

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Gulf Oil Distribution Facility

Other names/site number: O. A. Gregory, Inc.

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 481 Rollins Road

City or town: Marshall State: NC County: Madison

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B X C D

<hr/>	
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources _____	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: _____ **Date** _____

Title : _____ **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government** _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:
___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
-

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Structure

Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE/warehouse

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

WORK IN PROGRESS

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: bow barrel truss construction

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: _

Foundation: brick

Walls: brick

Roof: rubber

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The 1.39-acre Gulf Oil Distribution Facility property, with a flat topography, extends in an east-west direction along the north side of Rollins Road, approximately one mile east of downtown Marshall, North Carolina, in Madison County. Rollins Road extends in a northwest to southeast direction, but for purposes of this nomination the description is written as though it runs true east-west. To the south of the property is the French Broad River, and to the north are railroad tracks of the Norfolk Southern Railroad. To the east of the property is a parcel of land purchased by O. A. Gregory in 2011 that formerly contained a pole barn that was torn down due to extensive structural damage from the 2024 Helene flood. The far east end of this parcel includes a non-historic concrete block building, so this parcel is not included in the boundary. To the west of the property are residences. Incorporated within the boundaries are three contributing buildings, a warehouse, a garage, and a pump house, a contributing structure with oil tanks, a contributing filling station structure, all dating from ca. 1929, and a non-contributing, post-1976 structure with a single oil tank. All of these contributing buildings and structures together served

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as important resources in the business operations. The resources retain a great deal of architectural integrity, with no significant changes.

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Site and Setting

The Gulf Oil Distribution Facility property is located on Rollins Road, to the east of downtown Marshall, North Carolina, with the French Broad River forming the southern boundary. The southern portion of the property, fronting onto the river, is separated from the buildings by Rollins Road. This portion of the property contains no buildings and extends to the river's edge. Rollins Road dead ends on the east and west, and is only accessible from a road to the north that winds down the hill from South Main Street. All of the free-standing buildings and structures stand in a straight line and are located on the north side of Rollins Road, fronting onto the road and facing in a southwest direction. To the east of the property are additional post-1976 industrial buildings, to the west are ca. 1920s to 1940s residences, and to the north are railroad tracks of the Norfolk Southern Railroad.

The site is generally flat with a slight slope up from south to north which allows the warehouse building to have an exposed basement on the south, east, and west elevations. The three Contributing buildings are located along the north edge of Rollins Road. The historic tank structure is located at the west end of the property, with one non-historic tank located adjacent to and west of the garage. Scattered at the rear of the property are several additional post-1976 loose tanks which were washed to the ground during the Helene storm in September 2024. The filling station structure is also located along the north edge of Rollins Road.

Warehouse, ca. 1929. Contributing Building.

This tall one-story-plus-basement five-to-one common bond brick building with a bow barrel truss roof covered by a rubber membrane, faces south towards the river and sits along the north edge of Rollins Road. Metal-frame windows are typical throughout. The south elevation, an arched end wall, facing the river is solid brick on the lower half at the basement level, and has a row of four nine-light, metal frame awning-style windows above this, with two six-light, square, metal frame windows centered above this. Windows here and throughout the building have concrete sills and a row of soldier course brick above each window. The east elevation has four nine-light windows on the main level and three six-light windows at the basement. The north elevation, also an arched end wall, on the main level, has three nine-light windows, two of which flank a double leaf sliding door made up of diagonally placed wood, opening onto a loading platform. There are two, square six-light windows above these, as on the south elevation. The west elevation consists of three nine-light windows on the main level, with a sliding wood door at the north end of the elevation and a six-light window and two solid wood doors, one with diagonal wood panels and the other with six lights above three horizontal panels, set slightly below this at the basement level. There was an awning above the lower doors which was damaged in the Helene flood. On the east and west elevations, at the cornice level, shaded by the roof soffits, is a band of metal-frame clerestory windows spanning nearly the entire wall.

The building entry is on the west elevation, through a sliding wood door. This opens onto a wooden landing with steps to the south leading to the basement level and steps to the east leading to the main level. The basement level was largely inaccessible due to hazardous conditions from Helene. The lower level, visible from the entry, has brick walls with some wide-beaded board partition walls, likely from the period of significance, and an additional wood door with six lights above three horizontal panels. Ceiling structure is exposed structure. Floors are concrete. It is possible, although not documented, that this lower level served as the office for the operations. The main level is one large open space with an exposed wood bow barrel truss roof, brick walls, and a wooden floor. On the south end is a wooden storage platform which appears to have been added later since it partially blocks the windows. Near the center of the floor

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are two small, unfinished sheetrock rooms with walls that do not extend to the ceiling, also likely later additions. There is also a conveyor belt extending from the center of the main floor to the basement, but the date of construction is not known.

