

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED AUG 6 1978
DATE ENTERED

**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

Crowley Cheese Factory

AND/OR COMMON

Crowley Cheese Factory

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Healdville Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Healdville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Vermont

STATE

Vermont

CODE

50

COUNTY

Rutland

CODE

021

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

__DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

__STRUCTURE

__SITE

__OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

__PUBLIC

PRIVATE

__BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

__IN PROCESS

__BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED

__UNOCCUPIED

__WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

__YES: UNRESTRICTED

__NO

PRESENT USE

__AGRICULTURE -- __MUSEUM

__COMMERCIAL __PARK

__EDUCATIONAL __PRIVATE RESIDENCE

__ENTERTAINMENT __RELIGIOUS

__GOVERNMENT __SCIENTIFIC

INDUSTRIAL __TRANSPORTATION

__MILITARY __OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Randolph B. Smith

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Belmont

VICINITY OF

STATE

Vermont

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the Town Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Mount Holly

STATE

Vermont

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey

DATE

1978

__FEDERAL STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN

Montpelier

STATE

Vermont

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<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

The Crowley Cheese Factory stands on a gently sloping hillside at the intersection of the Healdville-Belmont road (Town Highway 2) and the road to the nearby Crowley family farm (Town Highway 41). The cheese factory and farm buildings (the latter containing the local post office) constitute part of the scattered settlement of Healdville in the township of Mount Holly, and are located about one and one-third miles southwest of the Healdville railroad crossing.

Built in 1881-82, the Crowley Cheese Factory retains essentially its original appearance with only minor alterations. The cheese factory consists of an unembellished wood-frame, clapboarded building on a rectangular plan of about thirty feet by forty feet. Capped by a gable roof (now sheathed with asphalt shingles in place of the original wood shingles) with a rebuilt center chimney, the building is oriented with its four-bay side elevations perpendicular to the Healdville-Belmont road.

On its three-bay main (south) gable elevation, the cheese factory rises two and one-half stories while on the opposite gable end the downward slope of the ground exposes a half-story basement. Attached to the right (east) elevation is a one-story, shed-roofed wing of ten feet by twenty feet that was rebuilt and enlarged circa 1975. Currently (1979) a wood-frame, gable-roofed ell is being constructed against the north end of the left (west) elevation.

The main elevation is marked by a vertical succession of three loading doorways (one on each floor) centered under a hoisting boom that projects from the gable peak; a small concrete (formerly wood) loading dock stands outside the first-floor doorway. The double-door main entrance to the building occupies the east corner of this elevation, disrupting the generally symmetrical spacing of the six-over-six sash windows. (On the other elevations, the openings are arranged symmetrically.)

The interior of the Crowley Cheese Factory remains essentially in its original arrangement. The main (first) floor is dominated by the "make room" or vat room, where the actual production of the Colby type of Cheddar cheese occurs using traditional methods and equipment. The north half of the same floor is occupied by the drying room, where the fresh wheels of cheese are placed on open racks to dry for about one week. The shed wing off the main floor contains the equipment for waxing the dry wheels.

The waxed cheeses are stored for aging (two to six months or more to achieve the "mild" to "sharp" range of flavors) in the basement or in a mechanically cooled room on the second floor. The remainder of the building is used mostly for general storage, with the south end of the attic half-story being dominated by the large wood windlass used to service the loading doorways. The west ell now under construction will contain a bulk milk storage tank on its ground floor and cheese drying racks on the upper floor.

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 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 type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1881-82

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Crowley Cheese Factory in Healdville, Vermont, holds the distinction of being the oldest active cheese factory in Vermont and among the oldest in the United States remaining in continuous operation. Founded in 1882 by A. Winfield Crowley (1855-1935), the cheese factory belonged to the Crowley family for the following eighty-five years while three generations of Crowleys were the principal cheesemakers. During that period, the number of cheese factories in Vermont dwindled from hundreds to a handful. The Crowley Cheese Factory has become the last nineteenth century cheese factory in the state that continues using traditional methods and manual equipment, thereby perpetuating a pre-industrial enterprise that has nearly disappeared in the United States. The factory building retains essentially its original utilitarian architectural character, and Crowley cheese has achieved a national reputation for its traditional quality.

The original secretary's records reveal that on May 17, 1882, A. W. Crowley - then a teacher and the superintendent of the Mount Holly schools in addition to working on the family farm - called a meeting of "all persons interested in a Cheese Factory, near Alfred Crowley's" (his father). At that meeting, the A. W. Crowley Cheese Manufacturing Association was established and rules were adopted to govern the operation of a new cheese factory and the supply of milk by its "patrons", who owned nearby farms and agreed to sell their surplus milk to the factory. The patrons also "voted to accept the offer of A. W. Crowley to make the cheese and deliver it at the depot". The Crowley family was already fully experienced in cheese-making, having been doing it for the previous half-century on their farm located a short distance uphill (southeast) of the new factory.

