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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 categories and subcategories from the instructions.



1. Name of Property

Historic name: United States Post Office and Court House
Other names/site number: U.S. Federal Building and Courthouse; Harrisonburg Federal Building; Harrisonburg Post Office; Harrisonburg Courthouse
Name of related multiple property listing: "U.S. Post Office and Courthouse," contributing resource to Harrisonburg Downtown Historic District, NRISID 04001536, 01/19/2005
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 116 North Main Street
City or town: Harrisonburg State: VA County: Independent City
Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

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 X statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B X C D

		<u>8/16/2018</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>U.S. General Services Administration</u>		Date <u>Federal Preservation official</u>
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		
In my opinion, the property <u>X</u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.		
		<u>7/30/18</u>
Signature of commenting official:		Date
Virginia Department of Historic Resources		
Title : Director	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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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

9-18-2018
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
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Government: Post Office

Government: Courthouse

Government: Government Office

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Government: Courthouse

Government: Government Office

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Classical Revival; Neoclassical

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: STONE: granite

Walls: BRICK

Roof: SYNTHETIC; METAL: copper

Other: STONE: marble (stairs)

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 United States Post Office and Court House (Post Office-Court House) occupies an approximately 0.93-acre rectangular lot on the southwest corner of North Main and East Elizabeth streets in the historic commercial and institutional center of the City of Harrisonburg, Virginia. The three-story building has a full basement and penthouse. Typical of the Neoclassical style, the building is cruciform in plan, measuring approximately 104 feet along the north-south axis and 142 feet along the east-west axis. The exterior walls are clad in brick laid in Flemish bond and have marble detailing. The facade is dominated by a three-story Doric portico. The immediate setting of the building is urban. The building is bounded by East Elizabeth Street to the south, North Main Street to the west, North Federal Street to the east, and the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church (154 North Main Street) to the north. The building was completed in 1940, to house the Harrisonburg U.S. Post Office (USPO), federal courts, and additional government offices. As of 2017, the building houses the U.S. District Court, Bankruptcy Court, Attorney's Office for the Western District of Virginia, and the U.S. Marshals office. This building is included as a contributing resource to Harrisonburg Downtown Historic District, NRISID 04001536, 01/19/2005, as "U.S. Post Office and Courthouse."

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Narrative Description

The United States Post Office and Court House is a notable example of the Neoclassical architectural style commonly used for public and quasi-public buildings in the early twentieth century. The cruciform building plan, projecting front columned portico, granite base, and white marble belt course, frieze band, and cornice are typical elements of this style. Since the building is constructed of high-quality materials, including granite, marble, and brick, it remains in excellent condition with few alterations to its 1940 exterior appearance and configuration. A tower for a staircase and an elevator was added at the rear of the building, near the northeast corner in 1998, and the rear loading dock was expanded in 1996. These changes do not detract from the overall appearance of the building as they were made to rear elevations.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The Post Office-Court House is a three-story building, with a full, partially raised basement and penthouse. The exterior walls are clad with brick laid in Flemish bond and are accentuated with a white marble belt course between the first and second stories. The water table and the entrance steps are clad in white granite. The roofline is accentuated by a white marble frieze and cornice on all elevations. The flat roofs of both the main building and the penthouse are covered in a PVC membrane system.

The building is primarily lit by double-hung, wood-sash windows. At the first floor of the portico, the windows are ten-over-fifteen light; those in the flanking bays and at the north and south elevations are eight-over-twelve light. All are set into recessed segmental brick arches. The windows at the second and third stories are six-over-six light with flat lintels, except where noted. All windows feature plain wood surrounds. The windows of the first and second stories sit upon recessed greenstone sills with greenstone spandrel panels, while the third-story windows have marble sills. The window openings at the basement level at the west, north, and south elevations have steel-framed wire glass and decorative grilles featuring an exaggerated Greek keystone motif. The hinged and fixed penthouse windows are aluminum replacement units.

The symmetrical main facade faces west onto North Main Street. It is seven bays wide and is dominated by a three-story projecting central pedimented portico supported by six massive Doric columns. At the first story, or base, of the portico, the walls are clad in brick veneer and feature recessed segmental brick arched openings. The building's main entrance is through the central opening of the first story via replacement aluminum doors that lead into the former post office lobby. The entrance structure retains its original wood frame and decorative wood trim, simple pilasters, and ten-light wood arched transom. A row of carved wood anthemias visually separates the door head from the transom. The entrance is accessed from North Main Street via granite-clad stairs. Attached to the face of the building, on either side of the opening, are metal light fixtures. Large double-hung wood-sash windows with ten-over-fifteen lights flank the door and occupy the remaining recessed bays of the first story.

At the second and third stories of the portico is a colonnade, accessible from the second floor. The parapet, pediment, and six Doric columns (constructed in three parts) of the portico are grey-veined white marble. A veneer of the same marble covers the portico walls. The gable roof is clad in standing-

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seam copper roofing and features built-in copper pole gutters. The coffered ceiling is finished with plaster and features recessed glass panels that are illuminated from above. A set of eight-light paired metal doors topped by a four-light metal transom, all set into a simple wood frame, occupies the center bay of the second floor of the portico. The second and third floor windows feature marble sills. The colonnade floor is covered with slate pavers that were supplied by the Virginia Greenstone Company of Lynchburg. Metal railings that feature anthemias and paterae designs span the space between the columns at the second story. The columns are topped by a frieze and plain pediment. The words "UNITED STATES POST OFFICE AND COURT HOUSE" are incised into the frieze. The columns rest on a marble belt course, incised to read "HARRISONBURG VIRGINIA".

A cornerstone set into the southwest corner of the water table of the portico reads:

HENRY MORGENTHAU JR
SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

JAMES A FARLEY
POSTMASTER GENERAL

LOUIS A SIMON
SUPERVISING ARCHITECT

NEAL A MELICK
SUPERVISING ENGINEER

R STANLEY-BROWN
ARCHITECT

1939

At the basement level of the facade, small rectangular vents are located beneath each of the window openings. Metal grilles featuring an enlarged Greek key motif cover the vents.

