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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 Baskin Building other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 332 W. Main Street not for publication city, town Artesia vicinity state New Mexico code NM county Eddy code 015 zip code 88210

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: [X] private, [] public-local, [] public-State, [] public-Federal. Category of Property: [X] building(s), [] district, [] site, [] structure, [] object. Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 1, Noncontributing buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total 1.

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

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] 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 [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. [] See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: Thomas W. Hill, State of New Mexico, dated 3-5-90.

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. [] See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official: Historic Preservation Division, Office of Cultural Affairs, dated.

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: [X] 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: Beth Boland Date of Action: 2/18/90

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/hotel
COMMERCE/TRADE/department store
GOVERNMENT/post office
DEFENSE/arms storage

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Commercial

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Other - Concrete Blocks
(Artificial Stone)
roof Asphalt
other Portico - Wood/Iron

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Located in the heart of Artesia's downtown business district, the Baskin Building occupies a corner lot on Main Street. Completed in 1905 the building was designed as a hotel, tavern/restaurant and business building. The two-story structure is rectangular in plan with a small basement and flat roof. The primary building material is artificial stone concrete blocks. This building is a product of the early 1900s. It is of a plain commercial style with few alterations and sound structural integrity. (See Photo #1)

The Baskin Building faces to the south on a corner lot. It is a rectangular two-story artificial stone building measuring 50 feet by 80 feet. It has a partial basement and a flat roof. Situated approximately 12 feet from Main Street on the south and 12 feet from Fourth Street on the west. The building abuts a one-story commercial structure on the east and a one-story building on the north.

The building's principal (south) elevation is divided into three bays. Two of these bays are wide and the one narrow bay serves as the entrance to the second floor. The vertical iron supports with attached glass show-window channeling used in the construction of the three bays was severely altered in the 1940s. The present window channels and front door frames are not constructed of aluminum.

Three windows on the first floor of the west wall originally measured 36 inches wide by 28 inches high. Sometime between 1911 and 1934 these windows were enlarged to 36 inches wide by 71 inches high. This alteration was accomplished with minimal structural damage and it appears that the original concrete sills were reused.

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When the interior of the building was radically altered to the 1940s to be used as an auto parts store, two of the three windows were covered over and remain so at the present. The 1940 alteration also included the removal of the front stairway to the second floor and removal of the partition that separated the first floor into two separate business establishments. The end result was that the entire first floor was utilized to house one business.

The portico on the front of the building was removed in the 1920s and an awning was installed. (See Photo #2). This awning was further modified in the 1940s. The removal of the portico required the alteration of the south facing second story door into a window. This door had served as the access to the roof, or balcony, that the portico provided. During the recent renovation of the building, a new portico was built and the window was modified to once again serve as a door.

Artesia was hit by an earthquake in August of 1931. As a result, the exterior walls of the Baskin Building were weakened. In an effort to stabilize and reinforce these walls, a cable and turnbuckle arrangement was installed between the second floor and roof. A flat metal brace that the cable is attached to is visible on the south wall but it does not detract that much from the overall appearance of the building.

The Baskin Building was originally designed to fulfill a variety of functions and over the years the interior has been altered several times. Modernization and the meeting of new building codes has been responsible for the demise of the interior detail. Yet the recent renovation has done much to restore the historic character of this building. Examples of this include:

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The first floor is now divided into two business locations.

The middle entrance and stairway to the second floor has been reinstalled.

The second floor, which originally served as a hotel, saw last real use in the 1960's as small apartments. Then in about 1965, the second floor was closed up and used as a storage area. Today, the second floor is fully functional and houses an eating establishment, a beauty parlor, a business office, and an apartment. Through all of this, it has managed to retain all of its original exterior window and door openings.

On the second floor, building codes required the installation of a drop ceiling, yet the existing wood molding, doors, and doorways were left intact.

While age and alterations have caused some minor deterioration of its historic fabric, this, the oldest remaining artificial stone commercial building on Main, is still in excellent condition, serves the community well, and stands as a proud reminder of our early history. (See Photo #3)

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

Period of Significance

1904-1905

Significant Dates

1904-1905

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

S. P. Denning

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

Under Criterion C of the National Register Criteria, the Baskin Building is significant to the architectural history of Artesia, New Mexico, because of its use of artificial stone concrete blocks as a building material. The Baskin Building was completed in 1905 and is now the oldest business building standing on Main Street. The building's historic character is further enhanced by the fact that Artesia had a thematic group of ten (10) homes, also constructed of artificial stone in the early 1900s, placed on the National Register of Historic Places in March of 1984

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Anderson, George, History of New Mexico Its Resources and People, Vol. II, Pacific States Publishing Company, Los Angeles, 1907.

