By the mid 1870s, a number of Bohemians had settled in Wilson and the colony organized many clubs and societies. The Sokol, an athletic club, was to advance the physical culture and gymnastic training of young men. The first Sokol club was instituted in Prague, and was comparable to the baseball, basketball, and football of today. The basement of the Opera House housed a gymnasium that became the permanent home of the T.J. Sokol Jonas Association; the Lodge was called SOKOL, meaning falcon. Three local Bohemian Lodges, CSA (formerly CSPA), WFLA (formerly ZCJB), and SOKOL, shared ownership of the hall. Dedicated November 25th, 1901 according to a front-page article in the November 28, *Ellsworth Reporter*, the Opera House was referred to as Turner Hall in the story that outlined the dedication of the new building. "The Bohemian Turners of Wilson dedicated with appropriate exercises in the presence of a large gathering of people last Monday afternoon, the 25th." ...The program consisted of music and speaking. The dedicatory exercises were followed by a home talented play given by the Bohemian Amateurs of that town, and by a grand ball."

Frank Sibrava was manager of the Opera House for 21 years. He remembered the first show held in the historic structure. In an interview with *The Salina Journal* in 1956, Sibrava outlined the first show, "McCabes Colored Minstrels came to town by special railroad coach and played to a crowd of 600 or more in a building not yet completed. Children hung from beams not yet lathed and sat like little birds in the windows." The *Journal* story reported that the first movie machine was installed in 1912. The Opera House continued as a center of entertainment for more than 45 years with well-attended movies several nights a week. The movies fell victim to television and on January 9th, 1956, the last movie was shown in the Opera House. Continually used by the Bohemian Lodges throughout, the building was sold to a newly formed corporation in the 1980's to make improvements and establish a city museum. The basement houses the museum and the ballroom is still used for community events and activities.

Integrity: This building is perhaps the most prominent existing structure on Wilson's Southside. It is historically significant as a social and cultural center of the community and architecturally significant as a representative of native stone structures on the Southside. Past alterations to the building have been minor and the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity. It is a contributing member to the district.

7. **Weber/Warta Motor Company Building** **Contributing**
411 27th Street
Lots 7-8 in Block 8 Original Township & Bosland Addition

Date of Construction: c. 1930

Current Function: COMMERCE/TRADE: department store

Architectural Classification: LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style

Documentation: Figures #1, 3 and 7; Photos #4, 7, and 9-10.

Description: This one story building with a brick facade was built around 1930. It is a one part commercial block structure with a stepped parapet and vaulted roof. The front facade has experienced some alteration but the historic configuration is evident. The facade is comprised of three bays framed by brick piers. Each bay varies in size, creating

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an asymmetrical composition. No historic photos have been found to confirm the original appearance. It appears that the central bay was probably the entrance; a three pane transom is in place but an overhead garage door has been installed. The two side bays were most likely display windows. The east bay is intact with the original display and transom windows. The original transom is in place on the west bay but the display windows have been removed and infilled with wood. The wood infill has two small horizontal windows and a solid wood door, serving as the only front entrance. Presumably built as a garage/motor company, the rear of the building appears original. There is a large sliding garage door on the east end and a band of small windows on the west. The end of the vaulted roof is stamped metal.

History: In 1921, the land was sold by Wenzel Gregor to F.R. Gregor (Wentzel Gregor came to the US from Bohemia in 1868 and to Wilson in 1884 and began the manufacture of cigars - it is unclear if the Gregor Cigar factory/ store was located on this land). In one historic photo of this block, it appears that an earlier building was located on this site. It is reported that Gregor built the existing building and the appraisal records date it to 1930; he sold the property to E.O. Weber in 1939 (previously located in the Rezabek building/Robinson garage on Main Street). A 1938 ad for Weber Motor Co. says "on the highway"; it is unclear if Weber Motor leased the building before purchasing it in 1939 or who the original occupant was. Weber Motor Co. was in business until the late 1940s. By 1949, Warta Motor, replaced Weber Motor in this building, although the building continued to be owned by Weber (1952 plat plan). Warta Motor was in place at least through 1959. Harvey & Warta later ran an auto parts store and the building is now used for garage sales/flea market.

Integrity: This building is significant as one of the few existing Southside commercial buildings representative of the second phase of permanent buildings constructed after the mid 1920s in downtown Wilson. Although the building has experienced some alteration, the historic configuration is evident. The building is a contributing property to the district.

8. Thompson Monument Building

Non-Contributing

409 27th Street

Lot 6 & W15' of Lot 5 in Block 8 Original Township & Bosland Addition

Date of Construction: c1930

Current Function: HEALTH CARE: medical business/office

Architectural Classification: No Style

Documentation: Figure #1; Photos #4 and 7-10.

Description: Constructed around 1930, the building is a one story block building with a stucco finish. The building has a shed roof with a raised parapet on the front facade. The parapet is capped by a shallow mansard canopy with composition shingles. The storefront has a central door flanked by a window on each side. No historic photos have been found to confirm the original appearance of the building. Constructed to house Thompson's Monuments, the building may not have had a traditional storefront but the existing configuration appears to be a later alteration. There are windows along the east side of the building and a single door and window on the rear facade. The building is quite non-descript and does not fall within typical stylistic influences; it is therefore given the classification as 'No Style.'