The south elevation, which faces East Elizabeth Street, measures ten bays wide. The first and tenth bays are recessed due to the cruciform plan of the building. An entrance to the elevator lobby is located at the first story in the third bay; otherwise, all of the other openings at this elevation are windows. The entrance is accessed via a switchback concrete ramp, with granite veneer and iron railings, which extends from the sidewalk and runs along a portion of the building west of the entrance. The iron railings have X-style pickets and the first panel at street-level features a central medallion with a floral motif. The entrance door is also accessible via granite-clad stairs, flanked by a decorative iron railing with panels featuring X-style pickets and floral motif central medallions. The entry consists of a single replacement aluminum door with a wide sidelight to the west. The entry is topped by an eight-light, wood arched transom. Similar to the main entrance at the west elevation, this entry retains the original wood frame, decorative wood surround with simple pilasters, and a row of carved wood anthemias above the door header. Metal lantern-shaped light fixtures flank the entrance. The segmental arch first-story windows are slightly recessed. Brick pilasters with marble capitals divide the second through

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third bays of the upper stories. Several of the second- and third-story windows have louvered metal vents that replaced the original sashes. Similar vents were added within the spandrel panels beneath many of the first-story window openings subsequent to construction. Each basement-level window at the south elevation is surrounded by a poured-concrete window well that is covered with a steel security grille. At the eastern end of the south elevation are two metal transformers set on concrete pads.

The east (rear) elevation, which faces North Federal Street, measures five bays wide. The three central bays project from the face of the elevation. The first-story loading dock, first expanded in 1963, has an elevated concrete platform and a flat roof clad in corrugated metal. Brick walls, which protrude slightly from the north and south elevations of the central portion of the main block, enclose the ends of the dock; the concrete framing walls of the original, smaller loading dock are visible within the existing loading dock. Two pieces of HVAC equipment and floodlights are located on the roof. The ceiling is clad in metal and features fluorescent lights. At the north and south end of the platforms, metal pipe railings surround concrete stairs that lead to the basement level. The three original central loading bays have been infilled with brick and pedestrian doors, but are evidenced by the remnants of the original concrete headers and metal posts. Replacement doors in the first story include a metal pedestrian door with a two-light fixed window and two sets of paired metal doors. Above the loading dock, the first, second, and fourth bays of the second and third stories contain typical six-over-six double-hung wood-sash windows. The third bay features a tripartite window with double-hung sashes at both stories. The fifth bay, an addition made in 2000 to accommodate a freight elevator, has no opening, nor does the sixth bay, an addition made in 1992 to accommodate an additional staircase. The brick and bonding pattern of the elevator tower matches that of the original building; however, the staircase tower is clad in an exterior insulation and finish system (EIFS), painted red in an effort to harmonize it with the brick of the main building. The original brick chimney is visible at the northeast corner of the building, between the elevator addition and north elevation of the original building.

The north elevation is ten bays wide. The eighth and ninth bays are devoid of openings as these are the additions that were made to accommodate a stair tower and elevator. The openings of this elevation are all windows except at the eastern bays of the first story and basement. The easternmost bay of the first story features a metal pedestrian door that leads to the loading dock. This recessed entrance is accessible via a poured concrete ramp with metal pipe railing. To the west of the pedestrian door is a double-leaf metal door to accommodate the loading and unloading of vehicles. There are additional openings at the basement level, beneath the stair tower addition. Two paired metal doors to the basement are accessible via concrete stairs with a pipe railing. A louvered window with metal grill is located east of the two openings. To provide additional ventilation, louvered vents are located within the spandrel panels beneath the first-story window openings and are covered with metal screens that feature a simple diamond grid.

SITE AND LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

Late nineteenth-century to late twentieth-century commercial and city government buildings are found in the immediate areas to the north, east, and south of the building. Small lawn areas are located along North Main Street and flank the original entrance stairs. A steel flagpole set into a concrete base is located at the northwest corner of the property. Based on an examination of the 1939 architectural

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drawings, this is the original location of the flagpole. To the north are two evergreen trees and an evergreen hedge along the property line. A concrete and brick sidewalk runs along the North Main Street elevation and continues around the corner along East Elizabeth Street, where a small lawn abuts the south elevation. The lawns along the west and south elevations of the building are bordered by ornamental bollards; utilitarian bollards are found in the parking area, near the building and along the fenceline, to protect from vehicular strikes. A secured L-shaped parking area, improved in 1998, is located behind (east of) the building, wrapping along a portion of the north elevation. An ornamental metal fence borders the parking lot. Along the northern boundary of the property, the fence sits atop the stone retaining wall that separates the property from the neighboring Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The interior underwent interior rehabilitations and renovations in the 1970s that reconfigured the postal spaces as well as refinished and preserved many of the original details and features of the Neoclassical-style building. Renovations to reconfigure office space and create a new courtroom, jury room, and support offices were undertaken on the second floor, and updates were made to areas adjacent to the new elevator and stairs in the mid-to-late 1990s and 2000.

First Floor

The first floor historically housed post office operations, including a lobby accessible from the east and south entrances, a workroom with mailing vestibule, and office space for the Postmaster and Assistant Postmaster. As of 2017, the first floor contains offices for the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Virginia as well as the main entrances to the building.

The building underwent a slight reconfiguration of the post office lobby in the 1960s and 1970s, including the installation of air conditioning, new lighting, new lockboxes, new counters, workstations, new vestibule door, and a lobby partition. When possible, many existing materials were reused in the reconfiguration. Concurrently, HVAC installation and upgrades were undertaken, and new acoustical tile ceilings and drop lighting were installed.

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Vestibules

The vestibule at the main entrance provides access to the public lobby. The vestibule at the secondary entrance provides access to the elevator lobby. The floors of both vestibules are terrazzo with marble baseboard, and the ceilings are plaster. The interior walls of the west vestibule are created by multi-light windows. The aluminum replacement doors are flanked by fluted pilasters and a band of Greek key motifs separates the opening from the window above.

Public Lobby

The public lobby retains much of its original configuration and finishes, despite alterations in the 1960s and 1970s and the removal of the service counters c. 2006. Alterations dating to the 1960s and 1970s include the removal and replacement of the original mail boxes, reconstruction of the east wall, and the addition of an aluminum partition wall with aluminum and glass doors between the northern and eastern portions of the public lobby. The aluminum partition has a bronze anodized finish to match the existing bronze work. The public lobby floor is terrazzo in a grid-pattern with bronze strips, green chips, and a green base. The baseboard and window aprons are serpentine. The walls are clad in seven-foot-high grey marble veneer wainscoting below gypsum plaster walls. The coffered plaster ceiling has a stepped perimeter. The east wall has infilled spaces where mail boxes and service counters were originally located beneath the original and extant painted mural. Duct openings are covered with grilles with large Greek key motifs. Beneath the windows of the lobby are built-in desks or counters for patron use. The countertops are black structural glass, while the fronts are clad in grey marble veneer. The counters are supported by brass brackets executed with the Greek key motif. Above the built-in desks are original oak bulletin boards with brass plates. Some of the bulletin boards are lit by wall lamps with bronze frames and glass cylinders. The lobby is lit by fluorescent lights.

