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 any 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 Soulsby Service Station

other names/site number Soulsby Shell Station

2. Location

street & number 102 South Route 66 Street

city or town Mount Olive

state Illinois code IL county Macoupin code 117 zip code 62069

3. 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide ___ locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official

Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
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 commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau American Indian Tribe
4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this 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): ________________________________________________ ________________________________

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Each as many boxes as apply)

___ X private

___ public-local

___ public-State

___ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Each only one box)

___ X building(s)

___ district

___ site

___ structure

___ object

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributing</th>
<th>Noncontributing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>0 objects</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0 Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

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

Historic and Architectural Resources of Route 66 Through Illinois
Soulsby Service Station
Name of Property

Macoupin County, Illinois
County and State

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
TRANSPORTATION/road related
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
RECREATION AND CULTURE/Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/House and Canopy Gas station

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
Foundation  Concrete
Roof  Asphalt
Walls  Wood
Other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet
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 (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- 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
Architecture
Period of Significance 1926-1956

Significant Dates 1926; 1937

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Soulsby, Henry

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheet
9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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
x State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other Archives and business files of Soulsby family, current owner and researcher

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property  less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing  Zone Easting Northing
1 16 263348 432825 3  4
2  4
___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)  See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)  See continuation sheet
11. Form Prepared By

name/title       Tom Teague, President
organization     Soulsby Station Society  date       December 1, 2003
street & number  1208 W. Edwards    telephone  217-525-2781
city or town     Springfield       state IL      zip code  62704

Additional Documentation
Submit the following items with the completed form:
Continuation Sheets
Maps
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.
Photographs
Representative black and white photographs of the property.

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

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

name       Michael Dragovich

street & number 701 S. 1st St. West    telephone  217-999-6002
city or town  Mount Olive       state IL    zip code  62068

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 listings. 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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.
Narrative Description:

Setting

Soulsby Service Station in Mount Olive, Illinois, is one of Route 66’s original gas stations and is the oldest one still in usable condition. It stands near the center of two 50 by 80 foot lots at the southwest corner of 1st Street and Old Route 66 Street and is surrounded by mature walnut and oak trees. Henry Soulsby built it from his own design in 1926, using commonly available materials. His son Russell helped. Later his daughters Ola and Wilma would join him and Russell to run the station.

Exterior

Soulsby Service Station measures 30' 6" across by 24' 3" deep. A canopy 13' 6" foot wide by 12'6" deep is centered along the east-facing front of the building. The one-story building has a concrete block foundation with partial, limited crawl space. The exterior walls of the building are covered with horizontal wood tongue-and-groove Dutch lap siding, most of which is historic. The hipped roof is covered with asphalt shingles. Two square wooden columns support the canopy. A gravel drive runs under it. Two older, but not original gasoline pumps are located under the front edge of the canopy. To the south of the building is a steel ramp for auto repairs since the station itself did not have a garage/repair space.

The east façade is punctuated by three wooden doors and three five over one double hung wood windows in an alternating pattern beginning with a door on the north edge of the front façade. All doors are original with the exception of the center front door which had to be replaced. The canopy projects east above the centermost door and window.

The south façade of the building is 24' 3" across and has a wood door in the center and a wood double hung five over one window to the east. The west façade is 30' 6" across with three windows located along the façade. These windows are similar to the windows elsewhere on the building. The north façade is the same as the south façade.
Interior

The interior has horizontal wainscoting and unfinished pine floors and is divided into three spaces: a 10' by 10' office in the center of the east side of the building, a 10' by 24' 3" inch space to the north of the office and an L-shaped space to the south and west of the office space that occupies the rest of the building. The office has open interior doorways on its north, west and south sides, plus an exterior door on its east side. It originally held a wood stove, a roll top desk, a cash register, a chair and a water tap. No earlier than 1937, the Soulsbys removed the wood stove and installed a gas furnace in back of the office.

The north room initially served as storage space, but became Russell Soulsby's TV and radio repair shop in the 1950s. It also held a soda machine. Its wall covering is primarily fiber-board. The south also has open interior doorways at its west and east ends. A 2' by 3' section of flooring near the front of the room had sunken in, but was repaired by new owner Mike Dragovich in 1998. It was not necessary to replace the flooring itself.

The L-shaped space to the south and west of the office was also used primarily for storage. The portion of it in back of (west of) the office is where the natural gas furnace was installed. The ductwork is exposed. The room has two windows on its west side, a door and window on the south side and a door and window on the east side. A battery charger is bolted upside-down to the wall between the southside door and window. A two-foot square section of flooring near the furnace is termite-damaged and will be replaced this spring.