History: Advertisements for Thompson's monuments and pianos were in the local paper as early as 1923. It is reported by local residents that W.H. Thompson built this building around 1930, moving his monument business from his residence to the new building. W.H. Thompson Monuments was listed in the 1929 phone directory. His wife also had a flower shop in the building. In the late 1940s, Thompson Monuments closed and F.A. McEvoy, a local physician, bought the building and moved his practice from his home. The building was later vacated, purchased by the local Economic Development Corp. and sold to the current occupant, Dr. Ronald Whitmer for his office.

Integrity: Given the lack of historic documentation on the original appearance of this building, its non-descript appearance and lack of relationship to other buildings in downtown Wilson, the building is deemed a non-contributing property to the district.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The Wilson Downtown Historic District #3 – Southside is significant under National Register Criteria A in the area of Commerce and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The district includes the remaining block of existing historic commercial buildings south of the railroad tracks in Wilson's central business district. Comprised of traditional commercial properties, the district is representative of the development of the community of Wilson from the late nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century. The structures form a cohesive, defined district that illustrates the continuum of local commercial architecture constructed during this period. This collection of buildings convey the progression of design during this period reflecting the style, form, function and materials associated with the development of downtown Wilson.

The Southside District represents one of three historic districts in downtown Wilson, defined primarily by the railroad right-of-way that bisects the central business district, by the function of the districts and adjacent new construction that combine to form distinct boundaries of the three districts. The Southside District is comprised of eight buildings, six of which are contributing. The district reflects two periods of significance: 1887-1905 and 1925-1935, defined primarily by building materials and building styles distinctive in each period. The start of this range reflects the date of construction of the earliest extant buildings in the district and the end range reflects the date of construction of the most recent buildings. The period of significance acknowledges historic alterations that are representative of the evolution of commercial styles and building functions, and accepts changes to buildings within this period as significant to the district. Two architectural classifications are represented by the buildings within the district. The dominant classification is Late Victorian, primarily the Italianate style. The second architectural classification represented in the district is Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movement Commercial Style.

ELABORATION

The significance of the Wilson Downtown Historic District #3 – Southside is established by the following overview of the commercial and architectural development of Wilson from the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN WILSON

In *The History of Wilson*, Frank Sibrava notes that many towns and cities owe their specific location, indeed their very existence, to some great river or thoroughfare. Wilson, and its predecessor, Wilson Creek Station, owe their heritage to the Smoky Hill River. The Smoky Hill Route to the mountains was long a favorite road for prospectors and traders. The discovery of gold in Denver in 1859 increased traffic but, with the decline of the gold rush and the disruption of the Civil War, travel slowed. In 1865, David Butterfield surveyed the route and opened it to a thriving freight and stage business. The life of the trail was short, its eastern terminus rolling up before the laying of track by the Kansas Pacific.

The stage line and later the railroad provided the stimulus for the early settlement of the area. Combined with fertile agricultural resources, the community of Wilson was established and looked to a promising future. The town was originally platted in 1871 and incorporated in 1883.

From the early settlement, the railroad that bisected the center of town was a dominant force that influenced the physical and commercial development of the town. Residences, churches, schools, as well as commercial buildings were constructed both north and south of the tracks. Business advertisements as early as the 1880s included tag lines such as 'southside' and 'north of the tracks'. The railroad impacted the development of local industry as the first flour mill and grain elevators were built along the rail line in downtown Wilson before the turn of the century. Wilson's central business district today is illustrative of this early development and continues to serve as a mixed-use commercial area like most communities in rural Kansas.

In the 1883 *History of the State of Kansas*, William Cutler notes, "Wilson has had a good, healthy growth since it first started; people who came, came with the intention of making their settlement permanent. The town has superior

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advantages to many other towns in Central Kansas. It has an excellent agricultural country to support it, and located as it is in the northwest corner of the county, draws a great deal of trade from the southern part of Lincoln County and the eastern part of Russell County. It also has an additional advantage in the coal discoveries that have been made in its vicinity and which are being successfully operated. This advantage, in a country like Central Kansas, where fuel is so very scarce, cannot be over-estimated.²

The Early Settlement (1871-1876)

"As early as 1865, a stage station on the new Butterfield Overland Dispatch running from Atchison, Kansas to Denver, Colorado, was named Wilson Creek Station. This crude rest stop and relay point – a 'swing station' it was called, was located approximately one-half mile southeast of the present Wilson. The station was abandoned in 1868, the year that the Kansas Pacific Railway tracks reached the area and the first depot was built³ The railroad's original survey, which followed the Republican River route, was changed to the Smoky Hill route and on to Denver.⁴ The name, Wilson Station, was derived from the township in which the depot was located, that being Wilson.⁵ "The settlement continued to be known as Wilson Station until June of 1871 when the Post Office Department designated the site Attica. That label lasted only six months – until November of the same year when the designation was changed to Bosland, from the Latin word 'bos,' meaning cattle or oxen."⁶

In September of 1871 the town of Wilson was located and surveyed by the National Land Company.⁷ "The first building erected in town after the site was surveyed was built by Phillip Gabel, on the west side of Michigan Avenue near the railroad track, in which he opened the pioneer store of Wilson. The first settlement around Wilson was made in the spring of 1871, about six months before the town of Wilson was located, and the first person to make permanent settlement on a piece of government land in the vicinity was J. T. McKittrick. A number of settlers arrived in 1871-72, primarily from Pennsylvania. A settlement had barely been established when steps were taken to erect the first school house in 1872. Blown down in a wind storm, work was not resumed until 1874 when a small stone school house was built in the southeast part of town."⁸ In June of 1873, the Postal Department designated the town Wilson.⁹

