

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 **NATIONAL PARK SERVICE** Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse

other names/site number Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Federal Building

2. Location

street & number Fifth Street and State Line Avenue

N/A not for publication

city or town Texarkana

N/A vicinity

state Arkansas/Texas

code AR/TX

county Miller (AR)/Bowie (TX)

code 091/037

zip code 75501

3. 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Constance Warner Ramirez
Signature of certifying official

February 2, 2000
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☒ See continuation sheet, p.5, for additional comments.)

Cathryn A. Slater
Signature of commenting or other official

July 20, 1999
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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:)

for
Signature of Keeper

Edson H. Beall

Date of Action

3/24/00

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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**Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse
Miller (Arkansas)/Bowie (Texas) counties**

In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

Texas State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau

[Handwritten Signature] *9-15-99*

Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse
Name of Property

Miller, Arkansas, and Bowie, Texas
County and State

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
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:

GOVERNMENT

Sub:

Post Office

Courthouse

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:

GOVERNMENT

Sub:

Post Office

Courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Beaux-Arts

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls STONE: Limestone, Granite

roof ASPHALT

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets pp. 6-10.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Number 7 Page 6

**Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse
Miller (Arkansas)/Bowie (Texas) counties**

Narrative Description:

Completed in 1933, the Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse is an impressive structure because of both its location and its design. Constructed on State Line Avenue, the state boundary line between Texas and Arkansas, the building is uniquely situated in two states. The building's slightly higher elevation and its location at the center of State Line Avenue (between Fifth and Sixth streets) contribute to its prominent position in downtown Texarkana. Although the area surrounding the building site was initially residential, over the years the residential character changed as small office and commercial buildings were built. In 1893, the first federal facility to occupy this site was built. Although the federal building housed a courthouse, it did not, however, fully meet the judicial needs of the citizens of Texarkana. In 1930 preparations were begun for the construction of the current Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse. These plans called for extensive changes to the area. Streets were rerouted, and at least 12 buildings, including the first federal building and an area church, were demolished and removed. Texarkana has continued to grow and change since the 1930s, but the Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse remains very much as it was when first built and still serves as an integral part of the community.

The presence of the Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse is similarly manifested in its Beaux-Arts architecture. This style is exhibited through its many classical features including four colossal two-story Ionic columns which are bracketed by Tuscan pilasters on the primary (south) façade, a rusticated plinth (basement and first floor), an arched entry, and a symmetrical façade. The building was designed by the well-known local architectural firm of Witt, Seibert, and Halsey, in association with a second firm, Perkins, Chatten, and Hammond of Chicago. These two firms worked under the guidance of James A. Wetmore, the Acting Supervising Architect for the Treasury Department. R. O. Jameson prepared the original construction drawings, Gauger Construction Company of Memphis, Tennessee, served as the contractor, and R. F. Taylor was the mechanical engineer.

The prominence and character of the 1933 building have been retained, due largely to the building's continued use as a post office and courthouse. Original features such as marble floors, richly decorated plaster ceilings, original suspended light fixtures, and bronze postal stations continue to grace the first floor postal lobby. Just as impressive are the two double-height courtrooms which still display wooden wainscot and plaster walls, ornamental plaster entablatures (at the ceiling), suspended chandeliers, tall vertical windows, and built-in wooden furniture. Though modifications have been made to accommodate various facility issues, the exterior of the Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse retains a high level of integrity. The building remains an important landmark in downtown Texarkana and a symbol of the continued federal presence in far northeast Texas and southwest Arkansas.

Exterior Description

The Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse is a five-story, rectangular, steel and concrete structure with basement and service penthouse. The basement and first floor form a rusticated plinth that is composed of Texas pink granite. The building's walls are clad with horizontal blocks of gray Arkansas limestone laid in a running bond pattern. The structure's monumental character is communicated on the south (primary) façade by four massive two-story Ionic columns

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**Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse
Miller (Arkansas)/Bowie (Texas) counties**

Narrative Description (continued):

that rise above the plinth. Tuscan pilasters bracket both sides of the row of columns. These features create a vertical flow on the south elevation that continues up to the penthouse. Set above the cornice, the penthouse exhibits an Art Deco floral motif and the inscription:

UNITED • STATES
POST • OFFICE • AND
COURT • HOUSE

The rusticated plinth on the first floor is penetrated by three arched openings on the south façade that serve as the main entry into the building. Recessed, original, Palladian-type bronze grilles are located above replacement bronze doors at the main entry. Three sets of windows (at the second, third, and fourth stories) are set between the Ionic columns directly above the entrance. The third- and fourth-floor windows are separated by Antique Verde marble that displays the justice and post office seals.

Pilasters that rise above the plinth to support a dentiled entablature at the fifth floor add continuity to the north, east, and west façades. Above the cornice on these façades, the narrower fifth floor is not plane with the lower building face. Three-bay-wide projected end blocks protrude on the northern and southern ends of the east and west elevations. The end blocks are separated by a seven-bay midsection that displays double-hung, multilight windows. The projected end blocks at the northern end of these elevations exhibit two-story windows that are triple-hung. These elongated windows provide natural light in the double-height Arkansas and Texas courtrooms. The unadorned two-story niche, set between these windows (on the east and west building faces), corresponds to the placement of the judges' benches.

Windows on the north building face vary between single-story, double-hung, multilight configurations (on the first and second floors) and tall, two-story windows that correspond to the location of courtrooms at the third and fourth floors. This elevation serves as the postal loading platform and retains an original suspended canopy with a stamped metal ceiling.