Garage, ca. 1929. Contributing Building.

The one-story five-to-one common bond brick, rubber-membrane-clad bow barrel truss-roof garage building, located west of the warehouse, is also located at the south edge of the property. Metal-frame windows are typical throughout. The arched end wall south elevation consists of two, nine-light, metal-frame, awning-style windows with a square six-light window above. The east elevation has four sliding wooden-door garage bays, each separated by a metal column, with a band of clerestory windows above at the cornice line of the roof. The garage doors are damaged from the Hurricane Helene storm. The arched end wall north elevation is the same as the front, and the west elevation has four nine-light windows. Windows throughout this building are the same as on the warehouse, with concrete sills and a row of soldier course brick above. On the east and west elevations, at the cornice level, shaded by the roof soffits, is a band of metal-frame clerestory windows spanning nearly the entire wall. The interior of the building is one large space, with an exposed wood bow barrel truss roof structure and brick walls.

Pump House, ca. 1929. Contributing Building.

Located west of the garage and set back from the street is the one-story, rubber-membrane-clad side-gable-roof, brick pump house. The main elevation (façade) of this building faces west, and consists of a single six-light, metal-frame window on the north end and two, five-panel wood doors. The south elevation is solid brick with no fenestration, and the east and north elevations each have one six-light window. The inside of this building is one space, with some of the pump and electrical equipment still intact. The walls are five-to-one common bond brick and the ceiling is exposed structure with flush board roof decking. According to a long-time employee of O. A. Gregory, there were controls and gauges in this building that helped to regulate the amount of oil in the large tanks.¹

Oil Tank Structure, ca. 1929; ca. 1974. Contributing Structure.

Located near the west end of the property and set slightly back from the street is a brick structure designed to hold five metal oil storage tanks. The tanks are replacements of the original, but date from ca. 1974 when the property was purchased by O. A. Gregory, and are within the period of significance. The walls are solid on the north and south, with curved sections at the top of each wall to hold the tanks. The structure is open in the center beneath the elevated tanks. There is a metal ladder on the east end and a metal catwalk that extends across the top of the tanks. The westernmost section of the structure has a seam in the brick which indicates it may have been added later, possibly ca. 1974 when the tanks were replaced.

Oil Tank Structure, post-1976. Non-contributing Structure.

There is a single concrete oil tank structure, constructed of three parallel formed-concrete walls, located immediately to the east of the pump house. It appears to be recent construction, with a new oil tank.

Filling Station Structure, ca. 1929. Contributing Structure.

¹Greene, Jennifer. Long-time Marshall resident and former employee at O. A. Gregory. Phone interview with Sybil H. Argintar, August 25, 2025.

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Located to the west of the warehouse, at the south edge of the property, at the street, is a side-gable-roof open metal structure covering several gas pumps. Local farmers would often fill up equipment here, but most gas was sold directly to local gas stations, delivered by truck.

Integrity Statement

None of the buildings underwent extensive damage from the September 2024 Hurricane Helene storm, with floors typically covered with a layer of mud over the original concrete. Some of the wooden door bays on the garage were damaged by water, but most are still intact. Overall, the buildings, on the exterior and the interior, retain a great deal of integrity in terms of location, design, materials, and workmanship. The site as a whole, including all of the buildings, the tank structures and tanks, and the pumping station, retains a high degree of integrity of setting, location, feeling, and association of the oil company distribution business during its period of significance.