Francis Swehla arrived in 1874, one of the first Bohemians in the area. That year began a second wave of settlers - Bohemian immigrants from Iowa, Nebraska, Chicago and New York. These first Bohemians came mostly by train in 1874-75; a second set followed in 1876 by wagon from Minnesota. Swehla wrote letters in the Czech language newspapers encouraging other Bohemians to come to the area. "A curious fact about the Bohemians is that although most had been craftsmen in the old country, the majority, in the beginning, made farming – which they knew little about – their vocation here. Cheap, available land was the reason. However, many soon drifted back to their trades."¹⁰

The arrival of the first Bohemians in the area between 1874 and 1876 was a significant event in the development of Wilson. It was the Bohemians that influenced the cultural and social framework of the community establishing Wilson's rich Czech heritage that remains a distinguishing feature today.

The Boom Years (1887-1905)

According to Cutler's *History of the State of Kansas*, the years of 1877-78 were years of marked improvement in the town of Wilson in which a number of businesses and homes were erected. Cutler notes the construction of a large wooden building, called 'the barracks,' that was designed to accommodate the great numbers of immigrants, until they could erect homes or select claims for homesteading. "Like the first buildings in all new frontier towns, those in Wilson were rather inferior and most only one-story high. The first two-story frame building in town was erected by H.M. Keyser. He and his family arrived in Wilson in the spring of 1878; upon their arrival, Mr. Keyser purchased two lots and immediately built a good two-story frame building. The 'Wilson House' was one of the first two-story stone buildings, completed south of the tracks opposite the depot, by John Jellison in 1877."¹¹

The year of 1878 brought a profusion of construction activity in Wilson. By year's end the number of buildings in the community had doubled. Perhaps most significant was the construction of the depot, just north of the tracks, east of

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Michigan Avenue. In the fall of 1878, the Kansas Pacific Railway Company commenced erection of a magnificent stone depot, which opened in the spring of 1879.¹² The depot was constructed of sandstone quarried between Kanopolis and Brookville and shipped in by train. It was hailed as one of the finest depots on the entire line of road between Kansas City and Denver.¹³

The following year, 1879, was nearly a repeat of the construction of 1878; while the buildings that went up were not quite as numerous, they were of a better class. H. Greenough erected a steam flouring mill that began production in May of 1879, capable of grinding five hundred bushels of wheat per day. It was also in 1879 that Schermerhorn and Thompson put up a frame dry goods store building on Michigan Avenue and *The Wilson Echo*, the only paper published in Wilson at this time, was established by S.A. Coover.¹⁴

By the early 1880s, Wilson was commencing to look like a town with a first class depot, a school house, hotels, a mill, a printing office and several businesses.¹⁵ The first church was built that year – a small stone structure was erected by the Presbyterians at a cost of \$3,000. Other substantial improvements were made in 1880 - Nesmith and Walmer built a two-story stone building on Michigan Avenue, as did Barton & Carbiener, the former was a grocery store and the latter a hardware store.¹⁶ J.T. McKittrick, a land agent for the Union Pacific Railroad and the first area settler to the area, moved to town around 1880 and built the Cipra Hotel south of the tracks.¹⁷ In 1882, Anspaugh and Youngsman of Pennsylvania founded the community's first bank – the Bank of Wilson. They built the existing two-story stone building on the west side of Michigan Avenue.¹⁸

In Cutler's 1883 *History of the State of Kansas*, he summarizes, "Wilson is a progressive, prosperous town, and is inhabited by a thrifty, enterprising, and energetic people, who are not discouraged by difficulties, or rendered reckless by prosperity. For a town only twelve years old it has made wonderful progress, and gives evidence of what a few determined people can do."¹⁹

In 1882 Wilson boasted a population of 503, and the following year the town petitioned and was granted incorporation. W.H. Carhart, Fred Deissroth, Ed Schermerhorn, Michael Keyser, C.J. Claussen, Ira Danner, Mike Schwarz, C.F. Kyner, A.P. Woodmansee, James Latta, Joseph Latshaw, Dan Carbiener, A.D. Williams, A.A. McCoy, S.B. Jellison, H. Keller, S.A. Coover, and J.T. McKittrick were among the 58 petitioners. J.D. Lang was elected the town's first mayor.²⁰ Following its incorporation, the community grew modestly but steadily. Numerous existing two-story stone commercial buildings were constructed during this period including the Tampier and Zeman buildings built south of the tracks.

By the mid-1880s, in addition to expanding commercial endeavors, numerous industries had developed in the community. There were at least seven banks of coal being mined, one of them owned by the Kansas Pacific Railway Company. The quality of the coal mined was rather inferior but sufficed as fuel. A booming industry was that of rock quarrying, which supplied the majority of local building material. The principal quarry was located north of town in the bluffs along the Saline River. Previously mentioned was the flour mill constructed in 1879. There were also three grain elevators in place, through which an enormous amount of grain passed each year. Two additional industries included two cigar factories owned and operated by Jan Florian and Vaclav Gregor and the creamery operated by H. Carhartt who supplied the local community with cheese and also shipped some to Denver.²¹

As the turn-of the century approached, the construction of new commercial structures slowed somewhat but several prominent buildings were constructed in downtown Wilson during this time. In 1893 the new Schermerhorn & Lang building was constructed (replacing the frame structure built in 1879) and in 1899, the Hotel Power opened its doors just north of the Union Pacific Depot.