Green spaces, plantings, monuments, and other landscape features characterize the site immediately surrounding the building. Small- to medium-sized oak and flowering fruit trees are planted in green spaces throughout the site. These areas are more predominant on the south and west elevations. The east elevation has lost its original green space to 12 employee-parking spaces, an enclosed stairway, and an open-cell masonry mechanical equipment screen. The north elevation's green space has decreased over the years to a small green strip between the postal loading area and the street. Other site features are located at the main entry of the building (south elevation) and include the state line marker, a flagpole (replacement), and (an added) John F. Kennedy memorial plaque and pedestal. All of these elements are centered along the paved and original granite steps leading up to the entrance. Two original bronze light standards line both sides of these steps.

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**Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse
Miller (Arkansas)/Bowie (Texas) counties**

Narrative Description: (continued)

Interior Description

The interior of the Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse consists of three major public spaces—the postal lobby, the Texas Courtroom, and the Arkansas Courtroom—as well as offices and a small light corridor. The most heavily trafficked areas are the entry lobby and the postal lobby. The entry lobby, which leads to the postal area, is entered through three replacement bronze doors and is the most lavishly decorated and richly appointed of the interior space (Swanner 1995). Immediately inside the doors is a sensitively designed glass security wall that prevents unsecured access to the east and west stairwells and elevators. Both elevators, located between ascending and descending stairwells, display replacement bronze doors. An ornamental bronze grille caps each stairwell. Penetrating the north wall are three original pairs of cast bronze doors. Each door features two rectangular inset panels at the bottom and a glass panel above. The six entry lobby doorways and the two elevators are decorated with a guilloche-patterned stone lintel and Palladian-inspired carved marble arches. Five of these arches display circular bronze seals that contain either state or federal government emblems or clocks. One of the seals on the east wall is the Arkansas State seal, while the west wall similarly displays the Texas State seal. The walls, themselves, are polished St. Claire Fleuri marble with an Antique Verde marble base. The floor (approximately 475 square feet) is equally enriched with a checkerboard pattern of Gray and Pink Tennessee marble set on the diagonal, bordered with circles of Yellow Verona in a band of Gray Tennessee marble. Similarly, the ceiling displays coffered plaster of alternating circles and diagonal squares, the raised portions of which are gilded. Federal issue chandeliers are suspended from the circular coffers.

The larger postal lobby, encompassing 2,820 square feet, is five bays wide (9 feet, 9 inches) by five bays deep (11 feet, 7 inches). Four columns are placed on both sides of the lobby, at one bay's distance from the original postal screen. In kind with the entryway walls, the columns and low walls of the postal lobby are clad with polished St. Claire Fleuri marble. The walls are infilled with bronze-framed clear glass set over postal boxes or stamp counters. Some of the original marble has been moved to accommodate changes in the postal screen line. There are approximately 850 small, 250-mid-sized, and 230 large bronze postal boxes, many of which are original. These occupy the lower portion of 13 screen line bays.

The postal lobby's floor has a large central space surrounded by smaller rectangles of Gray and Pink Tennessee marble bordered by Antique Verde and Yellow Verona. This same design is echoed in the gilded plaster ceiling. Attractive pendant light fixtures also enrich the postal area as do two original post office lobby bronze writing tables. The tables have six legs, each decorated with a roaring lion's head opposite a curved, clawed foot. Designs for these tables were included in the original construction drawings.

The two double-height courtrooms are located at the northern end of the third and fourth floors. These rooms are imposing in size and character. The east courtroom is known as the Arkansas Courtroom because of its location in the Arkansas side of the building. Similarly, the west courtroom is called the Texas Courtroom because of its location in the Texas side of the building. While situated in two states, the rooms are very similar in appearance. Both are entered through original swinging

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**Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse
Miller (Arkansas)/Bowie (Texas) counties**

Narrative Description: (continued)

wooden doors adorned with imitation leather covering. Dividing the rooms are low wooden rails that separate the spectator gallery from the prosecution and defense tables. The spectator benches are not original to either courtroom. The walls of the rooms are divided horizontally by wooden wainscot and plaster. The wooden wainscot (7 feet, 10 inches high) wraps around the lower half of the courtroom. Tall, two-story windows on the north and east or west walls (depending on the courtroom) interrupt the wooden wainscoting. The courtroom ceilings are ornamented with 100 square plaster medallions that are set in a diagonal pattern. Each medallion is decorated with a painted organic design in red and yellow with gilded edges. Suspended from the center of the ceiling are four decorative chandeliers.

Although covered by carpeting, the marbled rubber tile flooring, original to both courtrooms, appears to be intact. This flooring was likely employed because it imitated marble without its negative sound qualities. Visible in the rear one-third of the Arkansas courtroom, the flooring is laid diagonally in a checkerboard pattern.

The focal point of each room is the judge's bench. The bench is two steps higher than the courtroom floor and is set in front of an original surround and pediment of St. Genevieve golden vein marble. The design of the surround is Greek Revival in influence. Perched on top of the marble pediment is a gray plaster eagle. Forming an arch behind the pediment is a wide, mustard and gray border that encompasses a red and gold floral design surrounded by gold stars. This painted design sits below another painted feature, the Great Seal of the United States. The judges' benches and clerks' desks are original to both courtrooms.

The building's office space comprises a large part of the building, consuming most of the second through fifth floors. This space, for the most part, is defined by a series of perimeter office spaces opening into a ring of corridors. These corridors surround a core area that includes restrooms, service spaces, and the light corridor. The light corridor (15 feet by 30 feet) extends from the second floor to the fifth floor, providing natural light into the hallways and corridors. The décor in the corridor areas is significantly restrained compared to that in the lobby areas. Plaster walls with Platin marble wainscoting are typical, as are original plaster cornices at the ceilings of each floor. The stairways also feature Platin marble steps. Bronze handrails with decorative brackets and end caps further enhance the stairways.

