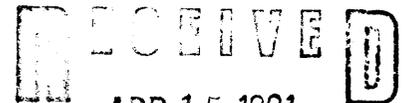


6202

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Santa Clara Hotel  
other names/site number Chamblis Hotel; City Hotel

2. Location

street & number 111 Railroad Avenue N/A not for publication  
city, town Wagon Mound N/A vicinity  
state New Mexico code NM county Mora code 033 zip code 87752

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>2</u>	<u>        </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>        </u>	<u>        </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>        </u>	<u>        </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> objects
			<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.

Thomas W Hill 4-8-91  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Historic Preservation Division, Office of Cultural Affairs  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. **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): \_\_\_\_\_

Belove Byrum 5/16/91  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/hotelCOMMERCE/restaurantCOMMERCEGOVERNMENT/post office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/restaurantWORK IN PROGRESS**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late VictorianOther: Vernacular Railroad Commercial

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation not visiblewalls brick; concreteroof not visibleother stuccoed adobe

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY

The Santa Clara Hotel and Restaurant consists of two adjacent, two-story, flat-roofed commercial buildings of unequal height and breadth. They face northwest onto the main business street of the village of Wagon Mound. The exterior walls of both buildings are constructed of adobe. The facade of the lower, wider building, which is located further north, is brick; that of the taller, more narrow building is constructed of concrete blocks cast to resemble stone. Both main facades are painted light brown. Other exterior walls have been stuccoed. The buildings are known together by the single name, Santa Clara Hotel.

The buildings have not been significantly altered and well represent their architectural and historical significance.

DESCRIPTION

The two buildings lie on three lots near the middle of a block that was once solidly occupied by commercial buildings, but now contains several vacant lots. Two one-story buildings are contiguous with the hotel on the southwest and a one-story building lies on the northeast separated by only a few feet.

The brick-facaded building, the older of the two structures comprising the Santa Clara Hotel, occupies two lots. Rectangular corner pilasters of raised brick define the ends of the building and a narrow brick cornice completes the top of the main facade. Over the windows and doors are brick, segmental-arched lintels. The first story is divided into two bays separated by a rectangular pilaster of raised brick. In the north bay are double doors with the word "office" painted in the transom windows and a long double window consisting of two 2/2 double-hung windows. In the other bay is a recessed double door flanked by display windows. A canopy supported by four metal posts shades the two first floor entrances. On the second floor are three long 2/2 double hung wooden windows and a single door directly over the first floor office door.

 See continuation sheet

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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The cast concrete facaded building occupies one lot on the southwest. Although it also has two stories, it is somewhat taller than the other which it overhangs slightly. On the first floor, offset to the southeast and occupying most of the facade, is a deeply recessed, double doorway flanked by two concrete columns and by display windows which are now reduced in size and filled in with wood. A slightly recessed single door occupies the remainder of the facade to the northwest. On the second floor are large rectangular windows, each with two large wooden casements. In each casement, ten panes are arranged in two vertical lines of five. Above the window openings are straight concrete lintels and below are concrete lug sills. A simple metal cornice is topped by corner finials.

At the ground floor level, the interior of the lower, brick-facaded building is divided into two distinct sections each entered by a set of double doors. On the northwest behind the doors labeled "office" the space has been divided into rooms. Although previously divided into living space, the present partitions are recent and unfinished. Near the front entrance a staircase leads to the second floor. The other section of the ground floor, entered through the recessed double doors, is a large undivided space with a much smaller kitchen area at the rear. This part of the building is in good condition and is currently being used as a restaurant called the Santa Clara Cafe. It has traditionally been used as an eating establishment or a saloon.

The first floor of the cast concrete facaded building is primarily taken up by one large room with a pressed metal ceiling, paneled wooden wainscoting, and an exposed adobe side wall. Originally a small, narrow room was partitioned off on the northwest side. This room was entered through the single door on the main facade and was used as a post office until after the Second World War. The main space has been occupied by a number of businesses including a barbershop, cafe, dance hall, drug store, and saloon.