The block of commercial buildings along Front Street, south of the railroad tracks, took its current form during this period. Sibrava notes that "probably the Bohemians greatest contribution to the culture and social life of Wilson was the erection of Wilson Opera House in 1901."²² The Opera House became the cultural and social center of community and continued

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to serve that function for years. Around this same time, another two-story stone building was constructed by Tampier, adjacent to the Opera House. In 1904 the Weber-Pierano Building was constructed at the corner of Michigan and Front Streets (the former location of the Wilson House). Nick Weber and Andy Peirano built this massive corner building to house a large business featuring hardware, implements, and automobiles, in addition to the Farmer's State Bank. Weber and Pierano had also recently built a grain elevator just south of the tracks on the west side of Michigan Avenue. Tampier built a second two-story stone building west of the Opera House around this time. The construction of these buildings in 1904 and 1905 brought to a close the twenty-eight year period that comprised the initial 'boom years' in downtown Wilson. It was during this period that the first permanent commercial structures were built of native limestone, most of which were two-story structures along Michigan Avenue (Main Street) and Front Street (Old Highway 40) south of the tracks.

Early Twentieth Century Wilson (1906-1935)

Around the turn-of-the century, downtown Wilson featured significant limestone commercial buildings but there were also numerous one and two-story wood frame commercial structures still in place on Michigan Avenue (Main Street). In 1910, the Presbyterians built a new brick church, replacing their original stone structure constructed in 1880. Located one block east of Michigan, on Kansas Avenue, this building appears to have been the first brick structure built in downtown Wilson. Businesses were thriving and the community continued to experience steady growth. The City developed a municipal water and light system in 1911 and the town boasted an efficient fire department and competent public officials. An article in the April 9, 1914 edition of *The Ellsworth Reporter* was titled 'Wilson – A Hustling, Thriving City of 1200 Inhabitants, the Center of a Great Agricultural Country....' The article provides a thorough overview of the community. It notes that, "Few districts are more favored, none more productive than that of which Wilson is the trade center...With a population of approximately 1200, and surrounded by a rich farming country, conditions in this city are normal and flourishing and sound judgment indeed was shown by the founders of the town in casting their lot here. It is easy of access, the town site was admirable chosen and located on the main line of Union Pacific, ample train service is afforded and the large markets are within easy reach. Years ago Wilson...passed the primitive, experimental stage and the privations and hardships of frontier days are all but forgotten in the face of the productive and progressive present."²³ Alfalfa, grain, especially the famous Turkey Red Hard wheat, vegetables, live stock and hay are the main products of the region and the shipments of lumber, coal, cement, lime, plaster, implements, automobiles, corn, brick, fruit, salt, and groceries are extensive. The Wilson Fair was recently organized and the article notes that you will travel many a mile before you find a better opera house...for a town of this size. The town boasted two banks with deposits amounting to \$430,000, a new ice plant and new hospital. Churches of the leading denominations, principal lodges, and an active Business Men's Club were in place and thriving. The article stated that Weber Co., operated the largest enterprise in Wilson.²⁴ The block of buildings at the southeast corner of Old Highway 40 and Main Street were referred to as 'the Weber Block' in this article.

As with most communities, World War I had little impact on the prosperity of the town. Although few commercial buildings were constructed between 1905 and the mid 1920s, a number of important developments occurred during this time. The First Presbyterian Church was built in 1910, thought to be the first brick structure in Wilson. The Wilson Grade School was built in 1916 at the north end of Main Street, primarily to serve grades one through six for residents living north of the tracks.²⁵ In 1917, J. Tobias hired Henry Winter, the Manhattan (Kansas) architect who designed the new Grade School, to design a new commercial building on Michigan Avenue to house the post office.²⁶ The city's first public library – Lang Memorial Library was built, across from the Methodist Church, in downtown Wilson in 1923. These prominent 'institutional' buildings were all constructed of brick (or stone with brick facades) and effectively represented a transition from the early limestone structures to the "modern" brick buildings prevalent through the mid-twentieth century.

The mid-1920s brought about another round of construction of commercial buildings in downtown Wilson. This period did not result in a physical expansion of downtown Wilson, but rather a second phase of more permanent construction. The majority of structures built during this time were one-story brick structures constructed to replace the wood frame structures built during the town's formative years (1880s). This phase of construction began along Michigan Avenue. It was not until around 1930 that one story brick structures were constructed on the Southside, along Front Street.