The first floor postal offices, the second floor U.S. Marshal offices, and the third floor judicial offices exhibit the highest degree of historical integrity of the office spaces. Original hardwood floors, wooden trim, and door hardware have been retained to varying degrees in these spaces.

Alterations

The Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse has been modified over the years to accommodate changes in the usage of space, the addition of air conditioning, and various building improvements and upgrades. While modifications have occurred, the building continues to exhibit many of the elements that have made it an impressive landmark addition to

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**Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse
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Narrative Description: (continued)

Texarkana since its completion in 1933. The continual use as a post office and courthouse is largely responsible for the building's high degree of architectural and functional integrity. While downtown Texarkana has changed over the years, modern development within the vicinity of the building has not detracted from the prominent location or the historic character of the Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse.

Alterations to the interior of the building began shortly after its construction. Within the first eight years, the postal screen walls were moved twice. Significant changes occurred in 1957 when air conditioning, plaster soffits, and suspended fluorescent fixtures were added to the judicial rooms. These changes also resulted in the loss of some of the original wood-and-glass transoms, which were replaced with metal return grilles. In the 1970s, installation of additional air conditioning equipment and ductwork with suspended acoustical tile ceilings in the second- through fifth-floor offices rendered further changes. The suspended ceilings had a detrimental effect on the volume and character of the offices. During this same period, the postal screen walls were altered for a third time. Other changes to the postal lobby involved the addition of a wood-paneled "hut." The 8-foot by 10-foot hut, which is set in the center of the postal lobby, contains 416 postal boxes. Its placement and design are intrusions on the historic character of the lobby area. Alterations to the courtrooms have consisted of the addition of carpeting over the original flooring. The entry lobby has not been altered, with the exceptions of the replacement of the original entry doors and the addition of a sensitively designed glass security wall.

Changes to the exterior of the building have been minimal. A conveyor areaway and stairs were added to the east side of the structure in 1958. This elevation and the north elevation have also suffered a reduction in green space to accommodate new employee parking. An added handicapped access ramp extends across the east end of the south elevation.

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.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets pp. 11-15.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.) See Continuation Sheet p. 16.

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Politics/Government

Architecture

Economics

Period of Significance

1931-1949

Significant Dates

1933

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Wetmore, James A., Supervising Architect, Treasury Department

Witt, Seibert, and Halsey, Architects

Perkins, Chatten & Hammond, Architects

Jameson, R. O., Construction Drawings

Gauger Construction Company, Construction Contractor

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository:

Texarkana Historical Museum, Texarkana, Texas

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**Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse
Miller (Arkansas)/Bowie (Texas) counties**

Narrative Statement of Significance:

Summary

The Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the local level of significance for its association with federal construction programs initiated as economic emergency measures undertaken during the Depression and under Criterion C as a significant example of architecture constructed by the federal government during the early 1930s. Completed in 1933, the building is symbolic of both the continued presence of the federal government in the Texarkana community and the overall growth of the federal government in the 1930s. The Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse is unique in that it is the only known building of its type to be situated on the state line of two adjoining states. Its design and construction, like other public buildings built in the early 1930s, was a part of federal construction programs that were designed to reduce unemployment during the Depression. Architecturally, the Beaux-Arts design of the Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse reflects the government's use of restrained classical architectural styles to evoke an appropriate image of the federal government. The period of significance for this property dates from its design in 1931 and extends to 1949. The building still serves its original functions as a post office and federal courthouse, and, as such, its significance extends to the 50-year mark.

Historical Significance

Founded in 1873, the city of Texarkana was established where the Texas and Pacific Railroad and the St. Louis, Iron Mountain, and Southern railways met on the Texas/Arkansas state line. In 1892, land was acquired from the Memphis-El Paso railroad for the location of Texarkana's first federal building (Miles et al. n.d.). The land was purchased for \$90,000 by the government, which chose the site because of its convenient location. The area east of the state line was designated Miller County by the Chamber of Commerce (Miles et al. n.d.) so that the building, when completed, would be located in two states. The building was to house one courtroom. Unfortunately for Texans, the courtroom was to be located on the Arkansas side of the building, which required Texans to be proficient in Arkansas law. The red brick and stone structure was completed in 1893.

It is unclear whether the 1893 building originally housed a post office. The first post office in Texarkana, located in Lafayette County (later part of Miller County), was established in 1874. The exact location of this first post office is unknown; it appears, however, to have operated until 1902 or 1903. Mr. Edwin Bancroft was appointed postmaster. Interestingly, Mr. Bancroft also appears to have served as county judge at the same time (Texarkana City Directory 1934). The postmasters who succeeded Mr. Bancroft included Henry F. Best, Walter W. Shaw, Charles E. Bramble, William R. Kelly, and Benjamin M. Foreman.

In February 1886, a second post office was established on the Texas (Bowie County) side of Texarkana. Mr. Willis Whitaker served as postmaster, and Mrs. Charles Whitaker succeeded him later that same year. She was succeeded by Richard Brunazzi four years later. This second post office closed in December 1892.