The most prominent feature of the public lobby is the mural that covers the upper portion of lobby walls. The commission for the mural was awarded to William Calfee (1909-1995) in 1941, and by 1943, he had completed an expansive artwork featuring local subjects in oil on canvas mounted on panels. The mural consists of three scenes and spans three walls for total length of 96' 5-3/4". "Trading" is the longest section and is in the former main lobby area; it depicts the hustle and bustle of market day, and reflects the area's agricultural heritage. The mural turns an outside corner and continues into a smaller lobby with "Courthouse Square," which depicts scenes of Sunday afternoon relaxation on a front porch and bench, as well as a portion of what was then a very-recently installed (1941) Virginia historical highway marker, "End of the Campaign, A-35" marking the general location of the end of Confederate General Stonewall Jackson's 1862 campaigns in the Shenandoah Valley.¹ The mural then turns an inside corner and continues with "County Fair," which depicts a bustling scene featuring a carousel and dancing.

¹Virginia Department of Historical Resources, Historical Highway Markers Database, <http://dhr.virginia.gov/HistoricMarkers/#GoToMap>, accessed October 23, 2017.

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Left, Figure 1, mural study c. 1941 with painted clock. Right, Figure 2, 2017 photograph showing electrical outlet for clock.

Since its installation in 1943, the mural has been altered to accommodate changes to the building, most notably mechanical system updates that required the addition of vents, sprinklers and smoke detectors.² Accommodation was made early on for some modern features: mural studies in the collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum show a painted clock where today there is an electrical outlet, presumably one that originally powered a clock.³ Two areas of the mural extend above the upper horizontal margin of the mural—one capturing the entirety of a tall sculpture, the other a portion of a porch column—suggesting the mural may have at one time extended above its current upper margin; the Smithsonian American Art Museum mural studies suggest the original Greek key grilles were painted to blend with the mural but whether the mural as installed ever extended further cannot be confirmed.⁴ During the installation of new lock boxes in 1971, the mural was removed for restoration by Hiram H. Hoelzer, a well-regarded art conservator based in New York City. Hoelzer detached the mural, rolled it, and treated it at his Manhattan workshop before returning it to the building.⁵ The mural was subsequently both remounted on panels and attached directly to the walls.⁶ A

² Myers Conservation and Associates, LLC, "Proposal, Conditions Assessment of the William Calfee Murals, US Post Office and Courthouse Building, Harrisonburg, Virginia," 12 November 2004, 2, 4.

³ Smithsonian American Art Museum website, <https://americanart.si.edu/artwork/country-fair-and-trading-court-house-square-mural-study-harrisonburg-virginia-post-office>, accessed October 23, 2017.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ken Mink, "Post Office Mural Reflects Bygone Era of Harrisonburg," Daily News Record (Harrisonburg, Virginia), October 8, 1994.

⁶ Myers, 3, 4.

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GSA fine arts inventory form completed in August 1972 noted that the newly reinstalled murals “are in excellent condition.”⁷

Elevators and Elevator Lobby

The elevator lobby is accessible from the public lobby and from the outside via the secondary entry at the south elevation. The floor is clad in terrazzo inlaid with brass dividing strips set in a grid pattern similar to the public lobby. Like the public lobby, the walls are covered in grey marble wainscoting and plaster, and the ceiling is plaster. A metal door leading to the basement is located beneath the staircase at the south wall. Radiators are built into the wall beneath the stairs and are covered by a brass grille. An oak board marked “DIRECTORY” is located above the radiator grille. At the west wall is an oak Civil Service bulletin board. Metal doors leading to the elevator and a custodial closet are present at the west wall. A metal door in the east wall provides access to a hallway that connects the former Postmaster’s Office and Assistant Postmaster’s Office, and ends at the postal workroom.

Postmaster’s Office

A wood door in the south side of the hallway leads to the Postmaster’s Office. It has a single panel of obscured glass with the room number 6777(109) in gold paint. The room features a wood floor, wood baseboard, wood wainscoting, and wood window trim. The walls, ceiling, and cornice are plaster. The room is now used as offices for GSA staff. A small hallway with a bathroom connects the Postmaster and Assistant Postmaster’s offices.

Assistant Postmaster’s Office

The west and north walls of the former Assistant Postmaster’s Office overlook the former workroom and are composed of multiple-light fixed windows with two-light transoms above and wood panels below. A door with multiple lights and transom in the north wall provides access to the workroom space. The east and south walls and ceiling are clad in plaster. The floor is covered in industrial carpet. The door to a metal vault that retains the U.S. Government seal is present in the east wall of the office. This room is currently used as office space.

Postal Workroom

This large space remains relatively unchanged. The former counters at the west wall, adjacent to the public lobby, have been removed. At the northwest corner, the former finance section has been enclosed to create six office spaces and an access hallway for the staff of the U.S. Attorney’s Office. These spaces feature industrial carpet, drop ceilings, and fluorescent lighting.

The former postal workroom is accessible via a door leading from the hallway off the elevator lobby and via doors in the east wall that lead to the mailing vestibule and loading docks. The workroom takes up the majority of the first floor space and features a concrete floor, painted wood baseboard and

⁷General Services Administration, “Fine Arts Inventory, Public Buildings Service, General Services Administration, Building No. 470043,” August 11, 1972, 2.

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wainscoting, and a plaster wall. At the west end of the room, a small portion of the floor is finished in terrazzo and former openings in the wall are covered over, reflective of the reconfiguration of the post office lobby in the 1970s. The large open room is broken up by massive square masonry columns. The room is well lit by windows in the north and south walls. At the east wall are bathrooms, paired doors to the mailing vestibule abutting the dock, and a door leading to the basement. Drop aluminum egg crate style light fixtures and fans are attached to the open ceiling.

