

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PHO 675 776

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED APR 25 1979
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

J. P. Strong Store

AND/OR COMMON

Nathan Weil Store

LOCATION

NM 21 and HWY 120

STREET & NUMBER Southwest corner of the intersection of
State Highways 21 and 120.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Ocaté

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
#1

STATE

New Mexico

CODE

35

COUNTY

Mora

CODE

033

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. Donaciano Mondragon

STREET & NUMBER

Catron Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Mora Wagon Mound

VICINITY OF

5/2/79
87750

STATE

New Mexico

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Mora County Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Mora

STATE

New Mexico

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

State Register of Cultural Properties

DATE

December 3, 1976

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Department of Educational Finance & Cultural Affairs
Historic Preservation Office

CITY, TOWN

Santa Fe

STATE

New Mexico 87503

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Situated in the northeastern New Mexico village of Ocaté at the intersection of State Highways 21 and 120, the J. P. Strong Store is a long, narrow adobe structure with a false front. Overshadowed by the rocky slopes of Gallinas Mesa, the village consists of a scattering of buildings strung along the south bank of Ocaté Creek for a mile or more. One of a number of small ranching communities which characterize the settlement of Mora County, Ocaté is surrounded by well-grassed pasture lands supporting large numbers of livestock which form the basis of the area's economy. When the store was built, c.1906, Ocaté supported three other mercantile establishments and several additional businesses but recent improvements in highways and transportation facilities have led to a gradual decline in the importance of such small rural communities. In 1974 the Strong Store was closed but it remains in good condition, almost unchanged from the time when it was a hub of neighborhood activity.

Resting on a sandstone foundation, the building is constructed of dark-red, unplastered adobe bricks topped by a corrugated metal pitched roof. A simple frame porch shades the facade, which is made of plate glass display windows enclosed by paneled woodwork painted a faded orange and green. Trimmed by a decorative cornice, a pressed metal false front simulating stone rises above the porch, which is further embellished by a small sign with "J. P. Strong" spelled out in block letters. Double doors made of glass over wood form the entrance, which is somewhat recessed. Horizontal iron rods protect the lower portion of the doors and adjoining show windows. For security reasons fenestration in the side walls is limited to two small windows just under the eaves on each side. To facilitate the handling of bulky merchandise a large doorway was installed in the middle of the west wall.

Although presently unoccupied, the building's fixtures remain in place. Shelves and display cases extend along each side of the store's main room which was heated by a large coal-burning stove at its center. Along the west wall towards the rear is a counter with stools which still has the store's cash register and brackets to hold wrapping paper and twine. Two rows of modern fluorescent light fixtures are suspended from a recently installed false ceiling. The only decoration is a large 48 star American flag on the east wall near the front. The rear of the building contains a small room used as an office or for storage.

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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Erected c.1906 by French immigrant Nathan Weil, the J. P. Strong Store is an excellent example of a southwestern general store. At the time of its construction the crossroads merchant in New Mexico's ranch country was not only the purveyor of a wide variety of goods but also was often an important purchaser of the area's produce-cattle, sheep, wool, hides and grain. In addition he usually served as the village postmaster and notary public and the store itself served as the region's political and social center. Since its establishment at the turn of the century the Strong Store served these functions under three different owners for the next 70 years.

Born in Paris March 7, 1867, Nathan Weil was the son of a wine merchant from Alsace-Lorraine. At the age of twelve the younger Weil immigrated to the United States. After a brief stay in New York City, he made his way to Salina, Kansas where he was employed by an uncle in the wool and hide trade. Continuing westward, Weil worked as a clerk and ranch hand in Colorado's Arkansas Valley first at Las Animas and then at Pueblo where he married Clara Goldsmith Bowman, a young widow from Denver. Within a few years the family moved to Ocaté where Weil established a mercantile and ranching business in partnership with his wife's cousin Sam Goldsmith. In 1907 Goldsmith sold his interest to his partner soon after the construction of a new store building, the subject of this nomination.