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Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse
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Narrative Statement of Significance: (continued)

In February 1903, the Postmaster General changed the postmarking stamp from Texarkana, Arkansas, to Texarkana, Ark-Tex. The city directory for that year listed the same name, Jacob Bickley, as postmaster for Miller County, Arkansas, and Bowie County, Texas. These two changes would indicate that the 1893 federal building did not originally include a centralized (two-state) post office and that one was established in 1903. However, the Texas Historical Medallion on the current post office and courthouse states that although "... each state had separate post offices until 1892, when the first joint office was built on this site, it was razed in 1930. . . ." Mr. Bickley served as the Texarkana postmaster until February 1905 when Lyman S. Roach, who served until 1913, succeeded him. Two other postmasters, P. G. Henry and Edgar E. Hudspeth, also held this position prior to the construction of the 1933 federal building.

The first steps taken to replace the 1893 structure began in 1925 when Congressman Otis Wingo, a representative from Arkansas, introduced a House resolution authorizing the appropriation of \$500,000 to renovate the building (Chandler and Howe 1939). But as Texarkana grew, so did its postal and legal needs. The Texarkana Chamber of Commerce advocated the need for a new, more modern facility that would accommodate two courtrooms as well as a post office (Miles et al. n.d.). In 1926, Congress passed the Public Buildings Act, which precipitated a period of federal construction that was unprecedented. One of the projects that resulted from the implementation of the act (and its subsequent amendments) was the construction of a new post office and federal building in Texarkana.

Preparations at the site began in 1930 when 12 buildings, including the original federal building and the Central Christian Church, were razed. The local architectural firm of Witt, Seibert, and Halsey, in association with Perkins, Chatten, and Hammond of Chicago, was responsible for the design of the Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse. As required by the Public Buildings Act, James A. Wetmore, Acting Supervising Architect for the Department of the Treasury, supervised this process. R. O. Jameson prepared the original structural engineering drawings, and R. F. Taylor was the mechanical engineer. Gauger Construction Company of Memphis, Tennessee, served as the construction contractor. According to site photographs, actual construction began around May 1932. The Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse was put into service in September 1933. The final cost of the building was estimated at \$1,000,000.

The unique two-state location of the new federal building attracted regional if not national attention. Touted as "the most unusual federal building and post office in the United States," the Texarkana building was viewed as an ingenious solution to two states' postal and legal needs (*Alexandria Daily Town Talk*, January 6, 1932). Its two-courtroom design allowed each state to practice law within its own jurisdiction. In other words, Texas jurors would no longer have to conduct court in Arkansas, which had required them to practice Arkansas law (as was the case in the previous building).

The construction of the Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse, like other federal construction projects undertaken during this period, provided unemployment relief during the Depression. During its planning and construction, the federal government expanded its public buildings program. The appropriations allotted under the 1926 Public Buildings Act were increased in 1928 and again in 1930 and 1931. The latter two increases were precipitated by the country's economic problems. In 1931, the Federal Employment Stabilization Act was passed. This act permitted the President and of

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Narrative Statement of Significance: (continued)

Congress to authorize additional appropriations for construction projects in order to facilitate employment. These pieces legislation established a trend in public works projects that led to the creation of the Public Works Administration (PWA) and Works Progress Administration (WPA).

One of the histories written about the Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse suggests that it was built by the WPA (Miles et al. n.d.). This is incorrect since the WPA was not created until 1935, with the passage of the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act. It is also unlikely that the building was a part of the PWA construction program because the building was nearly completed by mid-1933 when the PWA was created. Although not directly part of the so-called "alphabet" New Deal programs, the building's construction, like other public buildings built in the early 1930s, was part of the government's efforts to combat growing unemployment. Almost one-third of the nation's unemployed were from the building trade. In fact, in the first year of the Depression, nearly half of the country's architectural firms failed. The firm of Witt, Seibert, and Halsey was one of the many architectural firms that suffered from the decline in construction projects. According to a biography of architect E. C. Seibert, the firm barely stayed together during this period. Thus, projects like the Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse proved to be an important source of local work during the Depression years.

Since its completion in 1933, the Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse has continuously served the postal and (federal) judicial needs of Texarkana. At the building's opening in September 1933, Edgar E. Hudspeth was postmaster. He was succeeded by J. T. Burnett in 1934, who served as the acting postmaster for a short time. In 1935, A. Judson Pryor became postmaster and served through World War II and until 1950. Divided between the eastern judicial district of Texas and the western judicial district of Arkansas, both courts serve as federal district courts. The eastern judicial district of Texas included Bowie, Franklin, and Titus counties (until 1997 when Red River County was added). The first judge to serve in the building under the eastern judicial district of Texas was Randolph Bryant. Before his appointment, Judge Bryant served as the District Attorney for Sherman, Texas. Judge Heartsill Ragon was the first to hold court in the new building under the western judicial district of Arkansas, which was composed of Hempstead, Howard, Lafayette, Little River, Miller, Nevada, and Sevier counties.

Architectural Significance

The Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse was one of the many public buildings designed under the auspices of the Office of the Supervising Architect for the Treasury Department. For more than 75 years (1850s-1939), this office was responsible for the design and construction of such public buildings as custom houses, post offices, and courthouses. These buildings they created were not only designed to serve a federal function but to express the permanence and presence of the federal government in the cities and communities in which the buildings were located. Early in its history, the Office of the Supervising Architect employed a variety of architectural styles to convey this presence. At the turn of the century, however, classically inspired styles such as Classical Revival and Beaux-Arts began to predominate. These styles were thought to be expressive of democratic values. Additionally, they reflected the government's assertion

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**Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse
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Narrative Statement of Significance: (continued)

that “government buildings should be monumental and beautiful, and should represent the ideals of democracy and high standards of architectural sophistication in their communities” (Boland 1994:3).