Mailing Vestibule

Two sets of paired metal doors with single window lights in the upper half are located in the east wall of the workroom, lead to the mailing vestibule. The mailing vestibule leads from the workroom to the former loading docks and features a poured concrete floor and brick walls with a concrete ceiling. In 1970, a new mezzanine was added in the mailing vestibule with a lookout gallery constructed of fireproof terracotta.

South Staircase

The staircase leading from the elevator lobby to the second floor features a bronze handrail. The staircase is composed of a variety of stone: Virginia Royal Black marble without veining at the base and stringer; Georgia Grey Marble at the wainscoting and riser; serpentine at the treads and landing. At the second floor, the top of the staircase is adorned with a Greek key motif railing, also executed in bronze.

Second and Third Floors

Typical office spaces at the second and third floors feature plaster walls, paneled wood doors and wood door surrounds, chair rail and window trim. Many of the original doors to the second and third floors also have letter drop slots. Typical modifications include the introduction of new partitions and doorways, drop-tile ceilings and fluorescent lighting, and industrial carpeting. Many of the acoustical tile ceilings and drop light fixtures date to the early 1970s. The public corridors of the second and third floors feature terrazzo floors with brass inlay laid in a grid pattern, serpentine baseboards, plaster walls, and drop acoustical-tile ceilings.

Second Floor Spaces

The second floor is accessible via the elevator and elevator lobby staircase at the southwest corner of the building and the 1991 stairwell and elevator at the northeast corner of the building. The mezzanine is accessible via an interior concrete staircase that historically provided access to the working spaces of the post office. The second floor houses the bankruptcy court and related judges' and grand jury spaces, supporting offices and storage space, and offices and a cell block used by the U.S. Marshals Service.

The original configuration of the second floor has been highly altered. In 1991, a new stairwell was added at the northeast corner of the building and improvements were made to the eastern side of the floor, including some reconfiguration of spaces and the installation of cell blocks, drop ceilings, carpet, and doors in the office space of the U.S. Marshals Service at the eastern end of the building. The

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mezzanine was preserved. In order to accommodate the introduction of a new courtroom, in 1996, the northern and central portions of the floor were reconfigured.

A C-shaped corridor extends from the northeastern stairway around to the west side of the building at the northeast corner. The centrally-located 1996 courtroom is finished in hardwoods. A new judge's suite (clerk's office, conference room, and judge's chambers) is located on the north side of the courtroom, while a new grand jury suite with kitchen and conference room is located on the south side. The judge's and grand jury suites and entrances from the hallway are finished in similar materials as the 1996 courtroom. The courtroom and suites replaced former office spaces.

The rooms along the western side of the courtroom, which also serve the office of the bankruptcy clerk, retain original wood trim and doors and plaster walls as well as drop ceilings and light fixtures from the 1970s. Some of the original barrister bookcases and an early service counter also remain. Access to the second story of the portico is possible through a pair of metal doors in the bankruptcy clerk office.

Two original restrooms with the original ceramic-tile flooring, structural glass stalls, plaster walls, and porcelain fixtures are located off the corridor at the southern end of the floor. Original room layout and fabric, including historic wood trim and doors, also remain along the southern side of the corridor in rooms dedicated to file storage, server spaces, and offices for the bankruptcy court.

Third Floor Spaces

The third floor retains a similar configuration to the time of the building's completion in 1940, with the two-story courtroom located in the center of the floor and support rooms, offices, and storage space for the U.S. District Court and the U.S. Attorney's Office arranged along a U-shaped corridor. The courtroom attains its two-story height by virtue of a penthouse-like structure. Most of the offices along the north and south sides of the floor retain the original hardwood floors and chair rail.

The northern third-floor rooms house office, staffing, and storage space for the U.S. District Court Office for the Western District of Virginia, while the southern spaces include offices and the jury room. These areas retain the original grain painted doors, wood chair rail and baseboard, and plaster walls. The ceilings feature new acoustical tiles, and the 1970s tile ceiling is visible in some locations. The majority of the rooms are covered in carpet, although the original hardwood floors are visible in some of the spaces. At the northern office block, a centrally placed service counter was installed in the 1970s for use by the office of the Clerk of the Court. To the east of the counter is a large metal vault. A label inside the door reads "THE SCHWAB SAFE CO., LAFAYETTE, IND. U.S.A. 1939." Also posted inside the door are the "Treasury Department Instructions for Operating and Changing Combination Locks."

At the southern office block are the original men's and women's restrooms. The restrooms feature ceramic tile floors, structural glass toilet partitions, wainscoting, and baseboard, and plaster walls and ceilings. The unglazed, gray-colored tiles of the flooring are laid in a basket weave pattern. The bathrooms also retain original towel bars, metal radiators, and wood-framed mirrors.

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Courtroom Lobby

Similar to the hallways, the courtroom lobby features terrazzo flooring and serpentine baseboard. The lower third of the plaster walls are clad in grey marble. Unlike the dropped acoustic tile ceiling of the other hallways, the vaulted ceiling of the courtroom lobby is clad in textured plaster. The hanging round pendant light fixtures are bronze and feature star motifs. Opposite the courtroom entrance are four door openings that lead to the law library, offices of the bankruptcy law clerk, judicial assistant, and the Chief U.S. Bankruptcy Judge. These paneled wood doors with brass hardware feature marble surrounds with ears. The related spaces feature new carpet, acoustic tiles, and plaster walls, some of which are clad in wallpaper. In the ceiling of the hallway to the south of the courtroom lobby is a paneled wood trap door that leads to the mechanical room in the penthouse.

U.S. District Courtroom

A set of wooden double-leaf doors with four recessed panels provide access into the U.S. District Courtroom and are recessed slightly into a stepped wooden door surround. Gilt letters above the doorway read "UNITED STATES COURT 308." A recessed set of doors to the courtroom are clad in leather and feature single lights in the upper section. A transom tops the interior door and is covered with a wood grille featuring wheat sheaf, arrow, and floral motifs.

The courtroom retains many of the original features and finishes that date to the period of completion (1940). Carpeting covers the original cork tile floor. Oak wainscoting with chair rail and polished black marble baseboards surrounds the room and features inset radiators and panels. Plaster comprises the upper portion of the walls. Pilasters, executed singularly and in pairs, visually separate the replacement clerestory windows at the north and south walls. The ceiling features a decorative plaster grid with bulls-eye motifs in which square acoustic tiles are set. The original hanging rectangular metal pendant lighting fixtures, now stored in the basement, have been removed and replaced by glass pendant lights similar to those of the second-story courtroom. Windows along the roofline provide natural daylight.