The interior wainscoting was painted aquamarine or dark yellow at an indeterminate time. Door and window trim was aquamarine. There is no indication that anything ever received another coat of paint.

The station never had a washbasin, a toilet or any other plumbing except for the water tap the Soulsbys used for overheated radiators.
Historic Condition

The original building, constructed in 1926, was 30’ 6” wide by 12’3” feet deep. Its foundation was concrete and gravel block. There was no basement, only a limited crawl space. The siding was Dutch lap yellow pine with a tongue and groove. The Ace Hardware Laboratory in suburban Chicago conducted a computer analysis of the station’s paint in 2003. It indicates the primer was yellow and oil-based. To attract drivers’ attention, the initial cover coat was aluminum. It would be 11 years before the station took on a more neighborhood-friendly color.

Initially, the station had no guttering or downspouts. The roof pitched up from the edges of the building at a 20-degree angle. For the first 11 years, it was covered with roll material.

Centered in front of the station, a 13’6” by 12’6” canopy sheltered the pumps and service area. Its roof pitched back at an angle equal to the station’s roofline. The area under the canopy was paved with concrete, while the approaches were paved with a variety of different and less durable materials over the years.

In 1937, the Soulsbys built a 30’ 6” x 12’ 3” extension onto the back of the original building, doubling its size. They removed the original roofing material and covered the old and new portions of the roof with asphalt shingles instead. At the same time, they added guttering and downspouts. For exterior siding, they used the same Dutch lap pine. The Soulsbys then painted both the new and old portions light tan. Bands of yellow and red around the bottom of the station symbolized the Shell gasoline that they sold. Some of the window and door trim was also Shell red. When the exterior got its second and last coat of tan paint at an indeterminate time, all window and door trim became tan, too.

The finished station’s most striking feature is that it had five doors. The east side, which faced Route 66, had three. When Henry and Russell expanded the station, they added single doors on both the north and south sides. No one ever had to turn a corner to get in or out of the station. This ease of access made the best use of limited space. It also proved convenient for Russell later when he ran a radio and TV repair business out of the north side of the station. In addition to the outer doors, the station had four interior doorways.
The front of the station had three windows, alternating with the doors. The north and south sides each had one window on the east side of their doors. The rear or west side of the station had three windows.

The station was never big enough to accommodate a repair bay. Instead, the Soulsbys performed oil changes and minor repairs on a steel ramp to the south of the station. That ramp is still in place. About 25 years ago, however, when Russell was focused on his TV business, he let a pin oak seedling start growing between the ramp’s legs. The seedling is now 25 feet tall and its trunk is starting to lift up the ramp’s left leg.

Inside the station, the Soulsbys used primarily wainscoting siding. The floors are bare pine. The middle third of the front of the station was partitioned and served as the office. Barely big enough to hold a roll top desk and a wood stove, it had three interior doorways, plus a door to the outside. The stove would heat the station until the Soulsbys installed a natural gas furnace as part of their 1937 expansion. They had one water tap inside to service overheated radiators, but never a wash basin or toilet.

After his return from World War II, Russell began repairing radios and then televisions at the station. In the 1950s, he devoted the station’s north side room to this new business. He made no structural changes to the building, but did put an antenna on the roof to test his work.

Family photos indicate the Soulsbys put vinyl siding on the station in the early to mid-1980s. When they did, they covered up two of the doors on the front side. Only the center one remained visible and accessible.

Bypassed by the interstate, Russell stopped pumping gas in 1991 and had his storage tanks removed. The EPA has since certified the surrounding soil to be contamination free. In 1997, Russell sold the station at auction to Mike Dragovich, a neighbor. Mr. Dragovich used the station as his office. He braced up a section of floor that had sunk in, but made no other structural changes for nearly six years.
Rehabilitation

In April 2003 Mr. Dragovich began a major restoration effort with the help of some 20 volunteers. The crew first removed the station's vinyl siding. Surprisingly, the Dutch lap pine siding underneath was in excellent condition. Only 120 linear feet had to be replaced. For replacement siding, volunteers salvaged identical Dutch lap from an old garage in nearby Staunton.

In another surprise, the station still had four of its original doors and all of its original windows. The crew was able to restore all of them. Only the aluminum storm door in front had to be replaced. To do this, the crew used a wooden door identical to the originals.