While these ideals continued to be applied for many years, the expense of constructing “monumental and beautiful” buildings became a concern. In 1913, federal construction policy measured the cost of constructing post offices against the city or community’s postal receipts and the value of the real estate where the building was to be built. The evaluation of the cost of erecting public buildings coincided with a new architectural movement that promoted modernism. Both had similar effects on federal architecture—a “starved” classicism. Starved classical designs still employed many of the classical elements that defined styles of architecture such as Beaux-Arts, but the expression and amount of ornamentation were restrained. Façades became more simplified. Classical elements were angular and faded into the building faces. In the 1920s, particularly after the Public Buildings Act of 1926, starved versions of Beaux-Arts and other classical styles of architecture were employed rather than their more elaborate predecessors. While architects in the Office of the Supervising Architect resisted moving in the direction of totally modern designs, the starved classical approach was adopted because it still incorporated the classical elements that were thought to express the federal presence.

The Office of the Supervising Architect’s movement toward starved classical styles strongly influenced the design of the Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse. While steadfastly Beaux-Arts in design, the federal building is at the more austere end of the spectrum of its style. For example, windows in classically designed buildings tend to display more treatment or ornamentation than is present at the Texarkana building. The extra mass above the cornice is also unusual for a Beaux-Arts-style building. Additionally, the relief design on the cornice expresses a more modern style of architecture, Art Deco. While not as elaborate as earlier classically styled government buildings, the design of the Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse is a good example of a public building constructed in the Beaux-Arts style. Its design is reflective of architectural movements adopted by the Treasury Department to convey the permanence and presence of the federal government at a local level.

James A. Wetmore served as Acting Supervising Architect for the Treasury Department from 1912 to 1913 and then from 1915 to 1933. The Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse was one of more than 1,300 buildings constructed during his tenure. Mr. Wetmore began his career at the Treasury Department as a court stenographer (Withey and Withey 1970). Although he later held the position of Supervising Architect, Mr. Wetmore was a lawyer and not an architect. Historical documents indicate that he approached his position as an administrator rather than as a designer (Craig 1979). Louis A. Simon, Superintendent of the Architectural Division, assumed many of the architectural duties of the office, including the architectural direction of post office building designs. Mr. Simon’s adherence to traditional (classical) styles of architecture, albeit restrained, was reflected in the 1920s- and 1930s-era buildings constructed by the Treasury Department. Mr. Simon succeeded Mr. Wetmore after Wetmore’s retirement in 1933.

While the American Institute of Architects campaigned for the government to contract out the design of public buildings throughout the 1920s and 1930s, it was largely unsuccessful except in a limited number of cases. Designed by the local architectural firm of Witt, Seibert, and Halsey, in association with Perkins, Chatten, and Hammond of Chicago, the

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Number 8 Page 15

**Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse
Miller (Arkansas)/Bowie (Texas) counties**

Narrative Statement of Significance: (continued)

Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse was one of these unusual cases. The firms worked under the direction of James Wetmore, who signed the final drawings, and Louis Simon, who likely influenced the final designs. Witt, Seibert, and Halsey had designed a number of buildings in Texarkana as well as in other communities in Texas and Arkansas. While it appears that the firm was in existence from 1912 to 1944, Mr. Seibert, one of its principals, left the firm shortly after the completion of the Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse. According to biographical notes of his life, the firm's work declined significantly during the Depression. After leaving the firm, Seibert was appointed mayor of Texarkana, Arkansas, acceding to the position formerly held by A. B. Clark, who resigned in 1934. After Clark's original term expired, Mr. Seibert was elected to the position and served two full terms. While mayor, Seibert designed and supervised the construction of the Miller County Courthouse, an Art Deco style building in Texarkana, Arkansas, currently listed on the National Register.

The firm of Witt, Seibert, and Halsey designed a number of buildings currently listed on the National Register: the Arthur Dean House, Texarkana, Arkansas, listed in 1976; the Bottom House, Texarkana, Arkansas, listed in 1982; and the Sidney A. Umstead House in Camden, Arkansas, listed in 1995. Other important local buildings designed by the firm include the St. James Episcopal Church, the Congregational Church, the Central Christian Church, the Texarkana National Bank, and the Offenhauser Building. Like many of the buildings that Witt, Seibert, and Halsey designed, the Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse is an important landmark in the city of Texarkana and is probably one of the best-known examples of the firm's work.

**United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Number 9 Page 16

**Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse
Miller (Arkansas)/Bowie (Texas) counties**

Major Bibliographical References:

- Anonymous. Biographical notes regarding the life of E. C. Seibert, Architect. On file at the Texarkana Historical Museum, Texarkana, Texas, n.d.
- Anonymous. Biographical notes regarding the life of Fred H. Halsey, Architect. On file at the Texarkana Historical Museum, Texarkana, Texas, n.d.
- Boland, Beth M. *National Register Bulletin 13: How to Apply the National Register Criteria to Post Offices*. Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Interagency Resources Division, National Register of Historic Places, 1994 (revised).
- Chandler, Barbara O., and J. D. Howe. *History of Texarkana and Bowie and Miller Counties*. Shreveport, Louisiana: J. Edward Howe, Publisher, 1939.
- Craig, Lois, ed., and the staff of the Federal Architecture Project. *The Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics, and Symbols in United States Government Building*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1979.
- Miles, Rodney, Melanie Gardner, Dedra Kirk, and Rolf Gjoen. Untitled notes. On file at the Texarkana Historical Museum, Texarkana, Texas. n.d.
- Patman, Wright. *History of the Post Offices and Communities*. U.S. Postal Service Library, Washington, D.C., 1968.
- Waggonner and Ball Architects. *Historic Building Preservation Plan: U.S. Post Office and Courthouse, Texarkana, Texas and Arkansas*. Prepared for the General Services Administration, Fort Worth, Texas, November 30, 1995.
- Withey, Henry F., and Elsie R. Withey. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*. Los Angeles, California: Hennessey and Ingalls, Inc., 1970.