The first by-law of the Association defined the operating season of the cheese factory from the beginning of June to the end of September (extended in 1884 to include May). This period coincided with the large increase in milk production that occurred during the summer, also the most difficult season to store fresh milk prior to the introduction of mechanical cooling. Partly in exchange for their milk, the patrons received whey (a cheese by-product) from the factory to use for animal feed.

At the time of the establishment of the Crowley Cheese Factory, other cheese factories existed in the township of Mount Holly and almost every other village in Vermont, which was an overwhelmingly agricultural state. The cheese factories performed an essential community service of convert-

Continued on Continuation Sheet 1; Item #8; pg. 2

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Secretary's Records" (sic), A. W. Crowley Cheese Factory; manuscript with entries from 1882 to 1959 in the possession of Randolph B. Smith, Belmont, Vermont.

Stephens, Rockwell. "The Real Crowley Cheese". Vermont Life, XXIV (Summer, 1970), 42-46.

Continued on Continuation Sheet 3; Item #9; pg. 2

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 2

UTM REFERENCES

A	18	679150	4810050	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Crowley Cheese Factory occupies an irregularly shaped lot of approximately two acres that adjoins the south side of Town Highway 2 both northeast and southwest of its intersection with Town Highway 41.

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

Hugh H. Henry

ORGANIZATION

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

STREET & NUMBER

Pavilion Building

CITY OR TOWN

Montpelier

DATE

June 14, 1979

TELEPHONE

(802) 828-3226

STATE

Vermont

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

William B. Pinney

TITLE Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 7-31-79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Carol Stull

DATE

10-11-79

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Ann M. Duggan

DATE

10/11/79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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CONTINUATION SHEET 1

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

ing the local surplus of fresh milk into a less perishable and more valuable commodity that was shipped by train to the urban markets of southern New England and New York.

Beginning in 1883, the patrons of the A. W. Crowley Cheese Factory held a meeting in the spring of every year to elect officers and to set the rate paid to A. W. Crowley for making the cheese. At the 1912 meeting, his son, George A. Crowley (1884-1963), was elected a director. But A. W. Crowley was only about half-way through his career at that point: he continued operating the factory for another quarter-century. By the time of his death in 1935, he had been the cheesemaker for fifty-three years, possibly a record among his fellow craftsmen.

The generational transition was marked in 1937 by the deletion of the founder's initials from the factory name. Other changes occurred in traditional practices. After the development of mechanical refrigeration, part of the Crowley production was shipped to commercial refrigerated warehouses for storage and then returned to Healdville prior to delivery to customers. The operating season was extended beyond the traditional summer months. And after 1944, the annual patrons' meetings were not held for a decade; although revived briefly in the latter 1950's, the practice ceased permanently about 1960.

The cessation of the patrons' meetings reflected directly the profound and destructive changes exerted on Vermont agriculture by various economic, technological, and social forces following the Second World War. Small family farms, especially those in the so-called "hill towns" such as Mount Holly with poorer soils and steeper slopes, were abandoned at a catastrophic rate. In 1945, there were still almost 25,000 farms in Vermont; by 1979, that number plunged to barely 3,000.

One after another, the small farms that supplied milk to the Crowley Cheese Factory succumbed. The final blow for many farms throughout Vermont came in the early 1960's with the required conversion to bulk milk cooling tanks that abruptly eliminated small deliveries in milk cans. Having lost most of its patrons, the Crowley Cheese Factory shifted to a different source of supply, the milk thereafter being hauled by tank truck from a commercial creamery in another town. With that shift of supply, the cheese factory lost its traditional role in the local community.

The final succession of Crowley cheesemakers occurred in 1963 when George A. Crowley died and his son, Robert (1913-1966), took over the factory.

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However the latter's tenure proved unexpectedly brief: only three years later, the death of Robert Crowley suddenly ended the Crowley family tradition of cheesemaking, and the cheese factory was sold to the current owner. Since then, the factory has continued to operate under the Crowley name and produces about 150,000 pounds annually of the Colby type of Cheddar cheese. The original building together with the traditional methods and equipment used in the cheesemaking serve to perpetuate a substantial part of the Crowley heritage.

The property being nominated to the National Register comprises the Crowley Cheese Factory and its lot of about two acres of related land that has been transferred from the Crowley family farm to enable its use by the cheese factory.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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CONTINUATION SHEET 3

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Personal interview of Peter B. Smith, Manager of the Crowley Cheese
Factory, Healdville, Vermont by Hugh H. Henry on March 9, 1979.