Clarke, Mary W., John Chisum Jinglebob King of the Pecos, Eakin Press, Austin, Texas, 1984.

Schroeder, Joseph J. Jr., ed. Sears, Roebuck & Co., Catalogue 1908, Gun Digest Co., Chicago, Ill., 1969.

Waltrip, Lela and Rufus, Artesia: Heart of the Pecos, Staked Plains Press, Canyon, Texas, 1979.

Other Documents:

Property Abstract, James E. Evrage, Property owner.

See continuation sheet

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property Less than one acre.

UTM References

A 11 556120 3633790
 Zone Easting Northing

C

B
 Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The south portion of Lots 22 & 24 in Block 8 of the Clayton and Stegman Addition of Artesia that contain the Baskin Building. The boundary conforms to the outside perimeter of the building. It includes the second story projecting balcony that measures 10 feet north to south and 50 feet east to west.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

These lots are traditionally associated with the Baskin Building.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Terry R. Koenig, Director

organization Artesia Hist. Museum & Art Center date 11/1/89

street & number 505 W. Richardson Ave. telephone (505) 748-2390

city or town Artesia state NM zip code 88210

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The town of Artesia was established on what was a part of John Chisum's sprawling cattle empire. Chisum came into this area of the Pecos Valley in 1867, following the Goodnight-Loving cattle trail. Over the next decade, he built up a huge cattle herd which roamed the Pecos Valley, bordered on the north by Anton Chico and on the south by Seven Rivers, which is about fifteen miles south of Artesia. This represented a total distance of about 150 miles.

A steady influx of homesteaders and the notorious Lincoln County War in the 1870's whittled away at Chisum's vast claim, and after his death in 1884, what little remained soon disintegrated.

Sallie Chisum Robert, John Chisum's niece, homesteaded a choice piece of the old Chisum spread, known as Chisum Spring Camp in 1890. Here, Sallie, recently separated from her husband, and her aging father, James, a former partner in the Chisum empire, began to reorganize their lives. They built an adobe house and drilled a shallow artesian well, probably the first in the area, although not much note of it was made at the time. Sallie did some gardening and looked after the home while her father raised goats.

In 1894 the Pecos Valley Railroad was completed from Pecos, Texas, to Roswell, New Mexico. The rail line, which passed just east of Sallie's homestead, had a small siding here, and it went by the name of Miller. With the exception of a few homesteaders trickling in, life continued on at its own slow pace for the next few years.

In 1900 J. A. Bruce homesteaded about two miles east of the Robert place and in 1902 Bill Whitaker established a store at Miller, but it soon closed due to a lack of business. Then in 1903, J. A. Bruce, who had been drilling a well for his cattle, hit an artesian water source, a land boom was on, and Miller ended up in the middle of it all. As the new town began to take shape, the recently arrived land speculators decided a more appropriate name was needed and so Artesia was born.

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Early town organizers had dreams of Artesia as a modern urban center and they quickly set about introducing a telephone system, a water works and an electric generating plant. To go along with all these modern conveniences, business buildings, would of course, have to be first-rate, but in this endeavor they ran into a snag. For here in the windblown treeless plains, other than adobe, building material was very scarce. It all had to be shipped in, and it was very expensive.

The town's first major buildings, the First National Bank and the adjoining Gibson Hotel were of traditional brick construction but as they neared completion, a new building material was introduced - artificial stone concrete blocks. On the booming Southwest frontier, this material appeared to provide a practical solution. It would allow the contractor to provide a substantial and cosmopolitan structure and yet it could be had at a lower cost.

Concrete artificial stone had been around a number of years. It was invented in England before the middle of the nineteenth century and George A. Frear obtained an American patent for it in February of 1868. He proclaimed it to be a "cheap and yet elegant and durable building material." That same year, "Frear's Patent Machine" was on the market and in Chicago, Illinois, a house of "Frear Stone" was erected.