From a modest beginning Weil's business interests grew and prospered during the next decades. In addition to the store, he ran large numbers of livestock on the fertile pastures of Mora County and became a leading trader in cattle, sheep and wool. Diversifying further, he was also an organizer and director of local banks in the nearby towns of Las Vegas, Springer and Wagon Mound. In 1938, after 40 years of merchandising at Ocaté, Weil closed the store during the depths of the Depression to devote his remaining years to his ranching interests. The store building remained unused until a few years after World War II when it was purchased by a former commercial rival, John P. Strong, as a replacement for another store which had recently burned.

A descendant of one of the first Anglo families to settle at Ocaté, Strong was a grandson of Richard P. Strong who left County Wicklow, Ireland at nineteen seeking new opportunity in this country. In 1851, soon after his arrival at New York, Strong enlisted in the U.S. Army, serving with various cavalry regiments in Texas and New Mexico for the next 10 years until he was discharged at Fort Union, 20 miles south of present day Ocaté. At the conclusion of his military service he settled near the fort and entered the livestock and freighting business. Several years prior to his

(See Continuation Sheet Page 1)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Mora County Records, Mora County Courthouse, Mora, New Mexico, County Clerk's Records, Deed Book P.
 Mora County Records, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico
 County Assessor's Records, Assessment Rolls 1898-1912.
 (See Continuation Sheet Page 1)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approximately 1/2 acre.
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1,3	49,56,6,0	4,010,31,9,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point on the west side of State Highway #21 and proceeding in a north westerly direction along the line of a board fence for a distance of approximately 100'; thence in a northeasterly direction along the line of a wire fence for a distance of approximately 250' to the south side of State Highway #120; thence along the south side of said highway in a southeasterly direction for a distance of approximately 100' to its intersection with State Highway #120.
 (See Continuation Sheet Page 1)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John O. Baxter, Archivist

ORGANIZATION

State Records Center and Archives

DATE

April 4, 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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Thomas W. Nelson

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

4-13-79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

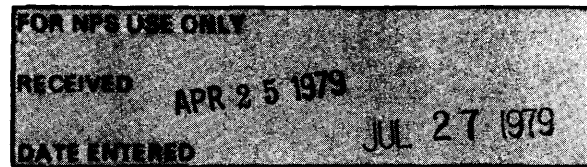
ATTEST: *Charles A. ...*
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 7-27-79
 KEPTER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *Wade ...*
 - KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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



CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8,9,10 PAGE #1

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discharge Strong had married Fanny Ryan at Taos in 1857 and the two became the progenitors of a large family which still has many descendants both in Mora County and other locations in eastern New Mexico and the Oklahoma panhandle.

Although the Strongs had previously operated other mercantile enterprises at various locations in Mora County, the business known as the J. P. Strong Store originated in 1913. In that year John R. Strong, Richard's youngest son, bought the Ocaté branch store from Vorenburg & Co., his former employers, who maintained their headquarters at the railroad town of Wagon Mound 20 miles east. Direction of this business was later carried on by two of his sons, John P. and Charles Strong, until 1960 when it was sold to Donaciano Mondragon, a long time employee who continued its operation for another 14 years and still owns the store building.

#9

Territorial Archives of New Mexico, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, N.M., Records of the Secretary of the Territory, Territorial Census of 1885.

Federal Census Reports, 1870 and 1900.

New Mexico State Business Directory. Denver, 1905, 1915, 1923.

Anderson, George B. History of New Mexico: Its Resources and People. Los Angeles, 1907.

Coan, Charles F. A History of New Mexico. Chicago, 1925.

Davis, Arthur Ellis, ed., The Historical Encyclopedia of New Mexico. Albuquerque, 1945.

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Highway #21; thence along the west side of said highway to the point of beginning, a distance of approximately 250'.