

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic R. H. Cowan Livery Stable

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 220 Maxwell Avenue not for publication

city, town Springer vicinity of congressional district #1

state New Mexico code 35 county Colfax code 007

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Jerry F. and Patricia J. Smith

street & number P.O. Box 808

city, town Springer vicinity of state New Mexico

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Colfax County Clerk's Office

street & number

city, town Raton state New Mexico 87747

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

State Register of Cultural Properties  
title State Register of Cultural Properties has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date November 4, 1977 federal  state  county  local

Department of Educational Finance & Cultural Affairs  
depository for survey records Historic Preservation Office

city, town P.O. Box 1629 state New Mexico 87503

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Erected in 1883 in the northeastern New Mexico town of Springer, the R.H. Cowan Livery Stable is a 50'x140' building of random ashlar masonry construction. Shaded on the north by an enormous cottonwood, it stands on the east side of Maxwell Avenue, Springer's main street, near the town's center. The structure's 18" thick walls are made of locally quarried sandstone topped by a pitched roof covered with green composition material. Centered over the main entrance under the gable in the facade is a rose window framed by the words "R. H. Cowan Livery Stable" and the date of construction. The last digit is now missing from the date but contemporary photographs indicate that the year was 1883. Flanked on each side by a double-hung, 2 over 2 window the big glass and wood paneled front door slides back and forth on a steel track. The original shaped wooden lintels surmount both windows and the entrance. Near the mid-point of the ridge there is a 12" drop in the roof line which marks the division of the office and feed storage in the front from the stalls in the rear.

In the fore part of the structure the roof is upheld by diagonal rough lumber timbers braced by heavy vertical iron rods which form a series of trusses. To the left of the entrance a small room was partitioned for quarters for the stable's night man, which was later used as an office. According to local tradition, it was also the site of marathon poker games patronized by cowboys, teamsters and stable hands. During the years when the building was used as a garage the center section of the stone dividing wall was removed to provide access to the full length of the structure for heavy equipment. The stalls in the rear were also taken out, but a U-shaped hay loft, supported by heavy uprights, still extends around three sides of the stall area. Feed was dropped to the animals tied below and supplies were replenished through a door under the eaves at the building's east end. Other alterations included moving the back entrance from the east end to the north east corner when new construction across the alley to the east restricted the maneuverability of big trucks and tractors.

The building is now floored with concrete throughout; the fore part was put down during first construction but the rear section was later poured over the packed earth where the horses stood. Although most of the small high windows which illuminated the stalls remain in the north wall, extra fenestration has been added on the south and east to improve the lighting. The stable has also been wired for electricity. Some of the masonry now requires re-pointing, particularly at the east end, but otherwise the building is in very good condition. It is presently occupied by Livery Stable Antiques, a business conducted by the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Jerry F. Smith. Keenly aware of the stable's importance in the community, Mr. and Mrs. Smith have sought out photographs and other memorabilia from the past which are now displayed on the office walls. They believe that in its most recent adaptive use the stable will continue as a Springer landmark for years to come.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** erected 1883 **Builder/Architect**

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Little changed in the last 100 years, the R. H. Cowan Livery Stable is an excellent example of the sandstone construction common in northeastern New Mexico during the late 19th century. One of the few livery stables remaining in the state, its gradual conversion from horse barn to garage represents the national shift to automotive transportation which characterized the period after World War I. The building also recalls Springer's former importance as the seat of Colfax County from 1882 to 1897. Named for prominent attorney Frank Springer, the town was founded in 1879 when the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway was extended southward through New Mexico. Three years later county offices were moved from Cimarron, twenty-five miles west, but despite the erection of a handsome courthouse, they were moved again to the growing town of Raton after a monumental struggle in the Territorial Legislature. Although the town suffered a loss in prestige from this untimely event it has continued to be an important trading center for a large ranching area in southern Colfax County.

