

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 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post
other names/site number Thunderbird Trading Post

2. Location

street & number 7650 Frontage Road (Old Route 66) not for publication
city or town _____ vicinity
Bluewater
state New Mexico code NM county Cibola code 006 zip code 87005

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 for 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.)

Arthur M. Stib SHPO 02 February 2006
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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 certifying 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:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Linda McClelland 3/21/06

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

The Historic and Architectural Resources of Route 66 Through New Mexico

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: department store (curio/trading post)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

foundation CONCRETE
walls CONCRETE; ADOBE; STUCCO; STONE
roof ASPHALT
other

Narrative Description
(see Section 7-5 through 7-10)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- 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 is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations N/A

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** moved from its original location.
- 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION
COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1954-1955

Significant Dates

1954

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(See Section 8-10 through 8-22).

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(See Section 9-23).

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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 – National Park Service, Santa Fe, NM
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post
Name of Property

Cibola, New Mexico
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.5 acres

UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 13 228385 3908455
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(See Section 10-24).

Boundary Justification

(See Section 10-24).

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Philip Thomason/Teresa Douglass
organization Thomason and Associates date November 8, 2005
street & number 1907 21st Ave. S. telephone 615-385-4960
city or town Nashville state TN zip code 37212

Additional Documentation

submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (see attached *Bluewater, N. Mex.* 7.5-minute topographic map).

A **Sketch map** (see Figure 7-2).

Photographs

(See Section Photo 25 through Photo 26).

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO) or FPO for any additional items

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Curtis and Gayle Lengefeld
street & number HC 62, Box 3015 telephone 505-870-6952
city or town Thoreau state NM zip code 87323

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 listing. 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 20303.

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Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post
Vic. Bluewater, Cibola County, New Mexico

Description

Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post is a one-story, commercial building of primarily concrete block and adobe construction completed in 1954. The building is located on the west side of the Interstate-40 Frontage Road (old U.S. 66) approximately 1.5 miles north of the community of Bluewater, Cibola County, New Mexico. The building is located on a 2.5-acre parcel and is bounded on the west by the right-of-way of Interstate 40 and on the east by the right-of-way of Route 66. No other buildings are in the immediate vicinity of the trading post. A gravel driveway leads to the front of the building from the frontage road. The building has undergone a few changes since its 1954 construction, yet retains a sufficient degree of integrity to communicate its significance under Criterion A.

Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post is located along a stretch of old U.S. 66 between Bluewater and Thoreau. Modern Interstate 40 sits to the west and to the east is the tracks of the old Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway. The area is characterized by scrub desert growth and black volcanic flows. To the southeast, Mount Taylor (11,301') forms a dramatic backdrop. A half-circle driveway provides entry to the building.

The trading post consists of a poured concrete foundation, a stucco exterior and sloping roof of rolled asphalt (Photo 1). The main (east) façade faces the four-lane divided highway of Route 66 which is now used as the I-40 Frontage Road. The south wing of the building is of adobe construction and the main façade of this wing has two entrances and four window openings (Photo 2). The two south bay window openings have been enclosed with wood panels. The south entrance has added wood panels. The north entrance has an original single-light and three-panel door. The glass is missing in this door and it has been replaced with a wood panel. This entrance is flanked by two, original windows. Both windows are six-light steel casements design with two-light steel transoms and wood sills.

The north wing of the building is of concrete block construction. On the main façade this wing has a central entrance that has been enclosed with a wood panel. The entrance is flanked by two window openings. The original windows have been replaced with ca. 1970, paired eight-over-eight and six-over-six aluminum sash windows.

This façade is distinguished by seven wall paintings. From south to north these are as follows: 1) A stylized painting of unknown design in black, yellow, and red; 2) A Native American holding a hoop in shades of tan and red; 3) A Native American standing and playing a drum in shades of green, white, tan and red (Photo 3); 4) A Native American on horseback waving his left hand in shades of brown and tan; 5) A Native American woman preparing food in a bowl at a table with a backdrop of a rug in shades of blue, tan, green, and red (Photo 4); 6) A Native American woman shown weaving a rug or blanket in shades of brown, yellow, green, and blue (Photo 5), and; 7) Two Native American girls walking with pots on their heads in shades of tan, blue, green and red (Photo 6). Above the storefront and murals are several layers of painted