The second floors of both buildings are divided into former hotel rooms. The two buildings are connected by a continuous hall which runs their entire length with a step up into the taller building. Brick or cast concrete blocks joined with an adobe and stone mortar are exposed on the interior of the front walls. Other exterior walls have original wooden wainscoting and exposed adobe walls. The rooms are now separated by walls of bare wood lath, the plaster having been removed as part of the renovation. The brick-facaded building has three front rooms and two parallel halls extending toward the back of the building. Five rooms open off of one hall and three rooms off the other. The other building has two front rooms and three rooms off a third

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hall which extends toward the rear of the building. In both buildings there are original pressed metal or wooden ceilings, wooden floors, and original woodwork around doors and windows.

The buildings have not been significantly altered. On the exterior, the canopy of the brick-facaded building has been replaced, probably more than once. The first floor display windows in the concrete block facaded building were reduced in size and filled in with wood in the early 1960s. On the interior, the major divisions of the buildings are intact, although some changes have been made in the division of interior space. For the most part major elements such as wooden floors, metal or wooden ceilings, wooden wainscoting, and door and window surrounds remain. However, the former hotel rooms are in poor condition, with unfinished walls, missing floor boards, and general deterioration. These areas are undergoing rehabilitation and are not presently in usable condition.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

(C) c.1900; c.1910

(A) c.1900-1941

Significant Dates

(C) c.1900; c.1910

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

SUMMARY

The Santa Clara Hotel is one of only a few buildings from the railroad era remaining on Railroad Avenue, the main commercial street of Wagon Mound. Located half a block from the depot, the hotel is historically significant for its associations with the railroad era from which the village of Wagon Mound originated. Architecturally it represents a vernacular expression of the commercial architecture which followed the railroad into New Mexico.

WAGON MOUND HISTORIC CONTEXT

The Santa Fe Trail

Although the town of Wagon Mound as it exists today was a product of railroad development, the immediate vicinity had long been associated with transportation. The town took its name from the distinctive shape of a nearby mesa that was a major landmark on the Cimarron Cutoff of the Santa Fe Trail. To early travelers this outcropping of rock resembled a wagon drawn by yokes of oxen. The Cimarron Cutoff was established by William Becknell in 1822 as an alternate route to the Mountain Branch which he had blazed the previous year. Under Mexico (pre-1846) there was reputedly a tax collection station near the Wagon Mound and later there was a stagecoach stop. After 1851 when Fort Union was founded, a road branched off near the Wagon Mound to the fort and there connected with the Colmor Cutoff to the Mountain branch.

Although the Cimarron Cutoff was 100 miles shorter than the Mountain Branch and reduced the trip to Santa Fe by about ten days, it was a significantly drier route. In the Santa Clara Canyon, about three miles northwest of the Wagon Mound, were springs known to early Spanish settlers as the Ojo de Santa Clara. The Wagon Mound, visible for 125 miles from the top of the Raton Pass, was a destination for travelers across the arid eastern plains and marked a stopping point and camping site where water could be obtained.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A 

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

C 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Block 40, Lots 16, 17, and 18. Wagon Mound Townsite.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The legal description of the property.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Corinne P. Sze, Ph.D  
organization Research Services of Santa Fe date 2/20/1991  
street & number 1042 Stagecoach Road telephone (505) 983-5605  
city or town Santa Fe state NM zip code 87501

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### The Nolan Grant<sup>1</sup>

In 1845, Governor Manuel Armijo authorized the last grant of land on the northern frontier of the Republic of Mexico to Gervacio (Gervais) Nolan, a naturalized Mexican citizen of French Canadian origin. The Nolan Grant (#39), sometimes called the Santa Clara Grant, was primarily range land and included the site of the future town of Wagon Mound.

In 1875 William Pinkerton bought the west half of the grant including the site of Wagon Mound for \$40,000. A native of Scotland, Pinkerton had brought improved breeds of sheep to California from Australia and New Zealand after 1848. In New Mexico he engaged in sheep raising near the Wagon Mound and by 1881 was said to have about 10,000 sheep. Although the grant was initially approved by the surveyor general in 1860, Pinkerton was involved in protracted litigation from 1881 until the claim was finally rejected in late 1896.