Outside, volunteers removed all paint, leaving only bare siding. Ace Hardware donated new paint and primer. Consulting family photos and the Ace paint analysis, the crew chose a color scheme that the station had at least 45 years ago. From the outside, the station looks essentially the same as it did during its post-World War II heyday. Inside, the crew is replacing missing ceiling tiles and a section of floor that had termite damage. The interior, too, looks essentially the same as it did during its heyday. National Park Service officials who visited the station in September 2003 said it was the best restoration project they had seen along Route 66.

An area Shell collector has donated vintage replacement panels for the outside sign. Mr. Dragovich and volunteers will install them early next spring. By June of 2004, they hope to be operating the station as a museum.
Statement of Significance:

Soulsby Service Station is locally significant for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The building qualifies under Criterion A as it is associated with events that contributed significantly to the broad patterns of Twentieth Century American history. The station served both local and traveling customers with oil, gasoline and repairs. Soulsby Service Station also qualifies under Criterion C as it embodies the practical, if often idiosyncratic architecture of roadside businesses. The station is an example of the house and canopy gas station type. It meets the registration requirements for the property type “gas station” as defined in the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation form Historic and Architectural Resources of Route 66 through Illinois. The period of significance is 1926, when Henry and Russell Soulsby built and opened the station, to 1956, the cutoff for significance established in the multiple property documentation form. However, the station remained open until 1993 and was tended by Russell Soulsby until 1997. The building also meets Criteria Consideration G for properties that have achieved significance within the last fifty years, due to the 1956 ending date of the multiple property form and the station’s continued use to that date.

History

Mount Olive is in southwestern Illinois, where the tall grass prairie starts rolling into the Ozarks. The area’s rich coal deposits drew immigrants from England, Ireland, Italy and southeastern Europe in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Union organizers Mary “Mother” Jones and “General” Alexander Bradley are buried in a Mount Olive cemetery. John L. Lewis, who advocated the mechanization that made many small area mines unprofitable, is not always fondly remembered in the town’s cafes and bars.

The advent of a national road system in 1926 ushered in a golden age for mom-and-pop entrepreneurs (see multiple property document for additional information). For Henry Soulsby of Mount Olive, Illinois, it happened just in time. Henry Soulsby followed his father, an Irish immigrant, into mining. But in the mid-1920s, an injury forced him aboveground. Betting that a national highway would soon pass through Mount Olive, he invested most of his life savings in two lots at the corner of 1st Street and what is now called Old Route 66 Street. With the balance, he built a gas station. His son Russell, 16 and still in high school, helped. When he was about
ready to open, Henry drove to nearby Benld to talk with Ben Fassero, another former miner. Fassero had started a gasoline delivery business in 1919. He bought gas by the tank car from the Wood River (later Shell) Refinery, hand pumped it into a storage tank, then pumped it back out for delivery. In the early years, he used a horse drawn wagon to make his rounds. Fassero readily agreed to be the new station’s supplier. This relationship between the Soulsby and Fassero families would last until the station stopped pumping gas in 1991.

When Russell finished high school, he joined his father full time at the station. Later his sisters Ola and Wilma also helped. Although the Great Depression soon began, the station thrived. America was broke, but it was still traveling. As Will Rogers would say, “We might be the first nation to drive to the poorhouse in an automobile.”

When Henry retired, Russell and Ola took over the station. Their partnership would endure until Ola’s death in 1996. Each was as adept as the other at pumping gas, checking the oil and looking under the hood or chassis to detect and fix problems.

At the close of business each day, Ola proved to be a homebody. She lived in the house directly west of the station, where Henry Soulsby had also lived. But Russell had a restless, creative spirit that needed to roam. On evenings and weekends, he played clarinet and saxophone in a dance band, the Melodians. It was at a dance in nearby Litchfield that he met his future wife, Elizabeth. Together they had four sons. Russell encouraged them to attend college instead of join him in the business. They followed his advice.

Russell always had an eye for technology. To recharge batteries and jump start cars, for example, he bolted a charger to the wall upside down. This made the cords just long enough to reach through the south window and serve cars outside. He was also the first person in Mount Olive to drive a car with balloon tires and a radio. During World War II, he was a communications technician in the Pacific theater. Shortly after coming home, he turned this experience into a second, simultaneous career—radio and TV repair. The station still has an antenna on the roof that he used to test his work.