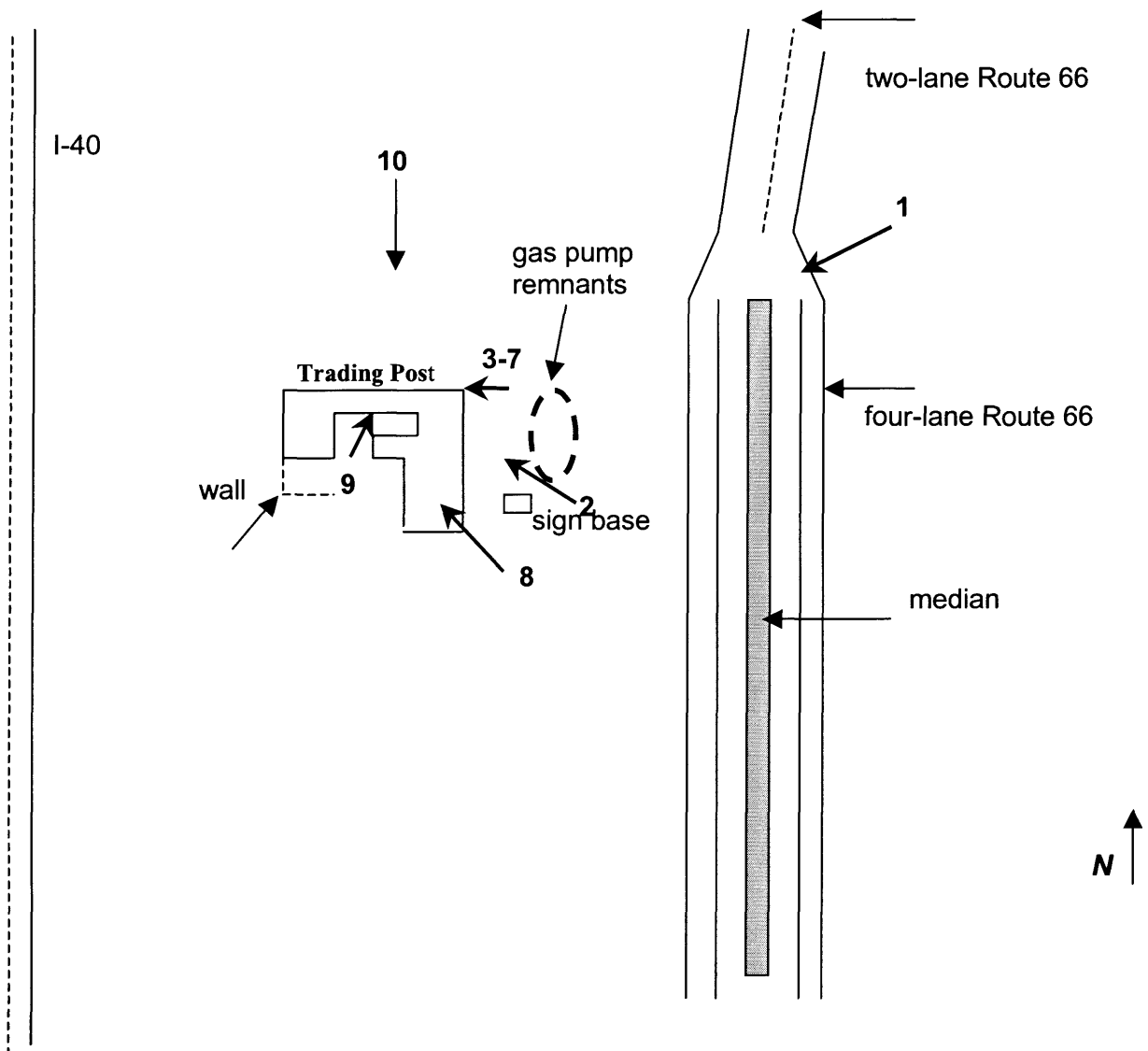
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Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post
Cibola County, New Mexico

Figure 7-2: Site Plan and Photo Key for Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post.



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Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post
Vic. Bluewater, Cibola County, New Mexico

signs. These have largely faded or are superimposed over one another. Legible words are “jewelry” and “rugs” on the north wing, and “bargains” and “Bowlin” on the south wing. Also visible on the south wing is the Bowlin Company logo, a running Native American holding a tomahawk and wearing a headband and feather (Photo 7).