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The year of 1925 dealt a major blow to the community with the failure of the Farmer's State Bank (located in the Weber-Peirano Building at Michigan and Front Streets). Additionally as with all towns, the Great Depression, the dust-bowl, and World War II did hamper growth in the community. The increasing popularity of the automobile probably had as great an impact on development during this time as any other factor. The completion of the Golden Belt Highway was perhaps the most significant occurrence in the city of Wilson in the 1930s. The newly paved highway followed section lines from Kansas City to Denver; it came into downtown Wilson on 24th Street, ran down Main Street and turned east, exiting town out Front Street. The highway directly impacted at least one local business, the Southside Garage. In 1931, Viecek's built the existing building, expanding their former business (garage) to include a car showroom, a gas station bay and a cafe, based in part on the fact that the new Golden Belt Highway ran by the store.²⁷ The early 1930s also saw the construction of the White Eagle Station at the corner of Highway 40 and Main, the addition of a one-story brick garage at the south end of the Weber-Pierano Building, by Roland Cobb for his Ford Agency and the construction of two additional one-story buildings along Front Street, south of the tracks.²⁸ In 1934 the pavement of U.S. Highway 40 (Front Street) reached Wilson from the east – "pavement all the way to New York," was the local boast.²⁹ The town experienced a boost with over-the-road transport complimenting the existing railroad industry. It was around this time that Greyhound bus service reached the area and the Southside Cafe became the local bus stop.³⁰

By the mid-1930s, the Southside business district had essentially taken its current form in terms of the construction of existing historic commercial buildings. The second period of construction of permanent buildings in downtown Wilson extended another twenty years along Main Street but the Southside experience little change during that time.

Modern Day Wilson (1945 – Present)

The end of World War II represented the emergence of a new generation in the business circles of Wilson. There are numerous examples of servicemen returning to Wilson after the war and joining their father's businesses. In several instances, it is that generation that is now retiring from local businesses. Wilson did experience resurgence after the war and saw the first construction of new downtown commercial buildings in over a decade. This activity was focused on and around Main Street and did not extend to the Southside.

As with most communities, many buildings had been poorly maintained over the previous decade and the post-war period brought a period of 'modernization' to traditional commercial storefronts. It was during this period that many existing downtown buildings were 'updated' as a symbol of progress. By the early 1950s, all of downtown Wilson had taken on its existing form. The run-down wood frame structures that existed as remnants of the 1880s had been steadily replaced, primarily by one-story brick structures over a period from the mid-1920s to the early 1950s. Many storefronts had been recently 'modernized' and the area was thriving. Prominent religious and civic structures established downtown Wilson as the social and cultural, as well as, commercial center of the community. There were concentrations of commercial activity along Main Street, north of the railroad, and along Front Street (Highway 40), south of the railroad with prominent businesses located in each of these clusters. The railroad right of way was a hub of industry in the center of downtown with three operating grain elevators, a gas station and the depot standing as a testament to the community's agricultural and transportation ties. Wilson continued to prosper from its rich agricultural assets and to serve the surrounding trade areas as a thriving commercial center. The city experienced modest growth and sustained a viable business district through the late 1960s. The town enjoyed temporary financial boosts from federal projects in the area in the 1960s. An Atlas Intercontinental Missile Base (soon abandoned) was constructed two miles east of town and Wilson Dam and Reservoir was built eleven miles north of town. Additionally, Interstate 70 was completed through the state of Kansas.³¹

The Union Pacific Railroad discontinued passenger service in 1972 marking the start of a period of decline in the community. The time coincided with last stages of a generation of local business owners. The retirement and passing of a number of prominent businessmen resulted in the closing of several key downtown businesses including Somer Hardware, Brown Drug, Weber Hardware and Zeman Drug. These buildings were sold or leased but many of the new businesses were short-lived compared to the former anchors. Throughout this time, important local businesses including the two grocery stores, two car dealerships, and the local bank, remained as anchors in the community.

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The face of downtown Wilson changed drastically in the 1980s as the community lost several of its significant historic resources. The Cipra hotel located south of the tracks, suffering from neglect and lack of maintenance, was demolished in 1982 and the depot, perhaps the most prominent downtown structure, was demolished the following year. The challenges continued as the Midland Hotel closed its doors in 1988 and school consolidation resulted in the demolition of the high school (south of downtown) and the closing of the grade school in the late 1990s.

Amidst these challenging times, an effort emerged to restore the Opera House and establish a Czech Museum. The community has continuously celebrated its Czech heritage with an annual event – the Czech Festival and the community is known as the ‘Czech Capital of Kansas.’ The Opera House continues to be a focal point of the festivities during the festival. Ongoing preservation efforts have maintained a strong link to the community’s Bohemian ancestry and ensure the building’s future.

The old adage that you don’t appreciate what you have until it is gone may be appropriate to describe current attitudes and the atmosphere in downtown Wilson. The Wilson Community Foundation was formed a few short years ago. Their first project was to purchase the Midland Hotel and return it to an operating hotel and restaurant. Restored to its former splendor, the hotel reopened this year and stands as an incredible testament of local commitment. The project has invigorated the community and generated increasing interest in preserving local historic resources and culture. The Foundation is now embarking on a project to rehabilitate the Grade School into an Assisted Living Center. A new antique mall recently opened and Southside Garage again houses an auto dealership. Things are happening in downtown Wilson; this nomination is submitted as a result of these local initiatives to revitalize the community by respecting its past.

ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN DOWNTOWN WILSON

Wilson’s central business district followed a typical pattern of development for many Kansas communities. Commercial buildings were constructed along two primary and perpendicular streets: Michigan Street (now Main Street) running north to south and Front Street (old Highway 40, now 27th Street) running east to west. Front Street “fronts” the railroad right-of-way on the south side of the railroad tracks and serves as the primary east/west route in the community. The railroad right-of-way bisects the downtown area, creating two concentrations of commercial development; a third grouping is the concentration of elevator structures on the railroad right-of-way.