Of Scottish descent, Robert H. Cowan was born at Lynchburg, Virginia October 15, 1839. At the age of eighteen he traveled westward where he found employment as a freighter and stage driver between various points in Missouri and New Mexico. In 1868 he married Deluvina Padilla, a native New Mexican, and settled in the area west of present day Springer, first at Rayado and, later, at Cimarron. After the arrival of the railroad Cowan moved to Springer where he built the large stone livery barn which is the subject of this nomination. In a special 1890 Fourth of July issue of The Springer Banner extolling the merits of the community the establishment was described thus:

R. H. Cowan of the stone livery stable is a very pleasant gentleman and has a fine stock of horses and carriages. His stable building is one of the finest in the territory and would be a credit to any city in the country.

Afflicted for many years with poor health, Cowan died in 1900. The stable was leased for a number of years to H. H. Hankins who ran it in conjunction with a stage line between Springer and the Moreno Valley in the mountains to the west. During this era an automobile supplemented the usual buggies and buckboards for those venturesome travelers desiring more rapid transportation and with this innovation the transition into the automobile age began. In 1916 Deluvina Cowan sold the property for \$4,000.00 to Enoch W. Calley and his son Ralph, who converted the building into a garage known as the Springer Service Station. The stable was sold again in 1947 by the Calley family to Arthur R. Bowers who, assisted by his sons, maintained a shop for the repair of all kinds of trucks, tractors and automobiles prior to the recent purchase by Mr. and Mrs. Smith.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Colfax County Records, County Clerk's Records, Deed Books B,E,H,S,38,41,81 and 119, Colfax County Court House, Raton, New Mexico.  
Colfax County Records, County Assessor Records, Assessment Rolls, 1872-1912, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.  
See Continuation Sheet Page 1)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approximately 1/3 acre.

Quadrangle name Springer, New Mexico.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

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

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification Lots 11 and 12, Block 26, Original Townsite of Springer as filed in Colfax County Courthouse, Raton, N.M. being all property associated with the stable.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John O. Baxter, Archivist

organization State Records Center and Archives date June 7, 1979

street & number 404 Montezuma telephone (505) 827-2321

city or town Santa Fe state New Mexico 87503

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

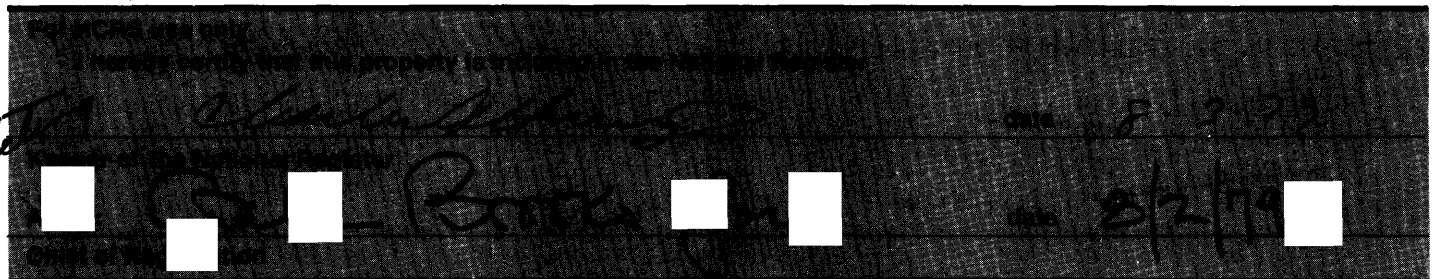
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Thomas W. Nelson*

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 6-7-79



FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUN 13 1979
DATE ENTERED	JUN 3 1979

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE #1

Federal Census Reports 1870, 1880, 1900.  
Adella Collier Collection, Scrapbook II, State Records Center and Archives  
Santa Fe, New Mexico.  
Colfax County Stockman, February 13, 1904, July 8 and 15, 1916.  
The Springer Banner, July 3, 1890.  
Anderson, George B. History of New Mexico: Its Resources and People.  
2 vols, Los Angeles, 1907.  
Twitchell, Ralph Emerson. The Leading Facts of New Mexico History, Vol. II  
Cedar Rapids, 1917.