

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1989
FEB 10 1989

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Council Grove United States Post Office
other names/site number Same

2. Location

street & number 103 West Main Street not for publication
city, town Council Grove vicinity
state Kansas code KS county Morris code 127 zip code 66846

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	_____ objects
			_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Kansas Post Offices That Contain Treasury
Department Section Artwork, 1936-1942
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. 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. See continuation sheet.
Ramon Power State Historic Preservation Officer December 20, 1988
Signature of certifying official Date
Kansas State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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:)

Carey Shue 10-17-89

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Government: post office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Government: post office

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

20th Century Revival: Classical
Revival

foundation Concrete
walls Brick
Stone: limestone
roof Other: tar
other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Council Grove United States Post Office (c. 1938-1939) is located at 103 West Main Street in Council Grove, Morris County, Kansas (pop. 2,381). The one story, flat roofed red brick and limestone building has a northwestern facade orientation. The building measures approximately sixty-four feet from southeast to northwest and fifty-five feet from northeast to southwest. A double door surmounted by a transom pierces the center of the building's facade. Steps lead up to the doorway. Two sets of large, multi-paned windows flank the doorway. Limestone panels surround the windows and the door on the facade, supporting a limestone stringcourse and concluding in the limestone foundation. Five windows of similar design pierce the east and west elevations of the building. This post office appears to be an example of a class B post office, rather than the more common class C or D type that was constructed in Kansas during the 1930s and 1940s.

The mural "Autumn Colors" was installed on the west wall of the Council Grove Post Office lobby above the postmaster's door and the two bulletin boards which flank it. This is the traditional location for Section artwork in the smaller post offices. "Autumn Colors" is a poppy seed oil on canvas mural that depicts a late fall scene of a farmstead in the Flint Hills near Council Grove. Minty green winter wheat sprouts cover the rolling fields around the farm. Bare and gnarled cottonwood trees dot the landscape. The white farmhouse, the several red barns, and grey sheds and outhouses all stand nestled against the rolling hills. A grey and cloudy sky rumbles on the horizon. The undulation of the hills, the various color patches of minty green and yellow green fields, the grey sky and trees, and the blue hills on the horizon make the landscape slightly scattered and hurried. Perhaps it is the early morning chill on a fall day that Rogers has captured.

The mural was installed in late May or very early April, 1941 and measured 14'3" by 6'3" before installation. A cornice surmounts the picture. Rogers wrote that he "believed the most satisfactory method of preserving the mural will be to give it a thin coat of pure mastic varnish during 1941 and at any future time that it may need it for restoration. Each coat will, after the pigment has been wiped clear of dust, rejuvenate that below. This procedure will protect the work for many years in

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

the dry climate of Kansas without further action." In 1966 the window and letter drop wall in the lobby was pushed forward approximately 7.5", covering over 7.5" on the left side of the mural, partially obscuring Rogers' signature. Rogers resigned the mural in May, 1980. In August, 1973 the mural's condition was assessed as good and remains as such.

A varnished, wooden vestibule projects into the lobby, cutting off some view of the mural. This is a tradition design feature found in most of the post offices included in this nomination. The floors and the wainscoting retain their original tiles. The postmaster's door and bulletin boards retain their varnished wood surrounds. The original five bronze lights that hung from the lobby ceiling have been replaced with almost flush mounted fluorescent lights.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Rogers was a self-taught artist who studied under Birger Sandzen at Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas, graduating with a B.A. in 1942. He went on to take his M.F.A. at the California College of Arts and Crafts and then returned to teach at Bethany College through the mid-1950s. He later managed the Huntington Hartford Foundation and headed up the School for Art at Kansas Wesleyan University before opening up a gallery in Ellsworth, Kansas which he operated until his death in 1987. He received the commission for the Council Grove Post Office while a student at Bethany College in 1940. Initially, he had entered the competition for the St. Louis Post Office, winning an honorable mention.

The honorable mention in the larger competition facilitated the awarding of the smaller Council Grove contract, a scenario that was repeated frequently during the Section program. Of the commission Rogers said during a 1964 interview that "(t)his is the strangest thing about the business of having been put on the Project, that not only was I in an insulated area there, young and self-taught on top of that, but this was strictly brought about by others. There were no organizations, for that matter, no art where I grew up. I saw my first original paintings when I was fairly grown up."