The town of Wilson came into being during the late settlement period in Kansas. Wilson’s location and configuration were influenced by the location of the Smoky Hill River, the stage route of the Butterfield Overland Dispatch (1865-1868), the rail line originally operated by the Kansas Pacific Railway (later Union Pacific), and the town planning concepts that were common during the 1860s and 1870s. The physical appearance of Wilson was further influenced by the materials available for building construction and the building styles that were popular for small town commercial buildings between the 1870s and mid 1900s.

The district is physically defined by its traditional downtown configuration and setting. Lots are generally in 20-25’ increments and the commercial buildings maintain a common setback, flush with the public sidewalks. The buildings generally span the full width of the lot and share party walls with adjoining buildings. The district’s buildings are representative of traditional commercial styles of the period(s). Except for corner properties, only the building fronts are designed for public view and access. Two story structures are typically characterized by a clear distinction between the upper and lower facades. The upper facades usually have regularly spaced windows and the top of the building is defined by a parapet or cornice. Storefronts are comprised of three basic components: a transom, large display windows and a bulkhead or base and framed by columns or piers. Based on the classifications in Richard Longstreth’s book, *the Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture*, the majority of the commercial buildings in downtown Wilson fall into three distinct types: one or two-part commercial block building types or the enframed window wall building type. Stylistic expression and ornamentation were typically secondary to the standard composition of traditional commercial buildings.

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Vernacular Architecture

According to Jim Kemp in his book *American Vernacular: Regional Influences in Architecture and Design*, many buildings, particularly in small, rural communities are called 'vernacular' because they do not fit the progression of mainstream styles. As architectural styles changed and evolved, regional architecture was left – at least stylistically – further and further behind.³² Stylistic Classifications are provided for each of the district's buildings however, many of the buildings embody stylistic influences of the classification identified rather than stand as exemplary representatives of the style. Some of the properties were difficult to classify and most could be termed vernacular. Kemp's vernacular theory explains the lack of design sophistication found in most small rural towns.

Kemp also notes that regional architecture has always been characterized by the use of local building materials.³³ Stone is a common building material in vernacular structures, particularly in the mid-west where trees were not abundant. This was clearly the case in Kansas where native limestone was the predominant building material by the 1880s. Ellsworth County is the eastern boundary of the Land of the Post Rock. The native limestone, abundant in central Kansas is commonly referred to as 'fence post', 'post-rock', or 'Greenhorn' limestone. The stone was first quarried for use as fence posts. By the 1870s and 1880s, most communities in the area had residents who were stone workers from the "old country" or "back east" providing local expertise on the potential of post rock as a building material. To obtain building block, fence posts, or other products, the quarrying process was the same: holes were drilled about four to five inches deep into the rock and nine to twelve inches apart along a line marked for splitting; feathers and wedges were placed in the holes, and tapping the wedges lightly with a stone hammer split out the slabs, posts, or blocks. In emerging towns, native rock was used exclusively as a building material and as a key resource in the area's economy; the use of post rock came to symbolize progress.³⁴

The town of Wilson was blessed with easy access to native stone. Limestone was available for the taking on the divide between the Smoky Hill and Hell Creek and on the bluffs south of the Smoky Hill River. From this natural resource came tons of stone for the building of numerous store buildings in Wilson and private homes and barns in and around town.³⁵ The original buildings in Wilson were typically one-story wood-frame structures. Within just a few years of the first settlement, native limestone became the building material of choice and remained such through the turn-of-the-century. In 1910, the first documented brick structure was built in downtown Wilson, beginning the transition to brick as the dominant building material through the mid-twentieth century.

Late Victorian Styles

The Late Victorian architectural styles reflected a taste for ornamentation. Downtown commercial buildings in the Late Victorian styles typically featured bracketed cornices of pressed metal or wood with panels, complex moldings, and dentils. Upper facade windows typically included cast iron, stone, or wood ornamental lintels or hoods. Stile and rail wood doors were sometimes a single leaf but were often paired and included recessed panels and ornamental moldings. Storefronts included cast iron, ornamental stonework, and wood trim. Architectural ornamentation was mass produced and available by rail as a result of advances in technology. It was common for builders to purchase stock items at the local lumberyard or iron works. Builders could also order building products from catalogs that were shipped by rail.

The two-story stone structures in the district, five buildings, all represent influences of Late Victorian design theory. Four of the buildings primarily reflect the Italianate style – Buildings #1, 4, 5, and 6. They are all two-story, limestone buildings constructed between 1887 and 1905 and have pressed metal cornices and upper windows with arched stone lintels or ornamental metal hoods. Two of these buildings share other Late Victorian stylistic influences. The Weber Peirano Building (#1) has a colonnade of Romanesque arches at the second floor and the Opera House (Building #6) reflects Queen Anne influences as demonstrated by the arched tripartite windows on the ground floor. This combination of stylistic influences is a common characteristic of buildings in rural communities. One additional commercial buildings is classified as Late Victorian but does not fall under the Italianate sub-category. The F. Zeman Drug Building (Building #3) was constructed in 1893. This building is a classic example of elaborate ornamentation with its decorative metal cornice, metal pilasters and pressed metal on the upper facade. All of these influences fall under the Late Victorian classification.