Newspaper Articles:

Alexandria Daily Town Talk [Alexandria, Louisiana]. "Its Half and Half!" 6 January 1923:1.

Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse
Name of Property

Miller, Arkansas, and Bowie, Texas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.35 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	1 5	4 0 3 0 4 0	3 6 9 8 7 3 0	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.) See Continuation Sheet p. 17.

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.) See Continuation Sheet p. 17.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Victoria Green Clow, Cultural Resources Project Manager
organization Geo-Marine, Inc. date February 19, 1999
street & number 550 East Fifteenth St. telephone (972) 423-5480
city or town Plano state TX zip code 75074

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name General Services Administration, Greater Southwest Region
street & number Fritz G. Lanham Federal Bldg., 819 Taylor St. telephone (817) 978-4229
city or town Fort Worth state TX zip code 76102

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications 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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Number 10 Page 17

**Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse
Miller (Arkansas)/Bowie (Texas) counties**

Verbal Boundary Description:

The Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse is situated on State Line Avenue and is bound by Fifth Street on the south and Sixth Street on the north. State Line Avenue splits at Sixth Street to form the east and west boundaries of the building and then reconnects at Fifth Street, which is the termination of the south boundary. (No legal description for the city lot and block exists for this property).

Boundary Justification:

All property lines are as they existed at the time of the building's construction.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Number Photographs Page 18

**Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse
Miller (Arkansas)/Bowie (Texas) counties**

1. Texarkana U.S. Post Office and Courthouse
2. Texarkana, Texas-Arkansas
3. Victoria Clow
4. 22 November 1998
5. Geo-Marine, Inc., Plano, Texas
6. South (main) elevation
7. Photo 1

Item numbers 1-5 are the same for all photographs. Item numbers 6 and 7 are listed below for each photograph.

6. West elevation
7. Photo 2

6. North elevation
7. Photo 3

6. East elevation
7. Photo 4

6. Entry ceiling
7. Photo 5

6. Stairway handrail
7. Photo 6

6. Postal lobby
7. Photo 7

6. Texas courtroom judge's bench
7. Photo 8

6. Texas courtroom windows
7. Photo 9

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Texarkana US Post Office and Courthouse

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Miller

DATE RECEIVED: 2/14/00 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 3/03/00
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 3/19/00 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/31/00
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 00000245

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 3/24/08 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



Texarkana, Post Office and Federal Building (Tex-Ark)