Two years later in 1870, Ernest L. Ransome, a pioneer in the development of reinforced concrete in the United States, founded the Pacific Stone Company in San Francisco and went into the production of artificial stone. The remainder of the late 1800's saw a number of concrete block manufacturers established. However, their finished product, all too often, was porous, structurally weak and tended to be visually unattractive. After several concrete block buildings collapsed, the industry's reputation was seriously damaged.

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By the early 1900's, the concrete industry had solved many of the technological problems that had plagued them early on. Improvements included the "facedown block machine," which enriched the exterior finish of the block and moulds which provided for an inner air space in the block which enhanced its insulating qualities. Coloring of the concrete had also been improved so now the artificial stone could be tinted and would blend in with the surrounding landscape.

The machinery required for making concrete blocks was simple and consisted of two pieces of portable cast-iron equipment: a hand-powered concrete-mixing machine and a concrete block machine. The block machine consisted of a mould box with interchangeable face plates of various surface textures, imitating the appearance of natural or cut stone (dressed stone, rock-face, tooled face, cobblestone, scroll, etc.). A mixture of cement, sand and aggregate was poured into the mould and "tamped down" with a "tamper" to fill the voids, forcing the aggregate to compact. The concrete block was then released from the mould. By changing the size of the cast-iron plates on the mould box, the size of the blocks could be varied. Lintels, sills, cornice mouldings, copings, balusters and many other architectural features could also be cast in concrete by changing the plates on the mould box.

The production and use of artificial stone proliferated and, by the early 1900s, was in its heyday. It was a popular movement largely carried out by small contractors. A two-man artificial stone "factory" could be hauled in a wagon and set up in one's back yard or at the building site, and two men operating the block machine could turn out between one and two hundred blocks a day. It produced a kind of folk vernacular architecture, as the sale of the concrete block machines spread across the nation. Such machines as the "Hercules", the "Ideal" and the "Wizard" promised easy money in the "Block Business". Even the mail-order giant, Sears Roebuck & Co., carried a complete line of artificial stone machinery. Naturally this appealed to the "do-it-yourself" craftsman who could obtain plans and instructions for building his own concrete block home.

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Contractors John Hodges and I. R. Daniels became two of the major producers of the concrete blocks in the Artesia area. For a short period of time, John Hodges had a small factory set up in nearby Lake Arthur that was kept quite busy turning out concrete building blocks. The local newspaper, The Artesia Advocate, noted in an article dated October 4, 1904: "This substantial and beautiful substitute for stone has revolutionized building in the west, where brick comes too high and a frame house is not satisfactory. The first building to be built of the material in Artesia was the Crouch Livery Stable on Second Street. The the two-story Baskin Building on Main The appearance of these two were so attractive and so substantial that the factory has been deluged with contracts for stone."

But the demise of this highly heralded material in Artesia was just around the corner. Buy 1910, just five years after its introduction in the area and for reasons yet unknown, it seems to have fallen into disfavor with the general public, and its use was largely discontinued. Major buildings in the downtown area, including the Beckham Block, the Hardwick Hotel and the Sipple Building, all built in 1910, reverted to the old standby, brick. At present, no known homes were built of artificial stone after 1910, and so the new revolutionary building material made a quiet exit from center stage.

Today, the Baskin Building is the only remaining example of a commercial building, built in Artesia's boom-time era, that used artificial stone concrete blocks. It is a simple, no frills early 20th century commercial building whose principal architectural interest lies in its primary exterior building material, material that is representative of the early development of Artesia.

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William E. Baskin, a merchant, and his brother-in-law, Lee McIntosh, a dentist, both of Louisiana, arrived in Artesia in late March of 1904. Both energetic, and in the terms of the April 9, 1904 Artesia Advocate, "pleasant, progressive gentlemen," they set about making their mark in the new, bustling town. Lee McIntosh set up his dental office in the Clayton Building on Main Street and in the latter part of April, 1904 Mr. Baskin contracted with S. P. Denning to have a business building built on Main Street. A short period later, he also arranged to have an artificial stone residence built. By the end of May, 1904 the Baskin building was under construction with the basement dug and some of the building material at the site.

