

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

JUL 14 1987

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page d

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RESUBMISSION  
WILLCOX MRA

Wilson, J. C., House (258 E. Maley)  
Cochise County  
ARIZONA

Summary

The J. C. Wilson House was returned by the reviewer for a clarification of applicable criteria and area of significance. The reviewer suggested that additional significant information be researched to justify criterion "B". The Wilson House was nominated under criteria "B" and "C". Criterion "C" was considered justified by the reviewer. This document is an addendum to the original nomination that justifies significance under criterion "B" for the significance area of commerce. This addendum does not change the boundary of the nominated property.

Significance

In order to understand best the historical significance of the Wilson House, a discussion is required on the Willcox Board of Trade since J. C. Wilson served as the Board's first president. This was an organization that promoted the commerce of Willcox. The best description of the Willcox Board of Trade is found in Vernon B. Schultz's scholarly publication, Southwestern Town: The Story of Willcox, Arizona (1964). Much of the following discussion is based on this scholarly study.

For Item 8, this property is nominated under criterion "C" for architecture and also under criterion "B" for its significance as a property that is historically associated with the physician, Dr. J. C. Wilson, who had an influential effect upon the development of commerce within Willcox. The area of significance under criterion "B" is commerce. For example, by the turn of the century, automobiles were beginning to make their appearance in southeastern Arizona. The John H. Norton Company had an automobile agency in Willcox in 1902, although cars were not common for a number of years. Although he was ridiculed for the purchase of a vehicle in 1909, this did not stop him from using it for his calls from that time on. He would also take people anywhere in the area, including mines and nearby towns.

When the American Legion was organized on August 30, 1919, Dr. Wilson served as its first commander. He also served as the first president of the Willcox Rotary Club which was organized in March, 1930. More importantly, though, he was president of the Willcox Board of Trade. The Board of Trade, and Wilson, played a vital role in the development of commerce in Willcox.

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### The Willcox Board of Trade

Shortly after the turn of the century, Willcox was growing into a town which needed an organization that would work for its improvement and that would help promote it to bring in prospective investors from the east. In 1908 the Willcox Board of Trade was organized. This was accomplished with the help of C. W. Hubbard of Sunset Magazine, who had visited the Sulphur Springs Valley and was very enthusiastic about its undeveloped resources. The members of the board elected Dr. J. C. Wilson as president; J. W. Angle, vice-president; R. W. Keyes, secretary; and A. A. Nicholson, treasurer. Twelve or 15 members signed the roll at the first meeting.

About 18 months after it was founded, the Board of Trade had 65 members, and it was managing to publicize the merits of the Willcox area as best as it could. Organizational dues were primarily used to print leaflets which people were encouraged to enclose in letters to friends in the East promoting the area. It also persuaded the Southern Pacific to include publicity for Willcox in a book the railroad was publishing. An excursion rate to the town was also established, although previously not even a stopover had been permitted. Advertisements placed in weekly papers in the Midwest and in daily papers on the Pacific Coast brought many inquiries. On one day in November, 1913, the secretary received and answered 41 of them, and during that year, the average was 150 or more per month.

Improved sanitation and the development of new water supplies was another area of interest for the Board. In 1911 the Board decided to drill an artesian well, which would be an asset for publicity as well as for the water produced. Originally, it was planned to drill near the railroad tracks, but, eventually, the committee decided that the fairgrounds on the northwest side of Willcox would be a more favorable location. The sum of \$3,000 was subscribed by various citizens, and a Deming, New Mexico, concern began drilling. There were many high hopes for the success of the venture, and the local paper reported regularly on its progress. The well was drilled to a depth of 900 feet, but only a weak artesian flow was brought to the surface. The project ended in failure. However, it did encourage more successful attempts later and provided a great deal of publicity for Willcox.

During the late 1890s and early 1900s, towns throughout Arizona were establishing organizations that would promote their potentiality for growth and trade, along with their area's resources. The railroads also helped stimulate growth of towns. For example, in 1901 the Nogales Board of Trade was founded as an organization of business interests to improve the town, to extend trade into the town, and to attract outside capital (Janus, 1984). In Phoenix "organizations such as the Phoenix Board of Trade, the Commercial Club, the Merchants and Manufacturers Association, and the Civic Federation promoted the area's agricultural fertility as the best reason for settling in the Salt River Valley." (Weisiger, 1984)

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This period (late 1890s through early 1900s) represents the beginning of the heyday of the copper era. Copper mining interests would bring millions to the economy of the state as a whole and to a majority of towns as well. By 1907 Arizona became the nation's number one copper mining state (Dunning, 1966). The early twentieth century also represents Arizona's great quest for statehood.

### Bibliography

Dunning, Charles H., with Edward H. Peplow Jr. Rock to Riches. Pasadena, California: Hicks Publishing, Corporation, 1966.

Janus and Associates, Inc. Nogales Multiple Resource Area. 1984.

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

Weisiger, Marsha. Boosters Streetcars and Bungalows. Phoenix: 1984.

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I concur with the statements as presented in this resubmission:

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Shereen Lerner*

Title SHPO

Date 7/2/87