The public entry in the west wall of the courtroom is set into a classically detailed oak surround with ears topped by a pediment. The judge's bench at the east wall is flanked to the north and south by single-leaf oak paneled doors that lead into the judge's chambers. Each door is set into a classically detailed oak surround with central tied wheat sheaf and shell motifs in the upper corners and topped by a pediment. Ventilation grates are set high into the east and west walls, at the northern and southern end.

The judicial process area is separated from the spectator area by original steel and brass stanchions with cordons.

The focal point of the courtroom is the concave ornamental plaster wall behind the judge's bench. The wall features reeded Ionic columns connected by decorative swags and topped by a dentilated cornice and pediments. Plaster medallions are located between the columns in the space between the swags and cornice. At the apex and valley of the interconnected pediments are gold painted leaf acroteria. The wall behind the pediments features recessed panels separated by fluted pilasters. The seal of the U.S. District Court, Western District of Virginia is attached to the center of the plaster wall.

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The oak judge's bench, clerk's desk, and jury box are located at the eastern end of the courtroom and are executed in quarter-sawn oak and feature polished black marble baseboards. The face of the judge's bench is accentuated by five wood panels, the outermost two being adorned with the Greek key motif. The face of the clerk's bench and the jury box are covered in panels that include the Greek key motif. The judge's bench and clerk's desk also retain the original metal desk lamps.

To the east of the courtroom are the judge's chambers and suite, library, and former jury room.

Basement

The interior staircase leads from the postal workroom to the basement space, which historically housed the fuel room, boiler room, and storage and custodial space. The ceiling is generally unfinished concrete with some acoustic tiles in spaces later used for offices. The floors are generally unfinished concrete although some are clad in terrazzo. The brick and terracotta walls are finished in paint in the boiler room and plaster in the former office spaces. Some of the corridors and rooms retain the original serpentine baseboard. The doors are typically metal and wood two-panel doors set in metal or wood frames. The doors to the fuel room, boiler room, and storage spaces have louvers at the lower panel, while the former office doors have lights in the upper panel. The basement continues to house the boiler and mechanical systems and is used for storage.

Alterations

The Post Office-Court House retains its original appearance and detailing on its exterior elevations, due in part to a 2005-2007 restoration effort undertaken by the GSA. Alterations to the north and east elevations of the building have been minimal and completed in-kind with the materials, finishes, and details of the original building. Exterior alterations to the building include the addition of a stair tower to the north and the addition of an elevator to the east in the 1990s. The elevator addition utilized the Flemish bond brick pattern employed in the original building plans. The stair tower is located at the least visible elevation. A ramp was also constructed along East Elizabeth Street in 1998 to ensure compliance with the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) and was designed to be sensitive to the historic building design and materials.

One original window has been concealed through the infill of brick, and the original loading dock area has been altered; however, neither detracts from the overall retention of materials, design, and workmanship as the building's original exterior cladding style and like materials (brick executed in Flemish bond) were utilized in the infill of the window and the alterations to the loading dock.

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Overall, the interior retains a high degree of integrity from the period of completion (1940), particularly in the public areas, including the public and elevator lobbies, postal offices, corridors, and third-floor U.S. District Courtroom and lobby. Many of the remaining interior spaces have been altered in order to meet the needs of the tenants or comply with accessibility regulations. Many of these spaces have new interior finishes that include commercial carpeting, new wall partitions, and acoustical-tile drop ceilings with inset fluorescent lighting; however, the majority of these changes are reversible.

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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.)

Architecture

Politics/Government

Law

Social History

Period of Significance

1940-1943; 1956-1968

Significant Dates

1940; 1943; 1956, 1958

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Simon, Louis A., Supervising Architect

Melick, Neal A., Supervising Engineer

Stanley-Brown, Rudolph, Architect

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Harrisonburg Post Office-Courthouse is significant under Criteria A and C at the state and local levels.

Criterion A; Politics/Government, Law, and Social History; state level; 1956-1968. The Post Office-Court House is significant for its association with racial desegregation in public education as the site of judicial rulings directing the desegregation of Virginia's public schools. In 1956, Judge John Paul, Jr., of the Western District of Virginia, issued the first order in the state pursuant to *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954, 1955) directing a public school system to desegregate immediately. In 1958, in

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another state first, Judge Paul's order directing the City of Charlottesville and Warren County to admit black school children triggered orders from the governor to close the affected schools. School desegregation cases continued to be administered from this court throughout the 1960s.

Criteria A; Politics/Government; local level; 1940-1943. The Post Office-Court House is a significant example of a federal government building in Harrisonburg, Virginia, erected under New Deal-era federal programs intended to relieve the economic problems caused by the Great Depression. The building was perceived as a symbol of community pride and achievement and as a representation of the federal presence in Harrisonburg. The period of significance begins with 1940, when the building was completed, and ends with 1943, when the mural was completed.

Criteria C; Architecture; local level; 1940-1943. The Post Office-Court House is significant as an example of the Neoclassical architectural style popularized through the federal building projects of the 1920s and 1930s. The period of significance begins with 1940, when the building was completed, and ends with 1943, when the mural was completed. This building is a contributing resource to Harrisonburg Downtown Historic District, NRISID 04001536, 01/19/2005, as "U.S. Post Office and Courthouse."

Narrative Statement of Significance

Brief History of Harrisonburg, Virginia

Harrisonburg has served as the seat of Rockingham County since the county was created from Augusta County in the eighteenth century. In 1779-1780, Harrisonburg was established on land owned by long-time residents Thomas and Sarah Harrison and was initially known as Rocktown. In 1780, the General Assembly of Virginia recognized the establishment of the town, comprised of 50 acres, as well as its role as the county seat of Rockingham.⁸

The town became the location of important trade routes in the central portion of the fertile Shenandoah Valley of Virginia in the early nineteenth century, with the Valley Turnpike (present day Route 11) and the Rockingham Turnpike (present day Route 33) meeting at the crossroads that was to become the city's Court Square. The agricultural importance of the area is evident in census returns from the mid-nineteenth century; in 1850, Rockingham County reported the highest returns of wheat and hay in the Commonwealth. Harrisonburg provided needed services to the city's population and the surrounding farmers. The town was governed by trustees until 1849, when it was formally incorporated and the first mayor and city council was elected.⁹

Given its location at a prominent crossroads, fifty miles north of the Confederate rail and supply center in the City of Staunton, Harrisonburg was the site of many active campaigns during the Civil War. The surrounding region, known as the "Breadbasket of the Confederacy," experienced the loss of a significant number of barns and farm buildings during a campaign led by Union General Philip H.