Community involvement in the development of the subject material and presentation of the mural was not extensive. When Rogers approached the postmaster initially about taking lobby measurements for the mural, the postmaster angrily told him that the post office did not want a mural. Rogers did not return to the Council Grove Post Office to install the mural once it was completed, but instead hired "two big Swedes" from Lindsborg, one of whom was Ernest K. Peterson, to attach the mural to the wall with white lead. Of the mural the Council Grove Republican wrote "(s)everal persons have expressed their satisfaction while a number of others have said that they did not feel the work properly depicted the Flint Hills farm scene."

Rogers received the commission on April 15, 1940 and the mural was installed in late May or very early April, 1941. The mural measured 14'3" by 6'8" before installation and was installed on the west wall of the Council Grove Post Office lobby, above the postmaster's door and the two bulletin boards that flank it. Rogers received \$800 for the commission. In 1966 the window and letter drop wall in the lobby was pushed forward

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page ³

approximately 7.5", covering over 7.5" on the left side of the mural, partially obscuring Rogers' signature. Rogers resigned the mural in May, 1980. The Council Grove Post Office is an example of a class B post office that received Section artwork in Kansas.

Please see the Kansas Post Office Artwork (1936-1942) Thematic Resources cover nomination for additional information.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 4

Samuels, Peggy and Harold. The Illustrated Biographical Encyclopedia
of Artists of the American West. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976).

Svedlow, Dr. Anthony V. (Mulvane Gallery, Washburn University, Topeka,
Kansas). Personal interview with Martha Hagedorn-Krass, 8 January 1988.

Wichita Eagle-Beacon, 21 May 1972.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Art
Politics/Government
Social History

Period of Significance

1941
1941
1941

Significant Dates

1941
1941
1941

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Rogers, Charles B.: Artist
Simon, Louis: Architect
Eby, Martin K.: Contractor

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Council Grove United States Post Office (c. 1938-1939) is being nominated to the National Register as part of the Kansas Post Office Artwork (1936-1942) Thematic Resources nomination at the local and state levels of significance under criteria A and C for its historical association with the Treasury Department's Section program and for the artistic significance of the mural that it contains. The mural, "Autumn Colors" was painted by Great Bend, Kansas artist Charles B. Rogers (1911-1987) in 1941. Because the mural is less than fifty years old, criteria consideration G, which allows for exceptional significance in the case of properties achieving significance within the past fifty years, is also a factor. The National Register has identified post offices containing Section artwork as being exceptionally significant if they retain integrity from their period of significance.

"Autumn Colors" is a poppy seed oil on canvas mural that depicts a late fall scene of a farmstead in the Flint Hills near Council Grove. Minty green winter sprouts cover the rolling fields around the farm. Bare and gnarled cottonwood trees dot the landscape. Although this is a rural scene it is not peaceful, the undulation of the hills, the various color patches of minty green and yellow green fields, the grey sky and trees, and the blue hills on the horizon make the landscape slightly scattered and hurried. Perhaps it is the chill of the early morning on a fall day that Rogers has captured. "Autumn Colors" shows a place common to those familiar with the surrounding countryside. The landscape "Autumn Colors" is representative of the illustrative realism funded under the Section program. While the subject material and presentation of illustrative realism may make less of a social statement than social realism, illustrative realism still presents effective and valid views of America.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Council Grove Republican; 29 December 1939, 1 April 1941.

Falk, Peter Hastings. Who Was Who in American Art. (Madison, CT: Soundview Press, 1985)

General Services Administration. Treasury Department Section Records-Kansas Post Offices. Council Grove, Kansas.

Hoag, Betty Lochrie. Interview with Charles B. Rogers at the Huntington Hartford Foundation, 27 April 1964, 13 May 1964. (The Oral History Collections at Archives of American Art. Smithsonian Institution).

Keyser, Loretta. Postmaster, Council Grove United States Post Office. Letter to Martha Hagedorn, 12 March 1987.

See continuation sheet

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:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Kansas State Historical Society

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than 1 acre

UTM References

A 14 718600 4281922
 Zone Easting Northing

C

B
 Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located on Lots 1 and 2 and E½ Lot 3; Block 6, Council Grove, Kansas. The property is bounded to the northeast by West Main Street, to the southeast by Wood Street, and to the northwest and southwest by adjacent property lines.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire parcel that is historically associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Martha Hagedorn-Krass, Architectural Historian

organization Kansas State Historical Society date December 20, 1988

street & number 120 W. 10th telephone 913-296-5264

city or town Topeka state Kansas zip code 66612