On the south elevation of the building are three window openings and an entrance bay (Photo 8). The entrance bay has been enclosed with wood panels. The east bay window opening has been enclosed with a wood panel. The two remaining windows are original six-light wood casement design. Between the entrance bay and east window is a faded sign with the word “Rugs” visible. At the eaves are exposed rafters.

At the southwest corner of the building is a ca. 1970 shed roof bathroom wing with weatherboard siding. This addition rests on concrete blocks and contains the remnants of a shower, sink, and toilet. This wing is in poor condition. At the rear or west façade is an original four-light, steel casement window with a concrete sill (Photo 9). On the south façade of this wing is an original fifteen-light steel window with the corner panels of three-light casement design. The window has a five-light transom and concrete sill. At the rear of the south section are two door openings and a window opening, all of which are covered with wood panels. Extending from the roofline is an interior stone and concrete chimney.

The north façade of the main section has two original windows (Photo 10). These are steel, six-light casement design with two-light rectangular transoms. The west window has had one of the casement panels replaced with a single-light steel window. This façade also has faded signage with “Rugs” visible and other geometric designs. At the rear of the north section is an original concrete block wing, which has a central entrance and two window bays. The entrance has a ca. 2002 paneled wood door and the opening has been partially enclosed with wood panels. The east bay window is original paired three-light steel casement design with a concrete sill. The west bay window has a two-light sliding track aluminum window added ca. 2004.

The west façade of this wing has two window openings with ca. 2004 sliding track, two-light windows. Windows on the south façade of this wing are also ca. 2004 sliding track design. On the south façade of the rear wing are three window openings and an entrance opening. The entrance has been enclosed with a wood paneled door. The west windows are original twenty-four-light steel design with paired inset six-light casement panels. The windows have eight-light steel transoms and concrete sills. The window east of the entrance is fifteen-light design with the two end three-light panels of casement design. This window has a five-light transom and concrete sill. The north section also has a central wing extending from the west façade. This wing has an entrance opening with an added wood panel on the north façade.

The interior of the building consists of two large rooms originally used for merchandise display, and smaller rooms in the rear wing used for storage, offices, and private living quarters. The two rooms in the main section of the building has stuccoed walls, a concrete floor and ceilings with exposed unhewn beams (Figure 8-6). The interior displays wood support posts in the two main rooms. The rear wing section used as living quarters has stuccoed walls, wood floors, and stuccoed ceilings. The original kitchen in this wing has been removed but the original bathroom remains extant.

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Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post
Vic. Bluewater, Cibola County, New Mexico

In front of the building is a poured concrete foundation for two gas pumps. Also in front of the building is a concrete foundation, which served as a base for a steel sign (Photo 2).

Once common along Route 66 and other highways in the Southwest, the curio trading post is exceedingly rare today. Other than modern variations of the business that cluster at state lines and town entries, the historic prototype along rural stretches of old U.S. 66 has all but disappeared. Many, situated close to the right-of-way, were destroyed with the coming of the interstate or withered away due to a loss of business from the new highway. The 2003 resurvey of New Mexico Route 66 resources documented a number of curio trading posts inventoried during the 1992 inventory had been demolished. The resurvey identified only of two extant rural curio trading posts. Of these, Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post was considered the best example and recommended eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.¹ With the exception of the replacement of some windows and doors and general trend of deterioration, the building retains sufficient integrity to communicate its historical significance under Criterion A.

¹ David Kammer, *Route 66 Through New Mexico: Re-survey Report*. (Prepared for the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division), 2003, 22-23.

