



ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDIES
ALONG U.S. 70 BETWEEN ROSWELL
AND PORTALES, NEW MEXICO

Volume II: Historic Homesteads and Towns

NMDOT Cultural Resource Technical Series No. 2003-2
AC-MIP-070(34)350, CN 3392, Consultant Task 4029-8

Environmental Section



P.O. Box 1149
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504-1149



In 2000 and 2001, SWCA conducted archaeological testing and data recovery, including supporting historical studies, at 24 sites along US 70 between Roswell and Portales, in Chaves and Roosevelt Counties, New Mexico. The studies were requested by the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department (NMSHTD), prior to widening and other improvements to US 70. The westernmost site is 3.4 km (2.1 miles) east of the Pecos River and the easternmost site is about 3.4 km (2.1 miles) east of Kenna. The project took place on NMSHTD, New Mexico state trust, and private land.

The project report includes two volumes. The first volume introduces the context, goals, and methods of the data recovery program, and describes the results for five sites with Native American components. This volume describes the Euroamerican components at 12 sites, incorporating extensive archival research completed during the testing phase of the project. The 12 sites are LA 75159, LA 75163, LA 127494 (Delphos), LA 127495, LA 127497, LA 127502 (Boaz), LA 127503, LA 127511, LA 127517, LA 127518, LA 127523, and LA 127524.

The historical research revealed a rush of settlement in the early 1900s, in response to factors including federal land available for homesteading and the arrival of the Pecos Valley and Northeastern Railroad. In the long run, most of the homesteaders moved on; those who stayed turned from farming to low-density ranching. The few towns that survived did so by serving the ranchers, as well as what commerce could be picked up from travelers. During this process, and clearly connected to it, local railroad service died as US 70 became the artery for local life.

The archaeological remains from the project add to this historical information by revealing patterns of daily consumption. Thanks to the railroad and later US 70, the homesteaders and other inhabitants

along the project corridor always had access to a variety of manufactured goods and mass-produced foods. In other words, people in the area could obtain key products (from canned foods to canning jars) available on a national basis. The archaeological evidence thus shows that local people were, at least minimally, middle class—people with the power to consume, albeit people who had to work for the privilege. If after a decade or so most people had left the homesteads and towns studied by the project, that was because it was easier to be middle class somewhere else.