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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 grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce
Architecture

Period of Significance
ca. 1929 - 1976

Significant Dates
ca. 1929

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
unknown

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Gulf Oil Distribution Facility, with a period of significance of ca. 1929 – 1976, is eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion A for Commerce and under C for Architecture. The period of significance of the property begins ca. 1929, when Gulf Refining Company (later Gulf Oil Company) purchased the property, and continues through 1976, since the business continued to have local commercial importance and no more specific date can be defined to end the historic period. The property, known as a “bulk distribution facility” or “bulk terminal plant”, is significant to the commercial history of Marshall and western North Carolina for being the longest-running business of its type in Madison County, serving residences, businesses, and farmers in the area through distribution of its oil and fuel products. Distribution facilities were critical to the commercial operations of large oil and gas-producing companies like Gulf. Architecturally it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, in this case as a highly intact example of wooden bow barrel truss architecture, a company standardized building type utilized in other Gulf Oil distribution plants identified across the state of North Carolina. It is likely that Gulf Oil Company used the bow barrel truss and other arched-truss-roof building designs for its ability to provide wide open storage space, and as a way to standardize many of their buildings to create a corporate image. Additionally, this rare complex of buildings, or bulk terminal plant, was laid out in a standard fashion where buildings, offices, storage tanks, and pumping facilities were all clustered together and located along a railroad. The architectural features of this complex in Marshall, including load-bearing brick construction, bow barrel truss roofs on the two main buildings, the warehouse and garage, along with metal-frame multi-light and clerestory windows, together with the intact layout of the bulk terminal plan complex is significant in the architectural and commercial history of Marshall.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

History of Gulf Oil Distribution Facility

The Gulf Oil Distribution Facility is an example of what was generally known as a “bulk terminal plant” or “bulk distribution facility” that was critical to the commercial operations of large oil and gas-producing companies like Gulf. Oil and fuel products from the refining company were distributed to local dealers/distributors via rail cars, tank trucks, and truck trailers.² These distribution companies, as local storage facilities, in turn supplied service stations, homes, farms, and other consumers.

² Dase, Amy E., Prewitt and Associates, Inc., Cultural Resources Services, Austin, Texas, “A Field Guide to Industrial Properties in Texas”, p. 3. Accessed September 8, 2025.
<https://www.thc.texas.gov/public/upload/preserve/survey/survey/Industrial%20Props.pdf>.

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The Gulf Distribution Facility in Marshall, one of the bulk terminal plants for Gulf Oil, began operation in Marshall ca. 1929 – 1930, even though it was not mapped on the 1933 Sanborn map (it was located further to the east along the river).³ Deed records for the property are clear, however, that the land was sold, in two separate tracts, by Minnie G. Ramsey to the Gulf Refining Company on November 16, 1929 and December 27, 1929.⁴ The property was located to the east of a primarily residential community, known as the Rollins community, with a prime location adjacent to the railroad tracks.⁵ This was a time when Gulf was rapidly expanding its retail operations all across the country. On January 31, 1936, Gulf Refining Company became Gulf Oil Company as it expanded further into North Carolina. This name change is recorded in Madison County Deeds.⁶ Aubrey Gregory, O. A. Gregory's father, served as the distributor for Gulf in Marshall. Yearbooks from Marshall High School include advertisements from the O. A. Gregory Company in the 1960s, so the name of the company changed from Gulf Oil to O. A. Gregory at least by the 1960s.⁷ Aubrey Gregory continued in this capacity, with his son, as a lessee from Gulf, until O. A. Gregory purchased the property on July 31, 1974, changing the name to O. A. Gregory Inc.⁸ The O. A. Gregory business closed in 2022 and the property was sold to the current owner, Every Angle, Inc. on May 26, 2023.⁹

When the company began operating, all oil and gas was delivered from Gulf to the Marshall Gulf Oil Distribution Facility by train, with a spur line to the facility from the tracks located immediately adjacent to the property on the north. The Marshall distribution company stored oil in large tanks, and distributed oil and fuel products to residences and businesses not only in Marshall and Madison County, but to north Buncombe County to the south and a small portion of west Yancey County to the east, both adjacent to Madison County. Diesel fuel was also distributed to local farmers, and some farmers with larger trucks would fill up at the filling station on the property. Cases of oil were also available in the warehouse for delivery to businesses or to individuals. In the latter part of the twentieth century, in the late 1970s, Gulf products were brought by truck up the mountain from Spartanburg, and no longer delivered by train.¹⁰

Known locally as “The Gulf”, the company, under the leadership of the Gregory family, was an entity that cared a great deal about its local customers. Of all the distribution companies in the area, “The Gulf” was the only one that would sell small amounts to its customers, often as little as fifty gallons. Products were often sold on credit to local residents, who paid a small amount

³ Marshall was not mapped after 1933, so there is no record of the property in this resource.

⁴Madison County Deed Book 54, pp. 80 and 83.

