Old Trails Museum
WINSLOW HISTORICAL SOCIETY

100 YEARS OF ROUTE 66 IN WINSLOW

Route 66 Near Winslow

Meteor Crater was formed over 50,000 years ago when a 150-foot-wide meteor crashed into the earth. One of the world's most famous and well-preserved impact craters, it is over 4,100 feet across, 550 feet deep, and 2-1/2 miles around the rim. Starting in the 1920s, Winslow was promoted as "Meteor City" to Route 66 travelers because the crater is only 26 miles west of town and was only six miles south of Route 66 before the 1949 realignment. As more Americans traveled and explored western states via Route 66, entrepreneurs along the route capitalized on their growing interest in the region's geologic wonders and Native American cultures. Curio shops sprang up, selling both authentic Native-made arts and crafts and items commodified specifically for the tourist trade.

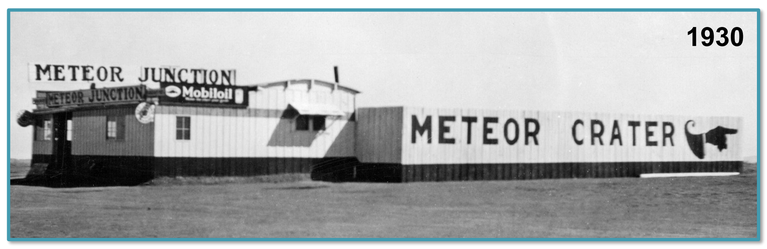
Left: Meteor Crater was designated a National Landmark in 1967, the same year NASA astronauts began training inside the crater.

Top Right: In the late 1920s, Harry and Hope Locke opened a service station and café at Meteor Junction, the intersection of Route 66 and Meteor Crater Road and "the nearest point to Meteor Crater on Highway 66," as stated in Locke's brochure. Locke named it Meteor Station, educated his customers on the crater, and sold them souvenir cards with meteor fragments (right). In 1933, the Lockes leased Meteor Station to "Rimmy Jim" Giddings to finance their dream of building a meteor museum nearby.

Right (with 2 women): Former Texas cowboy Giddings operated his service station and curio shop at Meteor Station from 1933 until his death in 1943. In 1948, Sid and Ruth Griffin bought the business and operated it as Rimmy Jim's for over two decades. The building was demolished by the time Interstate 40 bypassed Winslow in 1979.

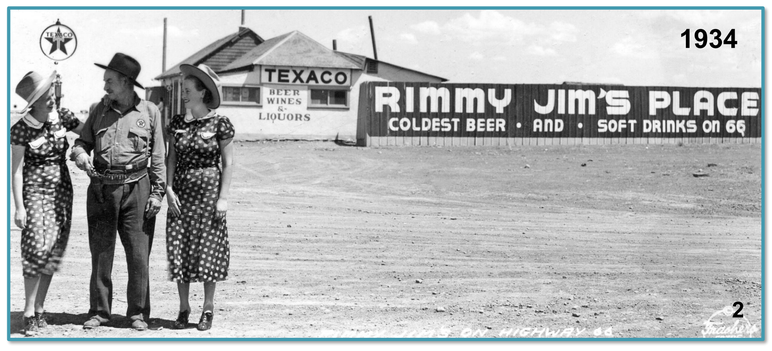
Bottom Right: Harry Locke built and opened Meteor Crater Observatory at Meteor Junction in 1936. Even though he displayed his large collection of meteors and charged for lectures and telescope views from the observatory tower, the enterprise failed to turn a profit during the Depression and went into foreclosure by 1938. Former observatory manager Arthur and Ruth Pelletier purchased the property and operated a curio shop there until 1946.

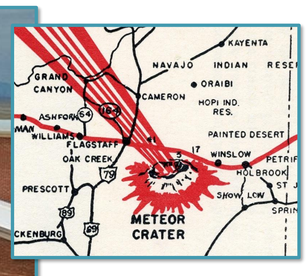
In 1946, Dr. Harvey H. and Addie Nininger leased the observatory building and opened the American Meteorite Museum, which became a renowned research center. Nininger gave lectures, conducted testing, and housed his collection of over 5,000 meteorites. The Niningers moved the museum collection to Sedona in 1953 after the 1949 Route 66 realignment, and the building is a ruin today.



Left: Locke's 1929 souvenir card

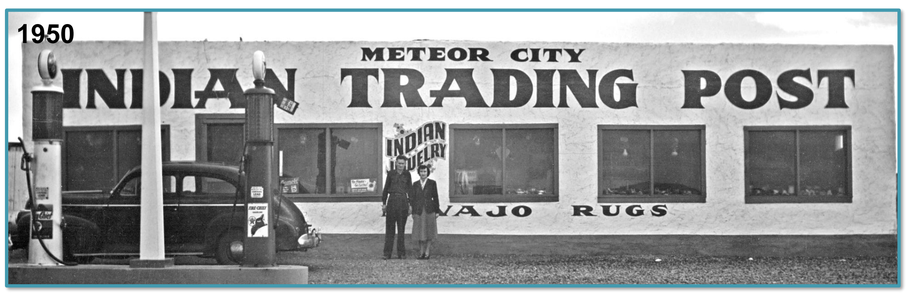
Right: The 1939 Winslow High School Yearbook





A map detail from the crater's 1960s brochure

Above: The original visitors center (left) on the crater's north rim was designed by architect Philip C. Johnson in 1950. Today the complex includes a museum, theater, and gift shop. Just a half hour drive from Winslow, Meteor Crater Natural Landmark and Barringer Space Museum is a privately-owned tourist attraction open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Left, Top : Earl and Louise Cundiff opened the Canyon Lodge Store and Camp near Canyon Diablo in 1924, and soon leased lots to Harry "Indian" Miller, who built the Fort Two Guns Zoo, and Chief Joe Sekakuku, who built the Apache Caves "ruins" and curio shop. In 1934, Phillip and Louise (widow of Earl) Hesch constructed this residence, service station, curio shop, and roadside zoo along the 1937 Route 66 realignment. Several businesses opened and closed at Two Guns after the 1947 realignment, including a Shell station and a KOA campground. The complex is a ruin today.

Left, Center: Built in 1941 by Ray and Ella Meany, the Hopi House Trading Post was located 10 miles west of Winslow at Leupp Corner, the junction of Route 66 and State Route 99. The complex included a Texaco service station, curio shop, coffee shop, trailer camp, and a few motel rooms. Armand Ortega owned the business from 1955 to 1979, when Interstate 40 bypassed Route 66. The building is no longer there.

Left, Bottom: In 1941, "Lonesome" Jack Newsome took over the Texaco service station 15 miles west of Winslow, added a curio shop, and named it Meteor City Indian Trading Post. He sold Native-made jewelry, petrified wood, postcards, road maps, and felt pennants with "real meteorites" glued to them. He married Goldie Moman in 1946 (the couple at left), and the business had a series of owners after they died in the 1960s. In 1979, the building was replaced with a geodesic dome, and pivotal scenes in the 1984 film *Starman* were filmed there, as well as on the crater floor. The Dole family renovated the complex and reopened the Dino Drive-Thru at Historic Meteor City in 2024.

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