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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

SEP 08 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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 Russell United States Post Office
other names/site number Same

2. Location

street & number 135 West Sixth Street not for publication
city, town Russell vicinity
state Kansas code KS county Russell code 167 zip code 67665

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 | _____ | _____ objects |
| | | <u>1</u> | _____ 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 Bowen State Historic Preservation Officer March 8, 1989
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. _____ 10-17-89
 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:) _____

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)

20th Century Revival: Classical

Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other Stone: limestone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Russell United States Post Office (c. 1939-1940) is located at 135 West Sixth in Russell, Russell County, Kansas (pop. 5,427). The one story, ridge hipped roof, red brick building has a southern orientation. The building measures approximately seventy feet by seventy feet. An arched double door accentuated with a classical surround pierces the center of the building's facade. Steps lead up to the doorway. Two pairs of large, multi-paned windows surmounted by flat, limestone lintels and underscored by flat, limestone sills flank the doorway. Similar fenestration is employed on the lesser elevations. A limestone watertable delineates the building's foundation and a wooden classical entablature delineates the building's eave line. A wooden cupola marks the center of the roof. This post office is an example of the smaller class C or D standardized design type that was repeated throughout the country during the 1930s and 1940s.

The mural, "Wheat Workers" was installed on the west wall of the Russell Post Office lobby above the post master's door and the two bulletin boards that flank it. This is the traditional location for Section artwork in the smaller class C and D type post offices. "Wheat Workers" is an oil on canvas mural that depicts farm laborers cutting and shocking wheat by hand, oil derricks stand in the background. Six workers labor in the foreground on a day so hot that the sweat rolls off their brows and soaks their clothes. Bundles of wheat are stacked in the foreground waiting to be loaded onto wagons that will take the wheat to threshing machines. The expanse of the rolling, golden wheat field seems unending but several groups of oil derricks suddenly emerge, marking the near horizon. Schweig employs a primary palette of gold and blue for the mural.

The mural was installed on November 22, 1940. It measured 14' by 5' before installation and is surmounted by a cornice. Schweig recommended using bread or kneaded rubber to clean the mural. In 1980 the mural was cleaned and restored by Kansas artist Trudy Furney. It is in good condition.

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Continuation Sheet**

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A varnished, wooden vestibule projects into the lobby, cutting off some view of the mural. This is a traditional design feature found in most of the post offices included in this nomination. The original marble wainscotting and terrazzo floor tiles are retained. The postmaster's door and the bulletin boards retain their varnished wood surrounds. The original hanging lights have been replaced with almost flush mounted fluorescent lights.

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for the mural on January 15, 1940 and installed the mural on November 22, 1940. "Wheat Workers" was installed on the west wall of the lobby above the postmaster's door and the two bulletin boards that flank it. It measured 14' by 5' before installation and is surmounted by a cornice. Following the preliminary planning, sketches, and cartoons, Schweig spent two weeks actually painting the mural and returned to Russell for the installation. She received \$800 for the commission. The Russell Post Office is an example of one of the many smaller class C or D type post offices that received Section artwork in Kansas.

Schweig was born in St. Louis, Missouri and graduated from Washington University. She began her study of art as a young girl and by 1940 had studied under Arnold Blanch, Boardman Robinson, and Charles Hawthorne. Today her paintings are found in many public and private collections. Schweig is also responsible for the Section mural in the St. Genevieve, Missouri Post Office.

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

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

1940
1940
1940

Significant Dates

1940
1940
1940

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Schweig, Martyl: Artist
Simon, Louis: Supervising Architect
Busboom and Rauh: Builders

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

The Russell United States Post Office (c. 1939-1940) 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 mural that it contains. The mural, "Wheat Workers", was painted by St. Louis, Missouri artist Martyl Schweig (1918- ?) in 1940. 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.

"Wheat Workers" is an oil on canvas mural that depicts farm laborers cutting and shocking wheat by hand, oil derricks stand in the background. Six workers labor in the foreground on a day so hot that the sweat rolls off their brows and soaks their clothes. Bundles of wheat are stacked in the foreground waiting to be loaded onto wagons that will take the wheat to threshing machines. The expanse of the rolling, golden wheat field seems unending but several groups of oil derricks suddenly emerge, marking the near horizon. Schweig employs a primary palette of gold and blue for the mural. This scene is rooted to the local economy of the Russell region and through its portrayal is elevated to represent broad aspects of the American tradition. Schweig's wheat workers are nondescript in their appearance but seem slightly larger than life, they represent the common aspects of all agricultural workers and the dignity therein. "Wheat Workers" is representative of the regional social realism that was encouraged under the Section program.

The extent of community involvement in the development of the subject material and presentation of the mural is not clear in the Russell case. Schweig received the commission as a result of an honorable mention in the Forty-Eight State Competition. Schweig received the contract

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

General Services Administration, Treasury Department Section Records. Russell, Kansas.

Russell Record, 8 September 1980.

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

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 1 4 | 5 1 2 1 2 0 | 4 3 0 4 5 4 5
Zone Easting Northing

C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

B | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
Zone Easting Northing

D | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located on lots 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15; Block 87, Russell, Kansas. The property is bounded to the south by West Sixth, to the west by Maple, and to the north and east 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 March 8, 1989
street & number 120 W. 10th telephone 913-296-5264
city or town Topeka state Kansas zip code 66612