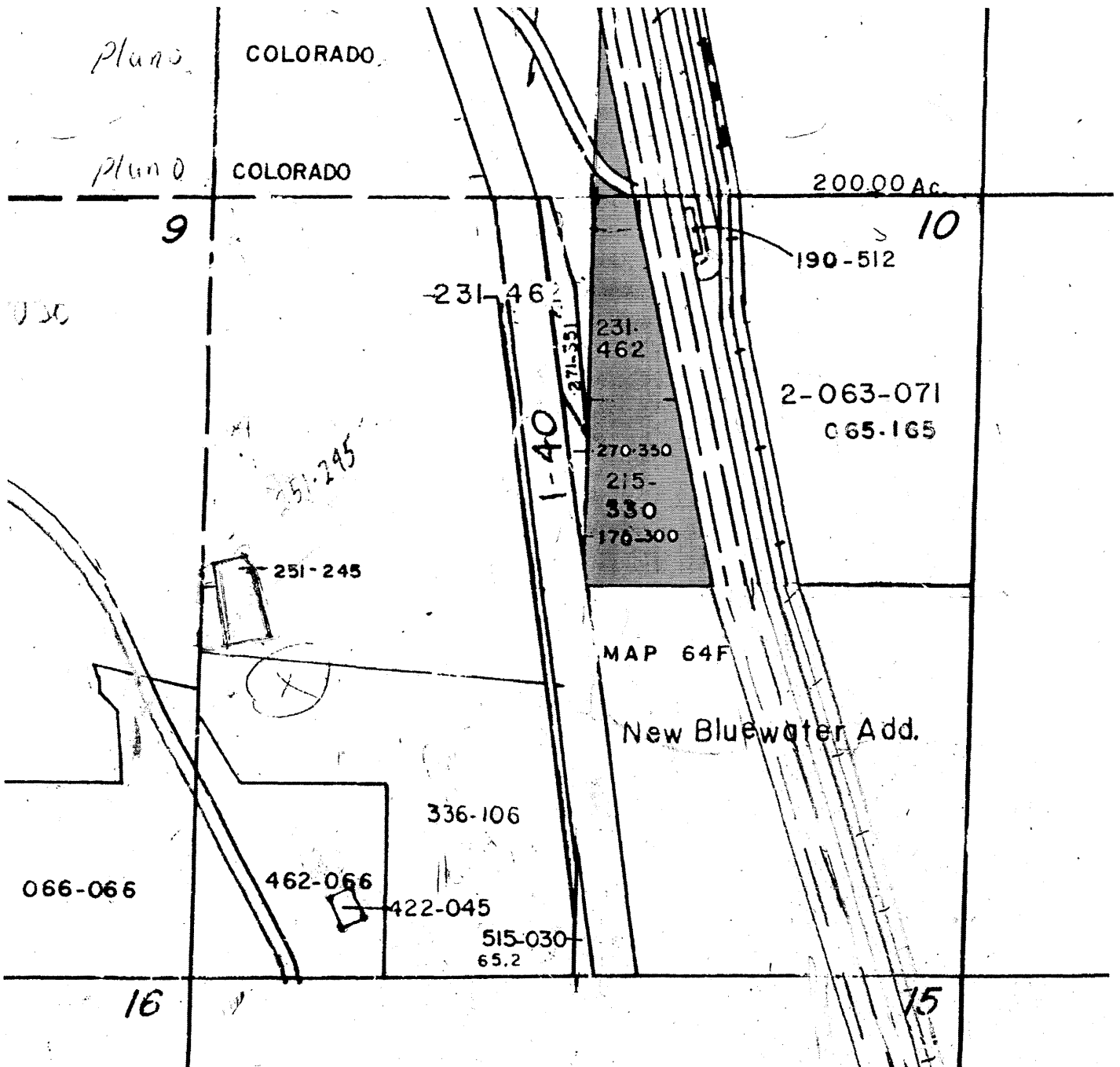
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Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post
Vic. Bluewater, Cibola County, New Mexico

Figure 7-1: Parcel Map of the Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post. (1" = 200')



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Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post
Vic. of Bluewater, Cibola County, New Mexico

Statement of Significance

Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post meets listing for the National Register under Criterion A for its role in the transportation history of Route 66 and as a representative commercial development along this highway corridor. Initially established in the mid-1930s, the Old Crater Trading Post proved to be a successful roadside enterprise that spawned a chain of similar stores throughout the region. Rebuilt in 1954, the store grew from a traditional trading post to one primarily aimed at highway travelers and tourists. Its emphasis on Native American products is reflective of the tourist trade along U.S. 66 in New Mexico, and its insistence on the authenticity of these products made it unique among many shops. No longer in use, the store retains much of its original configuration and design, and has had minimal alterations since its construction. Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post is representative of the type of specialty store catering to tourists which flourished along Route 66 until the construction of the interstate in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As such, the building meets the registration requirements of the property type of Recreation/Travel Stops/Destinations within *The Historic and Architectural Resources of Route 66 through New Mexico* Multiple Property Documentation Form.