⁸ Daniel J. Pezzoni, Harrisonburg Downtown Historic District National Register Nomination, National Register of Historic Places, January 19, 2005, 83.

⁹ Pezzoni, 85.

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Sheridan; however, many of the local citizenry were Mennonites and Brethrens who declined to fight in the war.¹⁰

Despite an economic decline after the Civil War, the coming of the railroads and new industry contributed to the growth of the city. In 1892, the city population increased threefold when 1,082 acres were annexed. By 1893, all commercial services for the county were listed in Harrisonburg, and the business district was clustered around Courthouse Square, bounded by South and North Main Street and East Market Street. An imposing Romanesque Revival/Renaissance Revival style courthouse was constructed on the square between 1896 and 1897, and remains a focal point for the historic downtown to the present day.¹¹

Growth of the city continued into the early twentieth century, in part due to the continued growth of agricultural production in the surrounding area. In 1916, Harrisonburg became an independent city by court order. The 1920 federal census reported the population at 5,875 citizens.¹²

However, in 1960, a 7.5-mile long highway was constructed to bypass the downtown to the east; this route would eventually become part of Interstate 81 and the area around the new roadway quickly became a commercial center. As a result, the downtown experienced a period of decline.¹³ There was also a significant loss of buildings in the downtown during this period due to urban renewal, planned parking areas, and rebuilding. Recent revitalization efforts, including the listing of the Harrisonburg Downtown Historic District in the National Register and the formation of the Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance, have had a positive impact on the historic character of the downtown area, returning businesses and shoppers to the heart of the city.¹⁴

Brief History of the Postal Service in the United States and Harrisonburg, Virginia

The establishment of the postal service began as a means to provide communication to the colonies during the Revolutionary War. On July 26, 1775, the Second Continental Congress developed the post office under its first Postmaster General, Benjamin Franklin. The post office was the only agency to remain intact through the Revolutionary War and under the nascent government, first under the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution. Subsequently, the newly established federal government viewed the post office as the means for conveying knowledge of its laws and proceedings to all parts of the country.¹⁵ Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Congress established or improved postal services and facilities throughout the nation. The postal presence, through its sheer number, distribution,

¹⁰ "Civil War in Harrisonburg-Rockingham County," Harrisonburg Tourism website, www.harrisonburgtourism.com, accessed April 14, 2010.

¹¹ Pezzoni, 86-87.

¹² "A Brief History of Harrisonburg," City of Harrisonburg website, www.harrisonburgva.gov, accessed April 14, 2010.

¹³ Scott Hamilton Suter and Cheryl Lyon, *Images of America: Harrisonburg* (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2003).

¹⁴ Pezzoni, 90.

¹⁵ Rita L. Maroney, *History of the U.S. Postal Service: 1775-1982* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982), 3.

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and types of services, provided tangible reminders to otherwise isolated communities of the role and ideals of the central government. Consequently, the buildings constructed for use as post offices have reflected various governmental and architectural philosophies throughout the nation.¹⁶

The earliest record of a post office serving Harrisonburg and the county of Rockingham dates to 1798 and identifies a post office on a farm located about one and one-half miles north of the city, known as "Rockingham Court House."¹⁷ The post office was subsequently relocated to Harrisonburg at an unknown location, with the name of the post office changed to Harrisonburg in 1818.¹⁸

Throughout its first one-hundred years, Harrisonburg's post office moved serially to various buildings, including commercial buildings and residences. In 1809, the post office was relocated on the north side of the square on a property owned by Henry Tutwiler, postmaster, and occupied this location until he discontinued his occupancy of the post in 1841. For the next fifteen years, the post office was located in a dwelling on West Market Street. Postal activities relocated to Main Street between 1856 and 1865. By 1876, the post office was located in a room in a commercial building on the southeast side of North Main Street. Between 1879 and 1887, the post office was located in a building on West Court Square, until the erection of the first federal building between 1884 and 1887 at the northeast corner of North Main and Elizabeth streets.¹⁹

The federal courts were present in the city by March 29, 1871, based on a diary entry of Judge James Kenney: "This is the first day of a Federal court held in this place. Alexander Rives is the Judge, Hughes the Attorney, Points [the] clerk, & A.S. Gray the Marshall." According to Kenney, the courts were first located in a leased church on West Market Street formerly occupied by the Northern Methodist Church.²⁰ The federal courts occupied the building until 1874. When the second brick court house for the county was erected in 1874, it also housed the federal courts, which remained in this location until the construction of a building at the corner of North Main and Elizabeth streets in 1884-1887.²¹ The building received substantial additions to the north and east throughout the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²²

¹⁶ Beth Boland, National Register of Historic Places Bulletin 13, "How to Apply National Register Criteria to Post Offices." (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1984), Section II, 2.

¹⁷ Anonymous, handwritten note, Post Office Vertical File, Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society, 1912.

¹⁸ George W. Fetzer, "The Harrisonburg Post Office," Post Office Vertical File, Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society, Dayton, Virginia, October 29, 1937.

¹⁹ Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society, *The Rockingham Recorder* (Dayton, Virginia: The Shenandoah Press, January 1954), Volume II, No. 1, p. 245; Post Office Vertical File, Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society.

²⁰ Kirby S. Bassford, *Landmarks and Personages of Old Harrisonburg* (Harrisonburg, Virginia: Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society, 1944), 7.

²¹ John W. Wayland, *Historic Harrisonburg* (Harrisonburg, Virginia: C.J. Carrier Company, 1949, reprint 1973), 41.

²² Wayland, 42.