⁵ A long-time resident of the Rollins community noted the families living in this community located southeast of downtown Marshall, in modest homes dating from the 1920s through the mid-twentieth century, along with recently rebuilt homes after the Helene flood. Sanborn Maps from 1924 and 1933 appear to document some of this community, with Rollins Road then named Railroad Place. The O. A. Gregory Company land is not mapped.

⁶Madison County Deed Book 119, p. 145.

⁷ *The Islander*. Marshall High School Yearbook, 1966.

⁸Madison County Deed Book 120, p. 317.

⁹Madison County Deed Book 773, p. 121.

¹⁰ Greene, Jennifer. Long-time Marshall resident and former employee at O. A. Gregory. Phone interview with Sybil H. Argintar, August 25, 2025.

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each month and had their accounts up to date by the time oil was delivered to them for the winter months. The Distribution Facility also provided maintenance services for furnaces to residents, with Herman Rice employed as the “trouble shooter” and general mechanic.¹¹

The Gulf Oil Distribution Facility was run first by Aubrey Gregory, who served as lessee for Gulf Oil Company from the beginning. Later his son, Overton A. (“O. A.”) Gregory (1914 – 1995), who worked at the business and later purchased it, took over operations. O. A. Gregory, in addition to his business, was a community leader, often helping in various volunteer capacities, including the Marshall Lions Club, where he was selected in 1966 as “Lion of the Year”, and serving as a member of the Board of Directors of First Citizens Bank.¹² Gregory also assisted local schools whenever possible.¹³ Ruth Gregory, O. A. Gregory’s wife, was also a leader in the community, serving the Girl Scouts among other organizations. After O. A. Gregory died, R. J. Plemmons took over operation and ownership (as O. A. Gregory, Inc.) of the business, where he had worked for fifty-nine years. Plemmons, like Gregoery, was a lifelong resident of Madison County.¹⁴ After Plemmons died in 2018, Jim Landers took over as owner/manager of the business.¹⁵

Commercial Context

The Gulf Refining Company of Texas was organized to “...refine and market the crude oil produced by the J. M. Guffey Petroleum Company in Texas...”.¹⁶ Oil companies like Gulf, at the turn of the twentieth century, began operating as a response to the discovery of crude oil in Texas. A large refinery was built soon after this in Port Arthur, Texas. Crude oil production declined briefly in 1907, but soon picked back up with the formation of Gulf Oil Corporation, who then built a 400-mile pipeline from Port Arthur to Glenn Pool, Oklahoma.¹⁷ By 1909 the company was producing over 11,000 barrels of oil per day, and continued to grow and expand. By 1929 the company had greatly increased its operations, with a network of pipelines from west Texas to not only Port Arthur and Oklahoma, but to Fort Worth, Bayonne, New Jersey, Philadelphia, and Sweetwater, Texas, all lines built between 1911 and 1928. Seventy-eight million barrels of crude oil were produced annually by the end of 1928.¹⁸ In 1929 Gulf Oil Company began expanding its retail operations all over the country, which until this time existed

¹¹ Allen, Gerri. Long-time Marshall resident and former employee at O. A. Gregory. In-person interview with Sybil H. Argintar, August 27, 2025.

¹² “Marshall Lions Laud Gregory”, *Asheville Citizen-Times*, April 1, 1966; “Finance”, *Asheville Citizen-Times*, April 20, 1986.

¹³ Allen, Gerri. Long-time Marshall resident and former employee at O. A. Gregory. In-person interview with Sybil H. Argintar, August 27, 2025.

¹⁴ “RJ Plemmons”. Obituary. *Asheville Citizen-Times*, March 30, 2018.

¹⁵ Allen, Gerri. Long-time Marshall resident and former employee at O. A. Gregory. In-person interview with Sybil H. Argintar, August 27, 2025.

¹⁶ Shelton, Devlin, Jay Firsching, and Emily Smith. *Gulf Oil Distribution Facility* (Dallas, Texas), National Register nomination, 2010, p. 8-13.