### Settlement Near the Wagon Mound

Before the arrival of the railroad in 1879, there was a small Hispanic community in the vicinity of the Wagon Mound called Santa Clara which in 1870 was a farming community of 89 households.<sup>2</sup> A Santa Clara post office was established in Mora County on December 8, 1876 and discontinued on July 6, 1877.<sup>3</sup>

Present Wagon Mound was one of several small towns that sprung up as a result of the construction of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad south from Raton to Las Vegas, New Mexico in 1879. In 1881 the post office was established as Pinkerton (the name Santa Clara was already in use), although the name was changed the next year to Wagon Mound.<sup>4</sup>

Typically these small railroad towns were laid out without regard for already existing settlements, in a grid pattern of streets, running parallel to the railroad tracks and the depot. The grid was only a few streets deep with a main street running either directly across from the tracks and depot or one street removed. Along this main street were built the town's principal commercial structures in styles reflecting the new expectations as well as a new range of building materials brought from points further east by improved transportation.<sup>5</sup>

1. Taylor, 151-184. Bowden IV, 817-822.
2. U.S. Census, 1870.
3. Helbok, 40.
4. Pearce, 122. McKenney's Business Directory, 1882.
5. Pratt, 179-180.

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In Wagon Mound the main street, called Railroad Avenue, faced the tracks and the depot. The development of the street seems to have followed a pattern not atypical of early railroad towns. A photo dated 1884<sup>6</sup> shows individual, unconnected, irregularly-spaced buildings facing the railroad tracks. They are primarily one-story, some have side gable roofs, and few are identifiably commercial in use. In the following years, these buildings were modified or replaced to create a main street of contiguous, mainly flat-roofed commercial buildings of one or two stories with recessed entrances and large display windows, creating a railroad-era commercial street front of stone, brick, concrete, or metal facades.

With the development of ranching and agriculture in Mora County, the town of Wagon Mound became a commercial and social center of the region. Initially cattle were brought in as part of the cattle boom of the early 1880s. Later sheep predominated and the railroad built a large sheep dipping plant and an extensive stockyard. Dry farming, especially of pinto beans, also became a major local industry. By 1902 Wagon Mound was the largest town in the sparsely populated county and a principal shipping point for cattle, sheep, wool, and agricultural products. It was claimed that as many as two million pounds of wool were shipped annually from Wagon Mound.<sup>7</sup> In 1909 farmers and ranchers established a Labor Day festival called the Mora County Farmers' Harvest Jubilee, an annual celebration that continues today as Bean Day. In the 1930s Wagon Mound was the chief distributing point for stockmen in the district<sup>8</sup> and the second largest shipping point for livestock in the New Mexico.

A decline in the significance of local agriculture led to a corresponding decline in the town of Wagon Mound's importance as a shipping point. Further, with the dominance of the automobile, Wagon Mound lost its position on the main route for travelers. Passenger service on the railroad was discontinued. A new highway bypassed the village replacing the route which had passed through town on Railroad Avenue. The population has declined from a high of about 1100 in 1950 to about 400 today. Much of historic Railroad Avenue has been lost, first to a devastating tornado on May 31, 1930 and in more recent years to dereliction and abandonment.

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6. George, 18.
  7. Mora County, Bulletin #19, 18.
  8. Inventory of County Archives, 22.

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### HISTORY OF THE SANTA CLARA HOTEL

The Santa Clara Hotel was erected and originally conducted by Epimenio Martinez, one of Wagon Mound's leading citizens. It has not been possible to document the exact construction dates of the two buildings; however, both appear much as they are today on a postcard dated 1913.<sup>10</sup> The lower building, which occupies two lots (#17 and #18 of Block 40) appears to be the older. It is a self-contained hotel and restaurant which could have stood alone. The taller, narrower building (lot #16) contains a large commercial space on the first floor, once subdivided to accommodate a small post office, and additional hotel rooms on the second which are reached only via a staircase in the other building.<sup>11</sup>

The first recorded hotel in Wagon Mound was run by "Mom and Pop Spear(s)" in 1884.<sup>12</sup> It is not known where this establishment was located. The earliest record found relating to the ownership of lots #17 and #18 of Block 40 is an 1897 deed from Esteban H. Biernbaum, Probate Judge and Trustee of the Wagon Mound townsite, to Epimenio Martinez.<sup>13</sup> Martinez also purchased the adjacent lot #16 and at some point before 1913 built a second building increasing the number of hotel rooms on the second floor and providing a large commercial space and post office on the first. In 1936 the construction date of the Santa Clara was placed at 1900.<sup>14</sup>