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The rapid growth of the city and surrounding area throughout the early twentieth century necessitated the need for a new post office and courthouse. The move for the construction of a new post office building was headed by Postmaster Fred Switzer and his assistant Wilmer Chandler who argued for the need for larger spaces for the increasing volume of mail for a city of nearly 100,000 occupants. The need to consolidate federal offices, including the court system, was a further impetus for a new building.²³

Development of Federal Buildings in the United States

Office of the Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury Department

The Office of the Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury Department (Supervising Architect) was responsible for the construction of federal buildings throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The office was created within the U.S. Treasury Department in 1852 as a response to an enormous increase in federal construction and was given responsibility for all architectural design and construction supervision. One of the earliest innovations of the office was the development of standardized building types to house the customs house, post office, and court house functions. The architectural style selected for these buildings reflected prevailing national taste. The scope of the Supervising Architect's office is reflected in the increase of federal buildings, from 23 in 1853, to 297 by 1892.²⁴

From 1895 to 1933, the office reported to the U.S. Treasury Department. In 1933, the U.S. Treasury Department was reorganized and the Office of the Supervising Architect was shifted to the Procurement Branch of the Division of Public Works of the Treasury. In July 1939, the public buildings program was removed from the U.S. Treasury Department and merged into the Federal Works Agency, Public Buildings Administration. In 1949, Congress established the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), and the new agency assumed responsibility for public buildings.²⁵

Supervising Architect Louis A. Simon

In 1934, Louis A. Simon, at the age of sixty-six, succeeded James A. Wetmore, who had worked on the 1896 courthouse for Harrisonburg, as Acting Supervising Architect.²⁶ At the time of his appointment, Simon had worked for the Office of the Supervising Architect for almost four decades and was well-known to the architectural community. The 1933 reorganization of the federal architecture program placed the newly named Public Works Branch at a lower level within the U.S. Treasury Department than the old Office of the Supervising Architect had previously enjoyed; however, Louis Simon retained control over the architecture of the federal buildings designed within his office. Simon served as Supervising Architect from 1934 until 1941, during which time the Post Office-Court House was constructed.

²³ Bassford, *Sketches of Harrisonburg, 1840-1940* (Harrisonburg, Virginia: Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society, 1940), 23 and 30.

²⁴ Lois A. Craig, et al., *The Federal Presence* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1978), 202.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 327.

²⁶ Antoinette Lee, *Architects to the Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 258; Pezzoni, 32.

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Louis A. Simon was born in Baltimore in 1867 and was educated at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After an extended tour throughout Europe, he opened an architectural office in Baltimore in 1894. Two years later, Edward A. Crane brought Simon into the Office of the Supervising Architect, where Simon spent the rest of his working career.²⁷

Simon favored classical styles of architecture during his tenure, although some of his works were greatly influenced by a new interest in Modernism. Simon utilized a simplified classical style (also known as the Stripped Classical style) that blended modern and classical elements, characterized by symmetrical massing and relatively plain surfaces.²⁸ His influence was apparent during James Wetmore's tenure, as Simon was the principal architectural designer during Wetmore's term. In addition to the Post Office-Court House in Harrisonburg, Virginia, Simon influenced the design of numerous federal buildings throughout the United States during the course of his tenure, including the Internal Revenue Service Building in Washington, D.C.; the U.S. Courthouse in Los Angeles, California; the U.S. Post Office Building in New Philadelphia, Ohio; and a series of U.S. Border Stations along the Vermont-Quebec border. Upon his retirement in 1941, the *Federal Architect* praised Simon for his leadership and insistence on quality designs:

Louis A. Simon will have a thousand or more buildings throughout the land, some bearing his name, some not, which are tokens of his architectural ability. Words concerning that ability are relatively ineffectual. It is the buildings themselves which are the best commentary of his judgment and his service to the country.²⁹

Louis A. Simon died in 1958 at the age of ninety-one.

Architect R. Stanley-Brown

R. (Rudolph) Stanley-Brown was born in 1890 in Mendon, Ohio, into a family of prominent political status. His mother, Mary Garfield Stanley-Brown, was the daughter of President James A. Garfield, and his father, James Stanley-Brown, served as President Garfield's private secretary. Shortly after Rudolph's birth, James Stanley-Brown moved his family to New York, where Rudolph spent most of his childhood.³⁰

R. Stanley-Brown received his undergraduate education at Yale University, after which, he studied at the Columbia University School of Architecture. He subsequently graduated from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris.³¹ Two years later, Stanley-Brown set his artistry aside to enlist in the U.S. Army where he

²⁷ Lee, 258.

²⁸ Lee, 260.

²⁹ Lee, 280.

³⁰ Society of Architectural Historians website, www.sah.org/oldsite06012004/aame/biosz.htm, accessed February 28, 2007.

³¹ "R. Stanley-Brown Obituary," *The New York Times*, February 9, 1944.

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served with the American Expeditionary Force in World War I.³² Upon his discharge, he joined the architectural firm of his uncle, Abram Garfield, a famed Cleveland architect. In 1936, Stanley-Brown left his uncle's firm and moved to Washington, D.C., where he lived and worked throughout the rest of his life.³³

It was shortly after his move to Washington, D.C., that the Supervising Architect commissioned Stanley-Brown to design the courthouse and post office for Harrisonburg. While the full list of commissions received by R. Stanley-Brown has not yet been compiled, known commissions include the Federal Building and Courthouse in Erie, Pennsylvania, designed in the Stripped Classical style and the U.S. Courthouse in Pensacola, Florida, designed in the Mission style.³⁴ Notably, President Franklin D. Roosevelt commissioned R. Stanley-Brown to design the Rhinebeck Post Office and the Wappingers Falls Post Office, both located in Dutchess County, New York. These buildings, constructed of fieldstone, provide a stark contrast to the Stripped Classical style that typified federal building construction at this time.

Despite the federal commissions awarded to Stanley-Brown throughout his lifetime, he was perhaps best known as an illustrator and painter. His wife, Katherine, published several books for which Stanley-Brown prepared the illustrations.³⁵ Stanley-Brown died on February 7, 1944, while visiting Augusta, Georgia, where he was planning a long-range program of recreational facilities for the city.³⁶

The Murals Program

From 1934 to 1943, the President Franklin D. Roosevelt Administration supported public art with a series of programs designed both to support unemployed artists and artisans, and to improve the character of public buildings within which their work was placed. These programs employed over ten thousand artists, producing a total of one hundred thousand paintings, eighteen thousand sculptures, thirteen thousand prints, and over four thousand murals.³⁷

The New Deal sought to change the relationship between the artist and society by democratizing art and culture and the New Deal Arts Program strived to bring art to the American people by placing the artwork in accessible locations. Art project officials wrote that the mass of people were

³² Ibid.

³³ Henry Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects* (Detroit: Omnigraphics, Inc., 1996), 566-567.

³⁴ General Services Administration website, www.gsa.gov, at Real Estate / Historic Preservation / Explore Historic Buildings / Find a Building: Search by Building Attribute "Stanley-Brown, Rudolph," accessed July 12, 2017.