¹⁷ James A. Clark and Mark Odintz, “Gulf Oil Corporation”, Accessed April 3, 2025, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/gulf-oil-corporation>,

¹⁸ James A. Clark and Mark Odintz, “Gulf Oil Corporation”, Accessed April 3, 2025, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/gulf-oil-corporation>,

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on a smaller basis in the south and east parts of the country. The company opened additional refineries in Cincinnati and Toledo, Ohio and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.¹⁹ In 1931, as a result of the Depression, Gulf Oil Company operated at a loss, but by the mid-1930s began to prosper and grow once again. One of the major changes they made in the early 1930s was to end maintenance and operations of service stations in favor of leasing to independent operators/distributors, of which the Gulf Oil Distribution Facility in Marshall, managed by Aubry Gregory, was one. High demand for oil happened during World War II, and the company continued to grow. By 1950 Gulf Oil Company claimed over one billion dollars in assets, with 32,000 stockholders and 43,000 employees nationwide, 10,000 miles of pipeline and the beginning of international operations in Kuwait, Canada, and Venezuela.²⁰ Later in the 1950s Gulf Oil joined with B. F. Goodrich to make synthetic rubber and expanded its petrochemical production. By 1967 Gulf produced 1.3 million barrels of oil per day and continued to expand internationally.²¹ The 1970s proved to be a decline in operations for the company, when their reserves depleted, but by 1983 they had recovered over 95% of this reserve supply. In 1984 Gulf merged with Chevron (previously Standard Oil Company of California).²²

The primary commercial center for Marshall, North Carolina was centered along Main Street, located to the west of the subject property. Development took place primarily in the 1910s and 1920s, with a secondary small wave of development taking place in the 1930s through 1940s. There were a wide variety of businesses located in this commercial core of the town through the middle of the twentieth century, including banks, building suppliers, automobile sales, a movie theater, filling stations, pharmacies, groceries, furniture and department stores, restaurants, and a newspaper office.²³ By the time Gulf Refining Company bought land in Marshall in 1929, there was little space left along Main Street to build, and likely the location adjacent to the railroad tracks was also a significant factor in where they decided to build their operations. The property they bought was located in what, up until that time, had been a small residential area southeast of downtown, known today as the Rollins community.²⁴ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps appear to include the west end of this community, with small dwellings in existence by 1933, with a portion of the east end of the road (appearing to have originally been called Railroad Place), developing later into a small secondary commercial location for the town. In the 1950s, according to long-time residents of the Rollins community, there were at least three other oil distribution companies along Rollins Road and the railroad, including Esso and Standard Oil, but these all closed and were torn down by the late 1970s.²⁵ The Rollins community remains today as primarily a residential area of town.

¹⁹James A. Clark and Mark Odintz, "Gulf Oil Corporation", Accessed April 3, 2025, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/gulf-oil-corporation>

²⁰James A. Clark and Mark Odintz, "Gulf Oil Corporation", Accessed April 3, 2025, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/gulf-oil-corporation>,

²¹James A. Clark and Mark Odintz, "Gulf Oil Corporation", Accessed April 3, 2025, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/gulf-oil-corporation>,

²²James A. Clark and Mark Odintz, "Gulf Oil Corporation", Accessed April 3, 2025, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/gulf-oil-corporation>

²³ Argintar, Sybil. *Marshall Main Street Historic District*, National Register Nomination, 2007, pp. 7-2 – 7-14.

²⁴ "Marshall Residents Remain Hopeful Despite Ongoing Recovery Needs", *Mountain Express*, February 20, 2026.

²⁵ Allen, Gerri. Long-time Marshall resident and former employee at O. A. Gregory. In-person interview with Sybil H. Argintar, August 27, 2025.

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As the town of Marshall grew from the 1920s through the mid-1970s, the need for fuel distributors in the area became a promising commercial venture. By the late 1950s, there were other businesses relying on these distributors, including Hunter's Esso Servicenter, Stines Gulf Service Station, and East End Service Station. In addition to the Gulf operations, there was a B & B Oil Company Distributor and a Phillips 66 dealer.²⁶ In the 1960s, when the Marshall by-pass had been completed, there were other service stations built, including Buckner's Gulf Service. Quality Oil Company was also built on the by-pass.²⁷ There were numerous service stations located in Marshall by the early 1970s, including Riverview Esso, and Frisby's Gulf.²⁸ The Gulf distributor was not the only one through the late 1970s, but as the others went out of business, the Gulf distributorship, under O. A. Gregory's leadership, remained in existence until 2022, providing not only fuel oil for automobiles, but fuel for residences and other thriving businesses of the time.