Martinez owned the property until the early 1920s. In the 1906 business directory, the earliest available from the period of his ownership, the Santa Clara was advertised as the only hotel in Wagon Mound. By 1913 according to both the business directory and a postcard, the name of the hotel was changed briefly to "Frye's Hotel" after the current manager. The Frye name was soon given to another hotel, a long-running establishment off the main street.<sup>15</sup> Within two years the name was apparently changed back to Santa Clara,<sup>16</sup> and so remained when Martinez sold a part of the property in 1920.

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9. Coan II, 242.

10. Private collection, Leroy and Elsie LeDoux.

11. No physical or testimonial evidence was found for the previous existence of a staircase in the second building.

12. George, 18; A Complete Business Directory of New Mexico, 1884-1985.

13. Mora County Deeds, Bk. 0, p. 6.

14. "Wagon Mound," WPA file.

15. That building was lost to fire. Bullock, SFNM, 1/5/69.

16. "Santa Clara Rooming House," New Mexico State Business Directory, 1915.

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In that year B.C. Chamblis and his wife purchased from Martinez lots #17 and #18 with the exception of a small portion of the former measuring 4'9" along Railroad Avenue.<sup>17</sup> It is not certain why Martinez retained ownership of this small strip which appears to have contained a portion of the restaurant in the original hotel building. Nevertheless, he sold this<sup>18</sup> to Chamblis along with lot #16, which contained the taller building, in 1924.

By 1921 the Santa Clara had become the "Chamblis Hotel and Cafe," and included a wholesale and retail bakery.<sup>19</sup> Chamblis may have tried various businesses since he is listed as a grocer in the 1923 directory. Chamblis was still the proprietor in 1930 when the name was apparently changed to the "City Hotel and Cafe."<sup>20</sup> So it remained after David Boyd took over the proprietorship between 1936 and 1938.<sup>21</sup> In 1936 the hotel had no running water and rooms could be had for \$1.00 and up.<sup>22</sup> While Chamblis was proprietor his family occupied living quarters in the hotel behind the office.<sup>23</sup> David Boyd owned the hotel from the late 1930s into the early 1940s. It passed through several owners in the 1940s and 1950s and ceased to be a hotel in the early 1960s when the owners, Felipe and Helen Lopez, sold the buildings and the hotel furniture separately.<sup>24</sup> Since that time a succession of owners have attempted to restore the buildings and revive the hotel. In the early 1980s it was called the Conestoga Inn.

In the mid-1980s William Arnold returned to his native Wagon Mound from Colorado where he had<sup>25</sup> lived for many years. With his wife, Rusty, he bought the Santa Clara Hotel and several other properties. William Arnold has since passed away. The restoration of the Santa Clara Hotel continues under the direction of Mrs. Arnold.

The hotel was located a short walk from the depot. It served as lodging for salesmen and others visiting Wagon Mound, a first accommodation for newcomers to town, and a residence for non-permanent members of the community such as<sup>26</sup> teachers or the geologists who came looking for oil in the late 1920s. People from outlying areas stayed there when coming to avail

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17. Mora County Deeds, Bk. 1, p. 411.

18. *Ibid.*, Bk. 3, p. 273.

19. New Mexico State Business Directory, 1921.

20. *Ibid.* 1930.

21. *Ibid.* 1936, 1938.

22. "Wagon Mound," WPA file.

23. Wiggins interview.

24. LeDoux interview.

25. Mora County Deeds, Bk. T-6, p. 340, July 20, 1984.

26. Farquer interview.

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themselves of the services available in town such as a doctor or druggist.<sup>27</sup> The hotel was also the site of social events such as Bean Day dances. The commercial space on the ground floor of the newer building was also a focus of community life. For many years it contained a barber shop. The post office remained in the building until after the Second World War.