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Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements

The majority of one-story buildings in the district are classified as Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movement Commercial Style buildings. They are the Cobb Ford Agency (Building #2) and the Weber/Warta Motor Company (Building #7). During the late 19th century commercial buildings in the United States began to be designed with greater simplicity than the Late Victorian Styles that had preceded them. These commercial buildings had flat roofs, simple facades usually with symmetrical fenestration and traditional storefront designs. Simple brick patterns in the upper facades and at the parapets were common. The two Southside buildings that are classified as Commercial Style were both constructed around 1930 and are one-story with brick facades. A distinguishing feature of these structures is the overall lack of ornamentation. They are generally void of ornament with the exception of simple brick detailing. Both of these buildings were built for or by automobile companies and therefore deviate from the traditional commercial storefront configuration. Both buildings incorporate garage bays on the front facade reflecting the original function of the buildings. The Commercial Style was the predominant style in downtown Wilson from the mid-1920s through 1940. The majority of Commercial Style buildings were located along Main Street, north of the Southside district. The two motor company buildings built around 1930 are the only extant Commercial Style buildings in the Southside district.

Historic Alterations

The "modernization" of traditional commercial storefronts was viewed as a sign of progress throughout the twentieth century. Common alterations included the installation of aluminum framed display windows, structural glass or other cladding, the replacement of original wood bulkheads with concrete or brick, and the application of stucco to achieve a smooth, clean finish. Many businesses remodeled the interior of their stores and offices at the same time and lowered ceilings. This alteration often resulted in the covering of transoms on the building's exterior, typically with a business sign or cladding. At least one building in the Southside district (Building #3) had a new brick storefront installed on a stone building - another common "modernization." The storefront alterations generally retained the building's traditional components and often the configuration. Due to the common nature of the storefront modifications, they are considered acceptable and are included in the district's period of significance

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The historic structures that comprise the Wilson Downtown Historic District #3 – Southside reflect a continuum of commercial enterprises and the corresponding evolution of architecture in downtown Wilson from the late-nineteenth through mid-twentieth centuries. These resources are significant as a surviving group of buildings that represent the history of downtown Wilson. As a collection of extant buildings that retain their historic architectural integrity and associations with the community's development, they form a distinct district with a visible sense of time and place.

The significant resources in the district span the period of 1887 to 1935 including two defined periods of significance: 1887 to 1905 and 1925 to 1935. These periods are illustrated by two distinct styles of buildings. The first period is defined primarily by two-story commercial structures built of native limestone. Stylistically, these buildings fall under the architectural classification of Late Victorian Italianate. The second period of significance is characterized primarily by the use of brick and the transition to one-story commercial buildings rather than the original two story stone buildings. Stylistically, these properties primarily fall under the Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements Commercial Style. As a grouping, the Southside buildings reflect the continuum of architectural development in Wilson. Included in this collection are examples of common alterations made to traditional commercial buildings as part of the general evolution of commercial design.

Wilson Downtown Historic District #3 – Southside is significant as a group of buildings representative of commercial property types historically found in small, rural communities throughout Kansas and the Midwest. The buildings reflect the patterns of architectural and commercial development dominant in this region for the past hundred years. As with most small communities, Wilson's existing downtown buildings illustrate the community's history.

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¹ Frank Sibrava, *History of Wilson*, p.3-4.

² William C. Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas*. Ellsworth County, Part 7. Wilson, 1883. (accessed on-line)

[Note: Cutler's *History of the State of Kansas* is a reprint of Andreas' *History of Kansas*; Andreas' version, Vol. II, p. 1280-82 was also consulted]

³ Sibrava, p.3.

⁴ *Wilson World*, July 8, 1948.

⁵ Cutler.

⁶ Sibrava, p.5.

⁷ Cutler.

⁸ Cutler.

⁹ Sibrava, p.6.

¹⁰ Sibrava, p.6-7.

¹¹ Cutler.

According to a July 15, 1948 article in *The Wilson World*, "The Wilson House, a two-story stone building which stood unfinished south of the tracks and opposite the depot (the first wood frame depot), was completed by John Jellison. Arthur A. Jellison recalls that his uncle, John Jellison traded the building for a farm in Iowa. Isaac Wilson Allerton was to take over the hotel and open it for business. When all of the Wilson's arrived, 12 or 13 covered wagons of families, they moved into the hotel. Isaac's son Millard Wilson recalled frequent visits of the railroad men who are, drank, and sometimes stayed overnight the 'hotel'. The engineers and brakemen came to know the hotel as the 'Wilson House' by the owner's name. Later the hotel was managed by Pop Claussen." The precise fate of the Wilson House is unknown. The building was replaced by the Weber-Pierano Building which was constructed in 1904 and is still standing today at the southeast corner of Old Highway 40 and Main Street.

¹² Cutler.

¹³ Sibrava, p.8.

¹⁴ Cutler.

¹⁵ Cutler.

¹⁶ Cutler.

¹⁷ Sibrava, p.5.

The building was located on the southwest corner of Old Highway 40 and Main Street. According to an article in the May 6, 1982 *The Wilson World*, "In the early 1890's, McKittrick advertised the building in *The Wilson World* and claimed that 'the building would be suitable for a hotel and is one of the finest store rooms in the city.' M.H. Alderson, one of the first doctors in Wilson and Bill Slimm, a jeweler, were two of the first businesses to rent space in the McKittrick building. Lewis and Josephine Cipra bought the building in the early 1900s. It was known as both the Cipra Hotel and the Central Hotel. Jack Libal, a Wilson resident purchased the hotel in 1962 and changed the name to J and L recreation. After Libal sold the hotel in 1974, it changed owners several times and was used primarily as a tavern. The building was demolished in 1982.