Architectural Context

The Gulf Oil Distribution Facility features resources with a company standardized building type, bow barrel truss construction, as evidenced by other Gulf Oil distribution plants identified across the state of North Carolina. The subject property appears to have several design features in common with other Gulf Oil distribution facilities in NC, most notably the brick construction, metal windows, arched roof shape, and small clerestory windows under the eaves of the side elevations. While no standardized plans for the Gulf Oil Company have been located to date, it is likely they did use the bow barrel truss building design for its ability to provide wide open storage space, and as a way to standardize many of their buildings to create a corporate image, along with the iconic Gulf symbol of an orange background in a circle that was in use by the company from the early 1920s. Perhaps more importantly, there were common layout standards for bulk terminal plants such as the one in Marshall. Buildings, offices, storage tanks, and pumping facilities, all clustered together and located along a railroad were common site layouts.²⁹

Arched truss construction has been around for a very long time, found in dwellings in Greece from as early as 2500 BC.³⁰ Early designs were built of wood timbers, allowing for large interior open spaces. It was not until the thirteenth century that these structures got the name of "truss", meaning "...a collection of things bound together. According to a document prepared by the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), a truss is "...composed of structural triangles joined together with pinned or riveted connections. The main pieces or members may be either stiff heavy struts, posts, or thin flexible bars. It is the arrangement of these members

²⁶ *The Islander* yearbook, Marshall High School, 1957.

²⁷ *The Laurels* yearbook, Laurel High School, 1966.

²⁸ *The Islander* yearbook, Marshall High School, 1971.

²⁹ Dase, Amy E., Prewitt and Associates, Inc., Cultural Resources Services, Austin, Texas, "A Field Guide to Industrial Properties in Texas", p. 3. Accessed March 27, 2026.

³⁰ "The Arch and the Vault in Greek Architecture" <https://www.jstor.org/stable/503797>. Accessed April 3, 2026.

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that determines the specific truss type...”.³¹ A bow barrel truss configuration “...has a curved top and bottom chord. The depth of the truss is equal at all points, and the chords are connected by a series of diagonal web members...”.³² Like other types of arched trusses, the bow barrel truss was used in large buildings to create an uninterrupted open space, with no columns present. The Gulf Oil Distribution Facility buildings utilize this bow barrel truss design. In the early 1900s, and especially from 1900 to 1950, this type of roof construction was very popular for buildings that needed to have large open interior spaces, ideal for commercial or industrial use. Some building types that have utilized this type of construction include manufacturing facilities, garages, warehouses, arenas, and skating rinks.³³ The large sloping roofs of bow barrel truss buildings functioned to divert water and create large open spans on the interior of the building. Trusses could span between twenty-four and seventy-two feet, with heights ranging from six-and-one-half to nineteen feet.³⁴ Different size spans are determined by the size and thickness of the various components.³⁵

When used for industrial purposes, such as the Gulf Oil Distribution Facility in Marshall, the bow barrel truss system served to provide a large open space, unencumbered by posts or other structural elements. This allowed for more storage areas, and in the case of the Facility in Marshall, for large distribution trucks to be housed in the garage and a large floor area to be available for storage of products in the warehouse. It appears to have been a standard design for many of these types of Gulf Oil facilities across the state of North Carolina, even though the resources may have varied in size and arrangement. As large oil companies adopted standardized designs, buildings were more likely to articulate corporate logos and uniform plans. The constituent parts of a bulk terminal plant could be purchased from several different manufacturers and assembled on site where signage identified both manufacturer and ownership.³⁶

The closest known surveyed comparable example, geographically speaking, is the Gulf Oil Distributorship in Shelby, Cleveland County (720 South Lafayette Street, Shelby, North Carolina). This resource, consisting of two, brick bow barrel truss buildings connected by a one-story section, is similar to the Gulf Oil Distribution Facility building in Marshall in its use of the bow barrel truss roof, clerestory windows just below the roofline, and metal-frame, multi-light windows with operable awnings. The interior of this building also remains intact, exhibiting the open interior distinctive to the use of an arched truss system. There are several additional Gulf Oil primary fuel oil supplier buildings which utilized some type of arch truss construction. In western North Carolina, there is a complex of buildings in Asheville (4 Fairview Road,

³¹ “Trusses: A Study by the Historic American Engineering Record”.

https://www.nps.gov/subjects/heritagedocumentation/upload/HAER-Truss-Poster_508.pdf, p. 1.

³² “Truss: Bow Barrel”, <https://www.dimensions.com/element/truss-bow-barrel>. Accessed March 30, 2026.