Artesia was booming, new artesian wells were drilled in rapid succession, and at the same time, traces of oil were showing up in many of the newly drilled wells. In the fall of 1904, approximately twelve miles south of Artesia in an area known as Seven Rivers, one of the first attempts in this locality to drill an oil well was made. This venture was backed by Mr. Baskin along with several other Artesia businessmen, who formed the Seven Rivers Oil Company. Unfortunately for Mr. Baskin and his associates, this well failed to produce and a similar fate awaited many others who ventured into these early oil endeavors for was not until 1923 that a successful commercial oil well was drilled in the area.

Aside from his oil interest, Mr. Baskin, in September of 1904, was appointed to serve on a committee to take the necessary steps in getting the town of Artesia incorporated. Here, he met with success, and the town of Artesia was incorporated in February of 1905.

By the end of 1904, the new Baskin Building was almost completed, and at this time, Mr. Baskin leased out the entire structure to Frank Stuart and Thomas Carberry for a period of three years. At this time, his new home was completed and he and his wife, Annie, were busy adding the finishing touches. Shortly after the Baskin Building was completed, Mr. Baskin

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decided to sell, and in May of 1905, it was sold to Stirling Russ for the sum of \$12,500.

While William Baskin's name does appear quite frequently in the town's early newspapers, his livelihood does remain a bit of a mystery. The newspaper in March of 1904 said he was in the mercantile business, yet no newspaper advertisement in the years of 1904 to 1906 appears under his name and he fails to appear in the 1905-1906 business directory.

Other than a few rental homes he had constructed in 1904 and 1905, and from the Baskin Building, his sources of income seem to be a bit hazy. According to newspaper accounts, Mr. Baskin did hold some mining interests, some ranch land in the panhandle of Texas, and a few miles northeast of Artesia, in a tract known as Cottonwood, he did own a farm. Here, in early 1906, in a region considered by the experts to be outside the artesian belt zone, Baskin drilled for water and at a depth of only 340 feet, he struck an artesian water source -- the first of its type in the area.

In April of 1906, Mr. Baskin was elected as a member of the Board of Trustees for the town of Artesia. In that same month, he was one of the twelve men who incorporated and formed the Artesia College, becoming one of the major shareholders in the fledgling corporation. This attempt to bring a college to Artesia would eventually fail, yet at the time, the town had lofty expectations for the institution. A building site was selected and construction of the college was soon under way. Excitement ran high as expected expansion of the town was envisioned.

Yet, the future was not all that bright for Artesia. As more and more artesian wells were drilled, the flow from existing wells began to fall off and in some cases the flow ceased altogether. Then the nationwide panic of 1907 hit, and this added to the woes of the newly developing town. Many of the early promoters of Artesia suffered some financial setbacks and decided to pull up stakes and seek new opportunities.

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Mr. Baskin appears to have been one of these early entrepreneurs who decided that perhaps it was time to move on to greener pastures. After a duck hunting trip in September of 1906 and a trip to nearby Roswell the following month, his name fails to appear in the local newspaper again.

Just what became of him and his brother-in-law, Lee McIntosh, is not known; both simply dropped out of sight in Artesia at about the same time. Yet in just three years' time, Baskin, a boomer in the frontier-town tradition, a risk taker who was not afraid to venture into new fields had displayed a real pioneer spirit.

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Bibliographical References

Other Documents (cont):

Swanson, Betsy, Artificial Stone Houses of Artesia, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1984

Artesia Advocate, Earthquake in area, Aug. 20, 1931.

Artesia Advocate, Hodges recalls towns growth, Aug. 23, 1929.

Artesia Advocate, mention of W. E. Baskin, or the Baskin Building.
Jun. 25, 1904, Sept. 10, 1904, Oct. 1, 1904, Dec. 24, 1904, Dec. 31, 1904,
Jan. 7, 1905, Jan. 21, 1905, Feb. 18, 1905, Apr. 8, 1905, Jun. 17, 1905,
Sept. 2, 1905, Sept. 9, 1905, Sept. 23, 1905, Dec. 9, 1905, Apr. 7, 1906,
Apr. 14, 1906, Apr. 21, 1906, Aug. 18, 1906, Aug. 25, 1906, Sept. 22, 1906,
Nov. 22, 1906, Dec., 13, 1906.

