

# **Soulsby Shell Station Mount Olive, Illinois Since 1926 on Route 66**

Henry Soulsby and his son Russell built this station in 1926. It is the oldest one still standing on Route 66. At 13 x 30 feet, it was smaller than the restrooms in modern stations. There was room for a desk, a cash register, a battery charger and a few supplies. Henry and Russell doubled the station's size in the 1930's but it was still never enough to accommodate a car. Oil changes and minor repairs were done on a drive-up ramp outside. There was room inside, however, for Russell to start a TV repair business in the 1950's.

After their father died, Russell and his sister Ola ran the station until 1991. But even then, they continued to greet thousands of visitors a year. Ola passed away in 1997 and Russell finally sold

the station in 1997. Two years later, Russell died. Mike Dragovich purchased the historic station and is working with the "Soulsby Station Society" to maintain the site as a historical and educational attraction for Route 66 travelers.

Local Route 66 volunteers repainted the outside in 2003. That caught the eye of the National Park Service. The "Soulsby Station Society" a not for profit 501-3C Corporation in partnership with the "Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, National Trails System – Santa Fe, National Park Service completed a \$30,000.00 plus restoration/preservation in 2009.

**Got a question or wish to make a donation.**

Donations for the continued preservation and operation of this Historic Station are tax deductible when made to the: "Soulsby Station Society", 201 South Old Route 66, Mt. Olive, IL 62069 or to the First National Bank of Mt. Olive in care of the "Soulsby Station Society".

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