EPIMENIO MARTINEZ

Martinez was born in Taos on July 17, 1859 to a prominent Spanish family. His father, Pablo Martinez, was a nephew of Taos' Padre Martinez, a well-known and controversial religious and political leader in the Mexican and early Territorial Periods. Epimenio Martinez engaged successively in farming and stock raising in Taos, Union, and Colfax Counties before settling in Wagon Mound where he became one of the most prominent and influential men of the locality. In 1906, in partnership with Juan R. Aguilar, he established a general store at Wagon Mound under the name of Wagon Mound Mercantile Company of which he served as president for fourteen years. He had large and valuable ranch interests in the area and also did an extensive business in buying and selling land and livestock. He was the organizer of the Bank of Wagon Mound and served as its president. His biographer specifically cites his erection of the Santa Clara Hotel as well as the Wagon Mound Opera House as examples of his "civic loyalty and liberality."<sup>28</sup> Active in the promotion of education, he was one of the leaders in building the school house at Wagon Mound. He was among the business leaders who established the Bean day celebration in 1909. Like his father he was active in Republican politics and held political offices in Colfax and Mora Counties, including probate judge. He served as postmaster in Wagon Mound. In 1897 he was appointed territorial sheep inspector. New Mexico's governor selected him in 1900 to represent the Territory as a commissioner to the International Exposition in Paris for five months. He died March 11, 1939. In the 1945 Historical Encyclopedia of New Mexico,<sup>29</sup> he was described as "one of the outstanding citizens of New Mexico. Martinez is still remembered by present residents of Wagon Mound as the richest man in town."<sup>30</sup>

27. Marie Berlier remembers well her stay there in 1927 with a sick child. (Berlier interview).

28. Coan, II, 242.

29. Anderson, 668-669; Coan, 241-242; Historical Encyclopedia I, 831; NMHR (July 1939): 304.

30. Berlier interview.

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## HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Architecturally, these buildings represent the vernacular, commercial main-street architecture of the small communities which grew up along the railroad in New Mexico. This region had for several centuries relied upon local materials (adobe, stone, and wood) and an indigenously developed style in which there was little differentiation of commercial structures. The opening of the Santa Fe Trail had brought new stylistic influences primarily based on the Greek Revival and new building materials such as fired brick, milled lumber, nails, and window glass, although the reliance on adobe as a basic wall material continued particularly in smaller, more isolated communities.

The coming of the railroad brought an influx of population and a new prosperity based on being able to move out local agricultural and mining products quickly and economically. The railroad also made possible the efficient importation of a whole range of new building materials. With these came new stylistic ideas for commercial buildings based on materials thought to be more sturdy and modern than adobe, such as brick and stone; and more commercially effective such as recessed entries and large display windows. Styles popular in the Midwest for commercial structures, such as the Italianate, were seen as progressive and representative of the new prosperity made possible by the railroad. Older towns made over their business districts or created new ones. New towns constructed main streets in the image of Midwestern America.

In smaller, more remote towns, such as Wagon Mound, these changes might be expressed through the use of new materials essentially as decoration and the vernacular application of suggestive detailing rather than through bold expressions of new styles. The Santa Clara Hotel buildings are essentially adobe structures with railroad-era facades of brick or cast concrete. Typical are the recessed doorways flanked by large display windows and the detailing such as segmented arches over fenestration, raised brickwork marking edges and divisions, small cornices, and concrete columns.

The 1930 tornado which destroyed several of the other business buildings on Railroad Avenue left the hotel unscathed, the best of only a few remaining examples of the railroad-era buildings that comprised the main street of Wagon Mound.

Historically the Santa Clara Hotel represents the era of Wagon Mound's prosperity based on its position on the railroad and on the success of agriculture in the region.

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The Period of Significance and Significant Dates for Criterion C (c.1900 and c.1910) are rounded approximate building dates based on the 1897 deed establishing Martinez' ownership of the property on which the oldest section of the hotel was built and on a postcard dated 1913 showing both buildings. The Period of Significance for Criterion A (c.1900-1941) extends from the approximate building date of the earliest portion of the hotel to the 50-year limit of the National Register which preceded the decline of Wagon Mound.

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### Interviews

Rusty Arnold, 11/1/90

Marie Berlier, 2/9/91.

Buelah Farquer, 11/1/90

Elsie and Leroy LeDoux, 11/1/90

Anita Wiggins, 2/9/91.