Artesia Advocate, various business establishments in Baskin building,
Mar. 7, 1908, Jul. 25, 1908, Aug 30, 1911, Mar. 2, 1923, Feb. 8, 1924,
Mar. 14, 1924, Feb. 12, 1925, Feb. 19, 1925, May 21, 1925, Aug. 27, 1931.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1905, 1911

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PHOTOGRAPHS BASKIN BUILDING ARTESIA, NEW MEXICO

1. Baskin Building
2. Artesia, New Mexico
3. Unknown
4. Circa 1905
5. The Artesia Hist. Museum & Art Ctr.
6. Camera facing north
7. Photograph #1

1. Baskin Building
2. Artesia, New Mexico
3. Unknown
4. Circa 1925
5. The Artesia Hist. Museum & Art Ctr.
6. Camera facing north
7. Photograph #2

1. Baskin Building
2. Artesia, New Mexico
3. Tony King
4. September 1989
5. The Artesia Hist. Museum & Art Ctr.
6. Camera facing north
7. Photograph #3

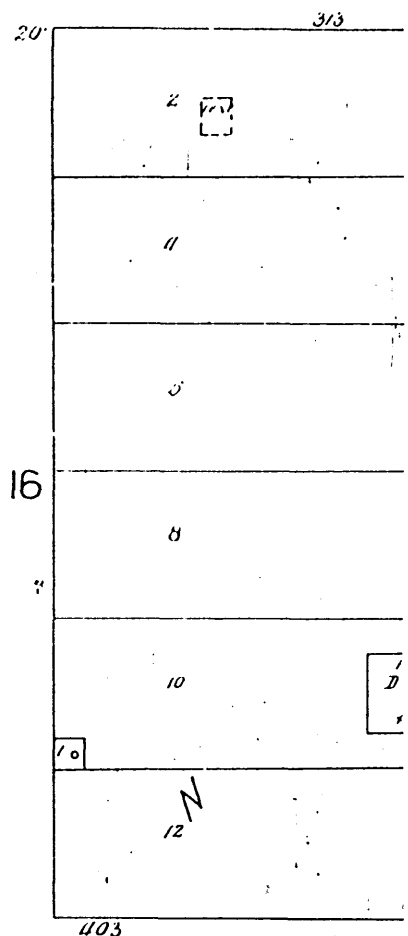
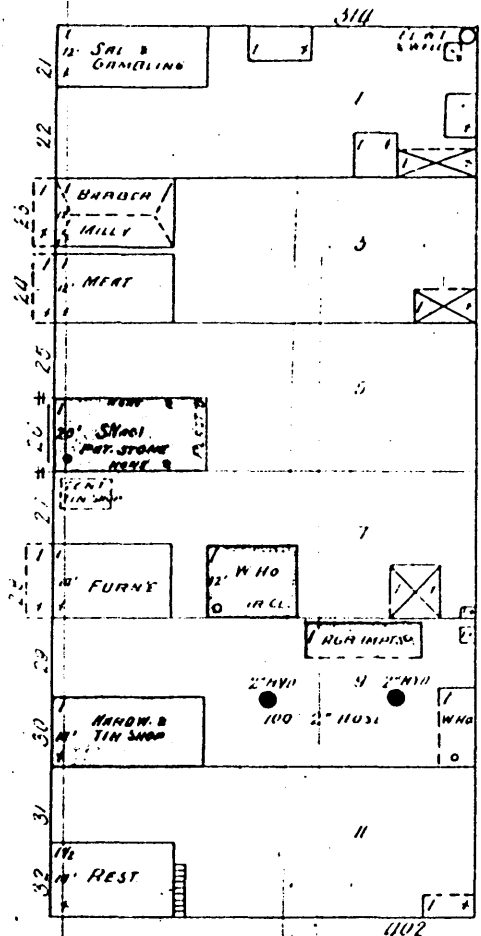
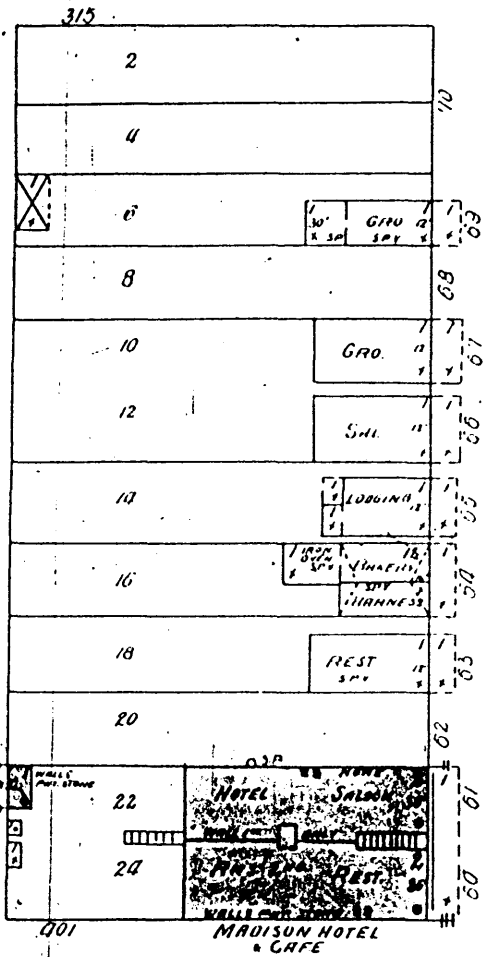
1. Baskin Building
2. Artesia, New Mexico
3. Tony King
4. September 1989
5. The Artesia Hist. Museum & Art Ctr.
6. Camera facing east northeast
7. Photograph #4