Historical Context

The Old Crater Trading Post was established along Route 66 near the village of Bluewater, New Mexico in 1936. Owner and operator Claude Bowlin built the commercial enterprise and named it after a nearby volcanic crater that had become a local tourist attraction. Bowlin had an extensive background in commercial trade, particularly with Native Americans, and came from a long line of traders and merchants. In the late nineteenth century, Claude Bowlin's grandfather moved his family to Oklahoma to set up trade with the Cherokee Nation. Claude's father, James Bennett Bowlin, moved his family on to New Mexico settling in Locust Grove where in 1915 he opened a mercantile store at Fort Sumner.²

Claude Bowlin began his mercantile career in 1912 at the age of twenty-one as an off-reservation trader in Gallup, New Mexico, where he worked for the A.B. McGaffey Lumbering Company. Gallup was on the southern periphery of the Navajo Reservation and the majority of Bowlin's customers at the company store were Navajos. He quickly became the primary trader with the Navajo dealing in commodities such as rugs, jewelry, sheep, and wool. World War I briefly interrupted Bowlin's career as a merchant, and following his tour of duty he married Willa Harding from Bluewater Valley in 1919. He tried his hand at ranching for a while, but soon realized that he was not well suited for farming and by 1922 he had returned to the business of trade. After first working for the Gallup Mercantile Company, Bowlin moved to Grants, New Mexico and purchased the Orange Front Soda Shop, a combination confectionary/drugstore where Bowlin also dealt in Navajo rugs.³

² Thomas Arthur Repp, *Route 66 The Romance of the West* (Lynnwood, WA: Mock Turtle Press) 2002, 41.

³ Ibid.

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Vic. of Bluewater, Cibola County, New Mexico

In 1932 Bowlin traded his soda shop for "Shady Corners," a highway business situated on four acres west of Farmington, New Mexico. The development included a general store, service station, and campground. Most of Bowlin's regular customers were Navajos and he continued to develop a trusting relationship with the tribe's members, especially its artists. In the mid-1930s, Bowlin was briefly involved as a partner of a mercantile business called Indian Home Trading Company, which was based in Gallup. In 1936 he decided to sell his interest in the company and built the Old Crater Trading Post along U.S. 66 just north of Bluewater.⁴

The move from Farmington to Route 66 reflected the realities of the tourist trade. Numerous curio and trading stores opened along U.S. 66 during the early 1930s and Bowlin sought to create an authentic environment for Navajo goods and products. The Old Crater Trading Post reflected the traditional trading posts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in both its appearance and operation. The original 1936 structure was two-stories in height and of frame and log construction (Figures 8-1 & 8-2). Its unpainted exterior and simple form reflected its practical, unassuming character, while the modest interior with its variety of merchandise, warm stove and casual atmosphere offered a welcoming spot for regulars and newcomers alike to sit and visit. In his history of Route 66, Thomas Arthur Repp provides this description of Old Crater Trading Post:

Its grounds were filled with corrals and dipping vats, shearing sheds and other amenities designed for the traditional Navajo trader. Inside, a pot-bellied stove brewed a kettle of coffee while a roof support post studded with nails held cups. Shelves overflowed with denim pants and Pendleton shawls, horse bridles and canned peaches. Pawned items packed the walk-in vault set behind the stairs. Any customer—whether arriving by horse or automobile—received with the purchase of a bag of flour a free can of Clabber Girl Baking Powder. Claude Bowlin—the man whom the Navajos called *Nahtsonshi* or "mouse"—silently served all.⁵

In addition to being the local mercantile, the trading post also became the center of community life for the surrounding Navajo population. The Bowlin family sponsored a number of activities such as chicken pulls, buckboard races and card games. The business was also a favored place to stop and chat, catch up with neighbors and friends, and perhaps has a smoke in the store's "bull pen."⁶ A man of honor and his word, Claude Bowlin was well-respected among the Navajo tribe, and likewise he held the Native Americans in high regard. When a local Navajo asked the Bowlins to raise his child so that he would become familiar with the white man's world, Claude and Willa agreed and took the boy under their wing. Their "adopted" son, Tom Lee, grew up to become in 1966 the first Navajo elected to the New Mexico State Senate.⁷

⁴ Ibid., 41-42.