Route 66 was a great agent of progress and development. But its very success helped spell its doom. In the late 1950s, Interstate 55 began supplanting it in Illinois. In Mount Olive, Russell
ended up a mile away from the new thoroughfare. His TV business kept him afloat, but even this declined in the age of transistors. In 1991, by mutual agreement with the Fasseros, he stopped pumping gas. Even then, he stayed open to check oil, sell soda pop and greet the ever-growing legion of Route 66 tourists and documentarians. He sent everyone off with a wink and a wave. Finally, in 1993, he closed his doors for good. In 1997, he sold the station at auction to Mike Dragovich, a neighbor. Through a disagreement with his son who had power of attorney, Russell didn’t even have a key to the station during the last several months that he owned it. With the new owner’s encouragement, however, he started greeting visitors again occasionally. When he died in 1999, his funeral procession took him under the canopy one last time. This time it was his friends’ turn to wink and wave.

Architecture

During the period of significance of Route 66, several types of gas stations could be found along the historic corridor in Illinois. These stations were classified by types, including the curbside, the shed, the house, the house with canopy, the house with bay and the oblong box. The Multiple Property Documentation form Historic and Architectural Resources of Route 66 Through Illinois discusses in detail the various gas station types.

Soulsby Service Station is an excellent local example of a house with canopy form designed in 1926 by former miner Henry Soulsby. By the time Soulsby built his station, the leading oil companies had been hiring architects to design stations that would blend well with neighborhoods to minimize local opposition to the crudeness often associated with gasoline distribution buildings. Soulsby’s design appears to take these trends into account and blended well with the surrounding area. The subsequent addition to the gas station in 1937 continued the residential feel of the station.

The integrity of Soulsby Service Station is excellent. Almost all of the historic materials are intact and its form as a house and canopy is still clearly visible. Little has changed in this part of
Mount Olive and the station's relationship to Route 66 is clearly evident. Soulsby Service Station possesses significance for both its historic and architectural associations in Mount Olive and the larger area.
Bibliography


Village of Mount Olive. Municipal records and archives, various years.
Verbal Boundary Description

An 80 by 50 foot lot at the southwest corner of South 1st Street West and what is now called Old Route 66 Street in Mount Olive, Illinois, plus a second 80 by 50 foot immediately to the south on 66 Street. The total property is 160 feet from north to south and 50 feet from east to west located in the northwest ¼ of the northwest ¼ of the northwest ¼ of Section 11, Mount Olive Township, Macoupin County, Illinois.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the gas station and the lots historically associated with the station.
KEY: State, County, Property Name, Address/Boundary, City, Vicinity, Reference Number, NHL, Action, Date, Multiple Name

COLORADO, BENT COUNTY,
Fort Lyon,
Jct. of Bent Cty. Rd. 15 and Fort Lyon Gate Rd.,
Las Animas vicinity, 04000388,
LISTED, 5/05/04

COLORADO, DENVER COUNTY,
Altamaha Apartments,
1490 Lafayette St.,
Denver, 04000382,
LISTED, 5/05/04

COLORADO, DENVER COUNTY,
West Side Court Building,
924 W. Colfax Ave.,
Denver, 04000383,
LISTED, 5/05/04

COLORADO, SAN JUAN COUNTY,
Martin Mining Complex,
6350 Cty Rd. # 2,
Silverton vicinity, 04000384,
LISTED, 5/05/04

CONNECTICUT, FAIRFIELD COUNTY,
Perkins, Maxwell E., House,
63 Park St.,
New Canaan, 04000415,
LISTED, 5/06/04

CONNECTICUT, HARTFORD COUNTY,
Downtown North Historic District,
Roughly Ann, Atlant, Ely, High, Main and Pleasant Sts.,
Hartford, 04000390,
LISTED, 5/06/04

CONNECTICUT, LITCHFIELD COUNTY,
Hine--Buckingham Farms,
44, 46, 48 Upland Rd., 78,81 Crossman Rd.,
New Milford, 04000413,
LISTED, 5/07/04

I LLINOIS, MACOU PIN COUNTY,
Soulsby Service Staion,
102 South Route 66 St.,
Mount Olive, 04000420,
LISTED, 5/06/04
(Route 66 through Illinois MPS)

MAINE, CUMBERLAND COUNTY,
Crystal Spring Farm,
277 Pleasant Hill Rd.,
Brunswick, 04000369,
LISTED, 4/29/04

MISSOURI, CAPE GIRARDEAU COUNTY,
B'Nai Israel Synagogue,
126 S. Main,
Cape Girardeau, 04000385,
LISTED, 5/05/04