1. Baskin Building
2. Artesia, New Mexico
3. Tony King
4. September 1989
5. The Artesia Hist. Museum & Art Ctr.
6. Camera facing east northeast
7. Photograph #5

AR
 APRIL 1905
ARTESIA
 N.M.

W. 3RD

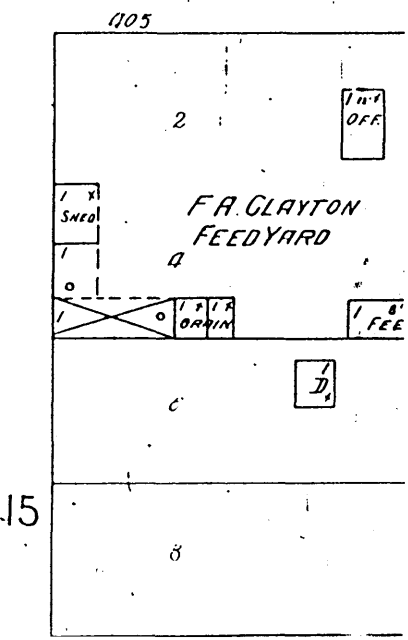
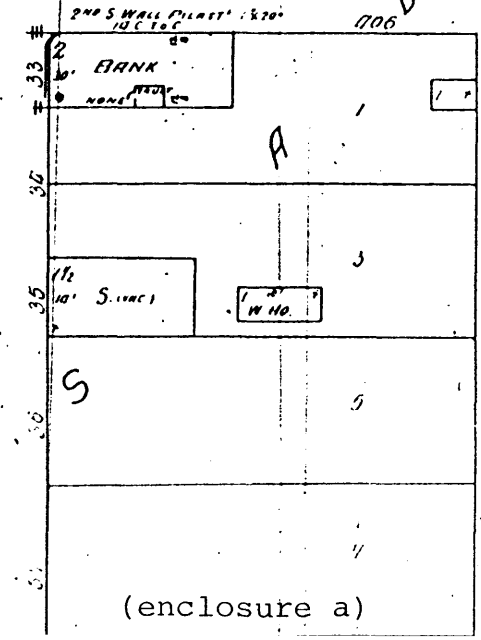
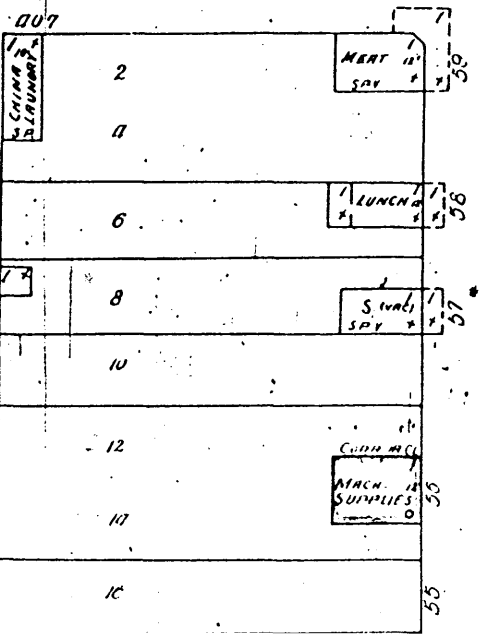
ST.



4TH

ST.

WELL



MAIN

(enclosure a)