⁵ Repp, "Old Crater Trading Post." 42.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

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Vic. of Bluewater, Cibola County, New Mexico

At the time Bowlin constructed his trading post along U.S. 66, the route through this portion of New Mexico still remained unpaved. His business closely resembled the traditional trading centers of old and he largely catered to a local clientele. Gradually, however, things began to change. By 1938, the entire length of U.S. 66 was paved which dramatically increased traffic through this section of New Mexico.⁸ To keep pace with the changing times, Bowlin added gas pumps and refrigeration units to his business. He also marketed Navajo dolls and souvenir moccasins to passing tourists and hired silversmiths and rug weavers to work at the trading post. Change was gradual at first and most of Bowlin's customers continued to be local Navajos. In the years following World War II, the nature of the business changed dramatically as area tourism boomed and focus of the trade shifted to accommodating travelers along Route 66.⁹

A savvy businessman, Bowlin saw the opportunity that the increasing tourism offered. During the 1940s, Bowlin, joined by other family members, built and opened three more stores in southern and eastern New Mexico. These included the Continental Divide Trading Post located between Deming and Lordsburg, the Wagon Wheel near the town of Gage, and Akela Flats just west of Las Cruces on old U.S highways 70 and 80. The Bowlin chain of stores expanded further in the 1950s with the establishment of the Old West and Jackrabbit Trading Posts near Las Cruces, and a store called the "Running Indian," the name of which tradition states was inspired by Bowlin's adopted son Tom, located north of Alamogordo. Each of the stores was managed and operated by a family member, and most lived at the property that they managed. Their success was such that the family incorporated in 1953. Initial officers of Bowlin's Incorporated were: Claude M. Bowlin, president; Claude W. Bowlin (Claude M.'s eldest son), 1st vice president; Joe Bowlin (Claude M.'s nephew), 2nd vice president; Frank McClure (Claude M.'s son-in-law), treasurer; and Willa Harding Bowlin (Claude M.'s wife), secretary.¹⁰

The chain of Bowlin stores were designed to serve tourists offering refreshments and souvenirs, and each had some sort of eye-catching device to draw in potential customers. In the face of a growing number of curio shops that often called themselves "trading posts," Claude Bowlin sought to distinguish his stores as true to the ways of old time traders. Bowlin continued to deal with area Native Americans and made a strong effort to educate passing tourists about tribal cultures. He hired artists from area reservations to work in his stores and he printed and distributed pamphlets that taught tourists how to identify authentic Navajo jewelry. Bowlin became a member of the United Indian Traders Association (UITA), which set standards for the creation of American Indian arts and crafts, and sold only UITA silverwork in his stores.¹¹ With the success of their new chain of stores, the Bowlins decided to demolish the first Old Crater Trading Post and construct a new building on the site. The new one-story, concrete block and adobe building, which remains today, was completed in the spring of 1954 (Figures 8-3 & 8-4). The new structure retained much of the original building's footprint, and the business continued under the name Bowlin's Old Crater Trading

⁸ Michael Cassity, *Route 66 Corridor National Historic Context Study*, (Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, National Trails System Office, National Park Service, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 2004), 141-148.

⁹ Repp, *Route 66 The Romance of the West*, 43.

¹⁰ Ibid., Cecelia Roton Perrow, "Claude Bowlin Indian Trader," Northern Arizona University, 1994.

¹¹ Repp, *Route 66 The Romance of the West*, 43.

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Vic. of Bluewater, Cibola County, New Mexico

Post. The building's eye-catching artwork of Native Americans in traditional settings was originally created by Conrad Barrio from Juarez, Mexico (Figure 8-5). Touch-ups and changes over the years were made by Earl Sherman and Evan Freymiller, a minister to the Navajos and a part-time sign painter. Frank McClure and Earl Sherman created the plaster casts of Native American figurines.¹²

Shortly after the new store was built, Claude Bowlin's daughter Hope and her husband Frank McClure assumed management of Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post. As was common, the couple lived at the property while they operated the business.¹³ In 1956, Hope and Frank McClure elected to lease the store rather than manage it and at this time the name of the business was changed to the Thunderbird Trading Post. This arrangement continued until 1963 when the McClures terminated their lease with Bowlin's Incorporated and the business reverted to a managed enterprise. On-site managers, including Claude and Willa Bowlin's youngest son Michael and his wife, lived at and managed the trading post until its closure in 1973.¹⁴

The closure of Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post was precipitated by the construction of Interstate 40 through the region in the early 1970s. The appearance of the interstate took its toll on many area businesses along Route 66 as travelers flocked to the new highway. Claude M. Bowlin had been enjoying retirement for several years by the time his trading post on U.S. 66 closed in 1973. He died shortly thereafter, and his widow, Willa, sold the property to Charles and Emma Mills for missionary purposes. The deed, dated November 1, 1976, stipulated that the property was being conveyed "for religious purposes only" and adamantly restricted the development of any commercial enterprise on the two- and one-half acre site. The building was home to the Bluewater Bible School and Church during the 1980s and 1990s. In recent years the property was sold to the present owners, Curtis and Gayle Lengefeld, who hope to restore the building.