³³ “What Inspectors Should Know About Bowstring Trusses”, pp 2 – 3. Accessed September 8, 2025.

<https://ccpia.org/what-inspectors-should-know-about-bowstring-trusses/>

³⁴ “Truss: Bow Barrel”, <https://www.dimensions.com/element/truss-bow-barrel>. Accessed March 30, 2026.

³⁵ “What Inspectors Should Know About Bowstring Trusses”, p. 3. Accessed September 8, 2025.

<https://ccpia.org/what-inspectors-should-know-about-bowstring-trusses/>

³⁶ Dase, Amy E., Prewitt and Associates, Inc., Cultural Resources Services, Austin, Texas, “A Field Guide to Industrial Properties in Texas”, p. 3. Accessed September 8, 2025.

<https://www.thc.texas.gov/public/upload/preserve/survey/survey/Industrial%20Props.pdf>

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Asheville, North Carolina), one of which is an arch truss building. The building is covered with metal siding and is not as architecturally intact as the complex of brick buildings in Marshall.³⁷ Another building, in Spruce Pine (Altapass Highway, Spruce Pine, North Carolina) has a remaining arch truss building, but also does not appear to be in the same intact condition as the Marshall buildings. The Gulf Oil Buildings in Goldsboro, Wayne County (1000 South George Street, Goldsboro, North Carolina) is another example of an arched truss building, but this single brick building retains only some of its windows and appears to be in poor condition on the exterior. The Gulf Oil Company Storage Buildings in Wilmington, New Hanover County (1332 Castle Hayne Road, Wilmington, North Carolina), includes one arched truss building, but many other more modern building additions that obscure the elevations of the original buildings. The interior condition of this building is not known. In comparison to all of these buildings, the Gulf Oil Distribution Facility in Marshall is a rare example of the use of bow barrel truss construction in western North Carolina. It is one of the most intact on both the exterior and interior, serving as an excellent example of wooden bow barrel truss construction within a setting that has not been altered since its construction. More importantly, however, the Distribution Facility in Marshall embodies a specific type of construction, a bulk terminal plant, seemingly following a corporate design and remaining as one of the most intact known examples of this type of building complex in western North Carolina.

³⁷ “Alphabetical List of Fuel Oil Primary Suppliers, March 1945”, p. 82. Accessed March 23, 2026.
https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GOVPUB-PR32_4200-c9f535308601b332b497d2b58523ae38/pdf/GOVPUB-PR32_4200-c9f535308601b332b497d2b58523ae38.pdf.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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“Trusses: A Study by the Historic American Engineering Record”.
https://www.nps.gov/subjects/heritagedocumentation/upload/HAER-Truss-Poster_508.pdf

“What Inspectors Should Know About Bowstring Trusses”, p. 3. Accessed September 8, 2025.
<https://ccpia.org/what-inspectors-should-know-about-bowstring-trusses/>.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

 X preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

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- 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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: Western Office, Archives and History

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): MD0325

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 1.39 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 35.788948 Longitude: -82.66377

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

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NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property boundary includes all of Madison County PIN #9716-326154 for a total of 1.39 acres. The parcel is bisected by Rollins Road and the boundary includes that portion of the road. See boundary map.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes all of the land, buildings, and structures originally associated with the Gulf Oil Distribution Facility and later the O. A. Gregory Company.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Sybil Argintar
organization: Southeastern Preservation Services
street & number: 166 Pearson Drive
city or town: Asheville state: NC zip code: 28801
e-mail sybil.argintar@yahoo.com
telephone: (828) 230-3773
date: April 3, 2026

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Gulf Oil Distribution Facility

City or Vicinity: Marshall

County: Madison

State: North Carolina

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Photographer: Sybil Argintar

Date Photographed: March 2025

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 11. Streetscape, view east
- 2 of 11. Streetscape, view northwest
- 3 of 11. Warehouse building, view northwest
- 4 of 11. Warehouse building interior, view south
- 5 of 11. Garage building, view northeast
- 6 of 11. Garage building interior, view south
- 7 of 11. Pump house building, view northeast
- 8 of 11. Pump house building interior, view northeast
- 9 of 11. Oil tank structure, view northeast
- 10 of 11. Non-contributing oil tank structure, view northeast
- 11 of 11. Filling station structure, view east.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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. 460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

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- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

DRAFT