¹⁸ *The Wilson Echo*, March 5, 1885.

¹⁹ Cutler.

²⁰ Sibrava, p.8.

²¹ *The Wilson World*, July 29, 1948.

²² Sibrava, p.7.

²³ *The Ellsworth Reporter*, April 9, 1914.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ *The Wilson World*, March 5, 1917.

²⁶ Patricia J. O'Brien, Lyda-Jean Apartments (Manhattan, Kansas) National Register Nomination-Appendix 1 Henry B. Winter. An Early 20th Century Kansas Architect,

²⁷ Interview with Joseph Vcek in Wilson, February, 2003.

²⁸ Interview with Leroy Klema in Wilson, February, 2003.

²⁹ Sibrava, p.11.

³⁰ Vcek interview.

³¹ Sibrava, p.11.

³² Jim Kemp, *American Vernacular Regional Influences in Architecture and Interior Design*. (Washington D.C.: The American Institute of Architects Press, 1987) p.10.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Grace Mullenburg and Ada Swineford, *Land of the Post Rock, Its Origins, History, and People*. (Lawrence/Manhattan/Wichita: The University Press of Kansas, 1975) p.3, 58-71.

³⁵ Sibrava, p.8.

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Wilson Echo, Review of business news columns and business advertisements from 1880s through early 1900s and September 9, 1880; September 4, 1884; March 5, 1885; December 30th, 1886; January 22, 1891; August 10, 1899; December 25, 1890; November 13, 1902; January 19 and 26th and February 9, 1905.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description:

Wilson Downtown Historic District #3 – Southside is comprised of the buildings in the block at the southeast corner of the intersection of Old U.S. Highway 40 and Main Street, known as the 400 block of 27th Street. The district boundary is shown by the dotted line on the attached boundary/property map.

Boundary Justification:

Wilson's central business district will be divided into three historic districts: #1 – Main Street, #2 – Soukup Grain Elevator, and #3 – South Side (Old Highway 40). The boundaries of the districts were established primarily by the physical barrier created by the one-block wide railroad right-of-way that bisects downtown, in addition to the distinction in uses (i.e. the elevator district) and adjacent contemporary construction. The Wilson Downtown Historic District #3 – Southside encompasses the remaining concentration of historic commercial buildings located south of the railroad tracks in downtown Wilson.

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DOCUMENTATION

Photo and Figure references are provided by individual property under Section 7 – Narrative Description of each property.

FIGURES

Photocopies of historic images within the district are attached. Most are from miscellaneous clipping files and displays at the Wilson Czech Opera House Museum, many with no date of source provided. The quality of some figures is poor because they had to be photocopied on site at the source.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographer: Brenda R. Spencer
Negatives: Spencer retains original negatives
Date: 5 June, 2003

<u>Photo #</u>	<u>Camera Direction</u>	<u>Description [building(s) and/or address]</u>
1	S	Old U.S. Highway 40, East of Main Buildings # 1,3-6 (R to L)
2	SE	Weber Peirano Building, Building #1
3	NE	Weber Peirano and Cobb Ford Agency Buildings, Buildings #1 and 2
4	NE	Rear Facades-Old U.S. Highway 40 east of Main, Buildings #1-8
5	S	F. Zeman Building and J.F. Tampier Building, Buildings #3 and 4 (R to L)
6	S	J. Tampier/Legion Building and Opera House, Buildings #5 and 6 (R to L)
7	S	Weber/Warta Motor Co. and Thompson Monument Buildings Buildings #7 and 8 (R to L)
8	NW	Rear (south) and east facades of Thompson Monument Building, Building #8)
9	N	Rear (south) facades of Weber/Warta Motor Co. and Opera House Buildings #6 and 7 (R to L)
10	SW	Old U.S. Highway 40, east of Main Buildings # 1, 3-8 (R to L)

PROPERTY OWNERS

<u>#</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Mailing Address</u>
1	Weber Peirano Building	2711 Main Street	Koetter Brother Grocery Store Partnership	P.O. Box 158, Wilson, KS 67490
2	Cobb Ford Agency	2715 Main Street	Koetter Brother Grocery Store Partnership	P.O. Box 158, Wilson, KS 67490
3	F. Zeman Building	427 27th Street	Dennis Hoag	936 East 5th Street, Russell, KS 67665
4	J.F. Tampier Building	423 27th Street	Lila Mae Abercrombie	1225 1st Road, Wilson, KS 67490
5	J. Tampier Building/Legion	419 27th Street	Wilson Post #262 of the American Legion	419 27th Street, Wilson, KS 67490
6	Wilson Czech Opera House	415 27th Street	Wilson Czech Opera House Corp.	P.O. Box 442, Wilson, KS 67490
7	Weber/Warta Motor Co. Building	411 27th Street	L.F. and Barbara A. Johnson	3847 198th Street, Dorrance, KS 67634
8	Thompson Monument Building	409 27th Street	Ronald and Josephine Whitmer	419 Bradley, Ellsworth, KS 67439