The Bowlin family, however, continued its career in trading and merchandising as Bowlin Travel Center Incorporated and expanded their businesses throughout New Mexico and Arizona. The corporation came to include over a dozen highway retail stores, a wholesale Indian jewelry business, and an outdoor advertising company. During the 1990s, the corporation, with Michael L. Bowlin at the helm, became a publicly traded company.¹⁵

¹² Perrow, "Claude Bowlin Indian Trader,"

¹³ C. Patricia McClure, "Old Crater/Thunderbird Trading Posts," Letter to Thomason and Associates, 26 May 2005.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid; Repp, *Route 66 The Romance of the West*, 43.

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Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post
Vic. of Bluewater, Cibola County, New Mexico

Situated along the roadside, Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post stands as testament to the heyday of Route 66 and is a representative example of the types of businesses that once flourished along the corridor in New Mexico. The trading post reflects the history of commercial development along Route 66 — specifically the rise of the curio trading post and its decline brought about by interstate construction. As such, the building represents the growth and development in the trade of Native American crafts, which became an important source of income in this region of the Southwest.

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Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post
Vic. of Bluewater, Cibola County, New Mexico

Figure 8-1: Original Old Crater Trading Post, ca. 1940 (Courtesy Patricia McClure)



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Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post
Vic. of Bluewater, Cibola County, New Mexico

Figure 8-2: Original Old Crater Trading Post, ca. 1940 (Courtesy Patricia McClure)



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Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post
Vic. of Bluewater, Cibola County, New Mexico

Figure 8-3: Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post in 1954 following the construction of the new building (Courtesy Patricia McClure)



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Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post
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Figure 8-4: Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post, ca. 1955 (Courtesy Patricia McClure)



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Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post
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Figure 8-5: Touching up the paintings on the main façade, ca. 1960 (Courtesy Patricia McClure)



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Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post
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Figure 8-6: Photograph taken in August of 1962 of the interior of the Thunderbird (Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post), (Courtesy New Mexico Archives and Record Center)



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Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post
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Figure 8-7: Claude and Willa Bowlin in 1964 (Courtesy Patricia McClure)



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Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post
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Figure 8-8: Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post, ca. 1955 with Patricia McClure at age one and her uncle Earl Delk. Note the wall painting at right. (Courtesy Patricia McClure)



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Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post
Vic. of Bluewater, Cibola County, New Mexico

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Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post includes all of parcel 231-462 on Cibola County Tax Map 176, Cibola County, New Mexico. This parcel is drawn at a scale of 1" = 200' and appears as Figure 7-1 in the nomination. This parcel includes 2.5 acres and is bounded on the west by I-40, on the east and north by the western right-of-way of the I-40 Frontage Road and on the south by an adjacent property line.*

Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundary for Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post includes the entire 2.5-acre parcel, which includes all the land associated with property during the period of significance.

(Note: The information card for this property has this parcel listed as 251-245. At the Cibola County Assessor's office this listing was confirmed as in error and 231-462 is the accurate location of this property).

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Photographs

Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post

Vicinity of Bluewater, Cibola County, New Mexico

Photographer: Thomason and Associates

May 2005

Location of Negatives: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division

Photo 1 of 10

Route 66 and trading post

Camera facing southwest

Photo 2 of 10

East (front) elevation

Camera facing northwest

Photo 3 of 10

Painting of Native American drummer

Facing west

Photo 4 of 10

Painting of Native American woman preparing food

Camera facing west

Photo 5 of 10

Painting of Native American rug weaver

Camera facing west

Photo 6 of 10

Painting of Native American women carrying water jugs

Camera facing west

Photo 7 of 10

The Bowlin Company "Running Indian" motif

Camera facing west

Photo 8 of 10

South and west elevations

Camera facing northeast

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Bowlin's Old Crater Trading Post
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Photo 9 of 10

West elevation showing the rear wing

Camera facing north

Photo 10 of 10

North elevation

Camera facing south