1

11

[08]310 0231-1-2



Texarkana, Texas-Arkansas, Post Office and Federal Building

2

117310 0231-1-2



Texarkana, Texas - Arkansas, Post Office and Federal Building

3

[013317 0231-1-2



Texarkana, Texas-Arkansas, Post Office and Federal Building

4

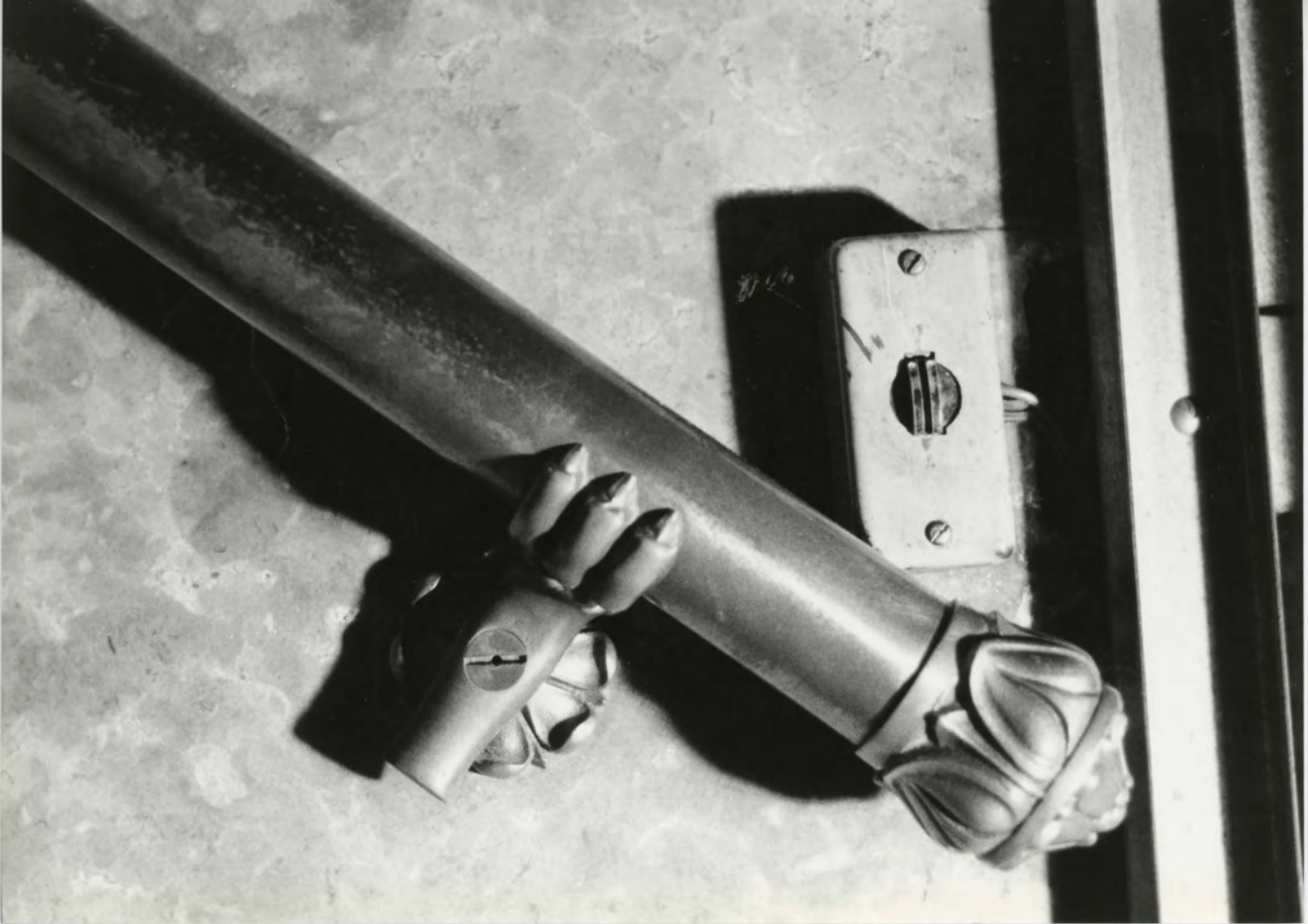
1033317 0231-1-2



Texarkana, Texas-Arkansas, Post Office and Federal Building

5

133810 0281 N-2



~~Texas~~Arkana, Texas-Arkansas, Post Office and Federal Building

le

3/10

1150310 0231-1 N



Texarkana, Texas - Arkansas, Post Office and Federal Building

7

1020310 0231-11



Texarkana, Texas - Arkansas, Post Office and Federal Building

8

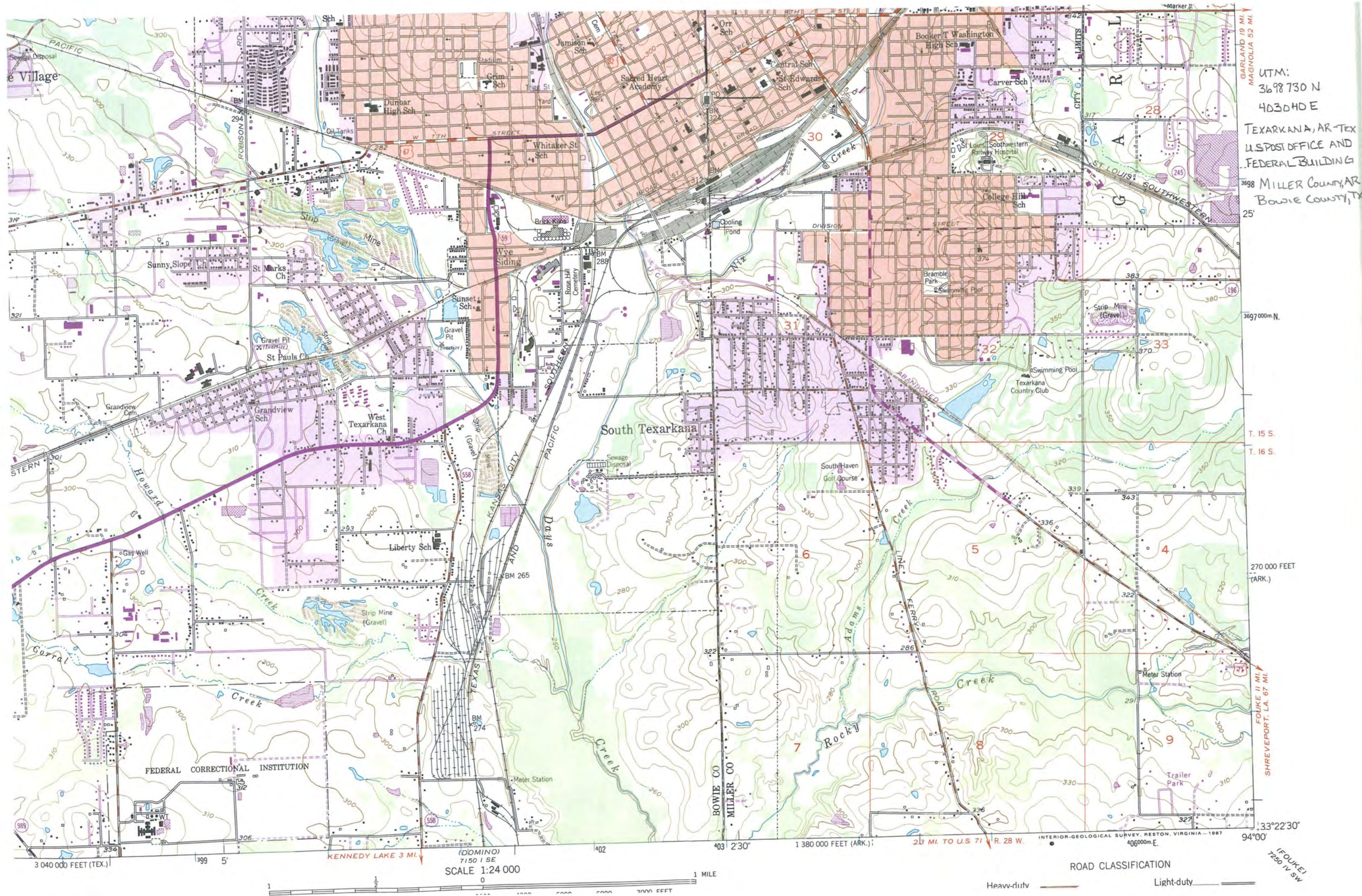
[09]310 0231-1 2



Texarkana, Texas-Arkansas, Post Office and Federal Building

9

LI 10310 0231 - 1 2



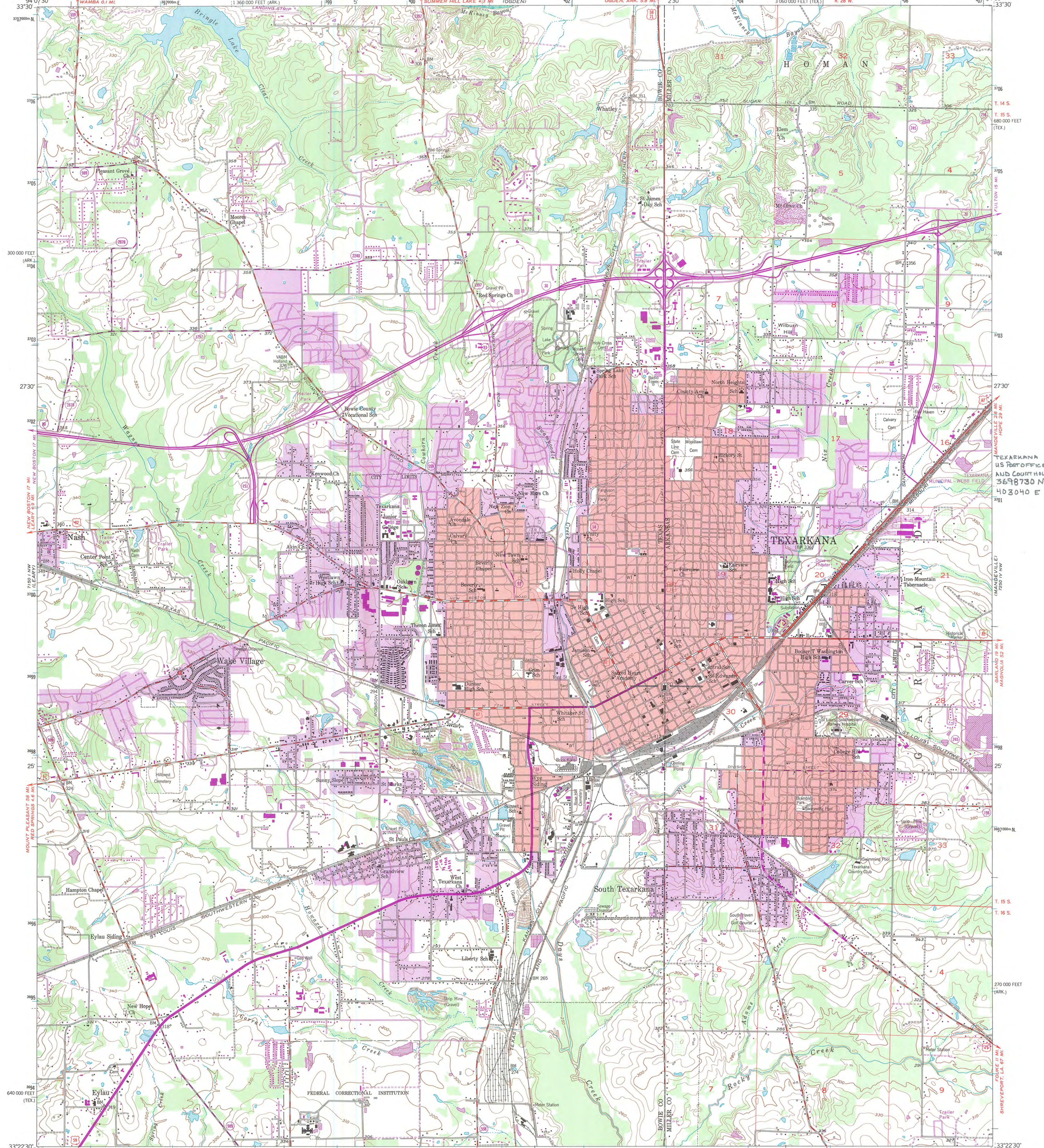
UTM:
36 98 730 N
403040 E
TEXARKANA, AR-TEX
U.S. POST OFFICE AND
FEDERAL BUILDING
3698 MILLER COUNTY, AR
Bowie County, TX
25'

T. 15 S.
T. 16 S.

270 000 FEET
(ARK.)

33°22'30"
94°00'
Fouke 11 MI.
Shreveport, LA 67 MI.

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ————
Light-duty ————





U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
Public Buildings Service

FEB 7 2000

Ms. Carol Shull
Keeper, National Register of Historic Places
National Register History and Education Division
National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior
P. O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

Dear Ms. Shull:

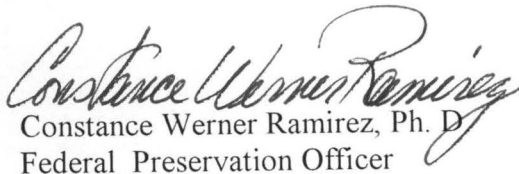
Enclosed for your approval is a National Register Nomination for the United States Post Office and Courthouse located in Texarkana, OK. This Property is under the control of the General Services Administration.

The following documents are enclosed:

- Original National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
- U.S.G.S. Map, and
- Set of original labeled black and white photographs

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the nomination, please call me at (202) 501-1811.

Sincerely,


Constance Werner Ramirez, Ph. D.
Federal Preservation Officer

Enclosure