³⁵ These books include *Song Book to the American Spirit* (1927), *The Young Architects* (1929), and *The Story of Printed Pictures* (1931). Society of Architectural Historians website, www.sah.org/oldsite06012004/aame/biosz.htm, accessed February 28, 2007.

³⁶ "R. Stanley-Brown Obituary," *The New York Times*, February 9, 1944.

³⁷ Marlene Park and Gerald E. Markowitz, *Democratic Vistas: Post Offices and Public Art in the New Deal* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984), 5.

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“underprivileged in art,” and they endeavored to make art accessible to all citizens, regardless of class, race, age, or gender.³⁸

In September 1934, Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr., and Treasury Department official and public art champion Edward Bruce agreed to spend a portion of new federal buildings’ construction costs on decoration: approximately 1% of the building cost was to be reserved for murals, sculpture, or both. A new Section of Painting and Sculpture became part of the Office of Supervising Architect in the Treasury Department. In 1938, the Section of Painting and Sculpture became the Section of Fine Arts. One year later, the entire building department, with the art unit, transferred from the Treasury Department to the New Federal Works Agency.

According to Bruce, by then chief of the Section of Fine Arts, the aim of the Section of Fine Arts was to “secure the murals and sculpture of distinguished quality appropriate to the embellishment of federal buildings.”³⁹ During this period, as many federal buildings were losing any regional architectural character, an emphasis was placed on including public art that presented local scenes or historical events. “Country Fair and Trading, Courthouse Square,” the mural that was included in the Harrisonburg federal building, is reflective of this trend.

Mural Artist William H. Calfee

Painter and sculptor William H. Calfee of Washington, D.C. (1909-1996) painted the mural in the public lobby of the Post Office-Court House. The mural, entitled “Country Fair and Trading, Court House Square,” shows scenes of contemporary life in Harrisonburg. Calfee served as chair of the art department at American University from 1945 to 1954, and played an important role in the development of post-World War II modernist art in the Washington, D.C., area.⁴⁰

Racial Segregation within the Federal Bureaucracy

The Harrisonburg Post Office-Court House was designed and built during the Jim Crow era, a time between the end of Reconstruction in 1877 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, when both laws and customs reinforced white racial supremacy. Between 1924 and 1930, the state of Virginia enacted a series of racial integrity laws, such as the Public Assemblages Act in 1924 which required racial segregation at all public events and venues in Virginia.⁴¹ While state law is subordinate to federal law, in the late 1930s, when the Harrisonburg Post Office-Court House was being designed and built, there

³⁸ Ibid., 5.

³⁹ National Gallery of Canada, *Exhibition of Mural Designs for Federal Buildings* (Ottawa: The National Gallery of Canada, 1940), 4.

⁴⁰ Park and Markowitz, 140-146; Smithsonian Archives of American Art website, William H. Calfee Papers, 1937-1982,” www.aaa.si.edu/collections/william-h-calfee-papers-5736, “accessed April 14, 2010.

⁴¹ 1926 Supplement to the Virginia Code of 1924, Title 15A “Regulation of Public Halls,” Chapter 73A “Separation of Races,” available at Encyclopedia Virginia, www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Separation_of_Races_1926, accessed November , 2017.

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were no federal laws or judicial opinions expressly prohibiting racial segregation; indeed, the United States Supreme Court's 1896 decision in *Plessey vs. Ferguson* condoned "separate but equal" facilities.⁴²

Discrimination within and segregation of the federal bureaucracy was not unknown during Reconstruction, when African Americans were first employed in the federal government in significant numbers; however, with the end of Reconstruction, by the turn of the nineteenth into the twentieth century, those numbers were at a minimum.⁴³ Racial segregation in federal offices became common after 1913 with the arrival of the Wilson Administration.⁴⁴ The Treasury Department in Washington, D.C.—which housed the Supervising Architect's Office—earned the strongest reputation for segregation.⁴⁵ One of the few written documents addressing racially segregated facilities was issued at the direction of Treasury Secretary William McAdoo:

In July 1913 the Auditor of the Treasury Department issued an order, on the authority of the newly appointed Secretary William McAdoo (a Southerner), designating separate toilets for White and Black employees. The Assistant Secretary, Williams, wrote to his Chief Clerk on 12 July 1913: "I think it would be best for this Department if you should make arrangements by which white and colored employees of this Department shall use different toilet rooms. Please arrange accordingly."⁴⁶

As black employees were routinely demoted and moved into manual labor jobs, segregation was typically touted as a way to promote efficiency and segregated spaces were readily created by various adaptive strategies, without formal written order or directive.⁴⁷ *De facto* segregation was achieved by

⁴² Article VI, Clause 2, of the U.S. Constitution, known as the "Supremacy Clause," establishes that federal laws made pursuant to the Constitution constitute the supreme law of the land." The Supreme Court in *Plessey v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896), upheld the constitutionality of state racial segregation laws for public facilities as long as the segregated facilities were equal in quality.

⁴³ August Meir and Elliott Rudwick, "The Rise of Segregation in the Federal Bureaucracy, 1900-1930," *Phylon*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (1967), 180, citing "The Crisis," XXXV (November 1928), 369.

⁴⁴ Desmond King, *Separate and Unequal: African Americans and the U.S. Federal Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 10.

⁴⁵ Eric S. Yellin, *Racism in the Nation's Service: Government Workers and the Color Line in Woodrow Wilson's America* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 117.

⁴⁶ King, 29, citing Papers of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Group I, Box C402, File "Segregation-Federal Service," 12 July-24 August, 1915, Library of Congress.

⁴⁷ Historian Eric Yellin writes, "Official orders are rarely extant in archives. Letters between administration officials refer to verbal conversations obliquely, and in one of the only letters between Treasury secretary William Gibbs McAdoo and President Wilson in which segregation was mentioned, McAdoo suggested that they meet privately. A diary kept by Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Charles S. Hamlin is a rare and brief record of key talks about race and segregation within the Treasury Department, which employed the most African Americans among the executive departments in Washington. It reveals a lack of administrative clarity, multiple changes in direction, varying degrees of commitment, and sensitivity to protests among some administrators." Yellin, 114-115, citing September 30, 1913, letter from William G. McAdoo to Woodrow Wilson, and the diary of Charles S. Hamlin.

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exclusion, *e.g.*, placing all black employees in one room or designating restrooms on different floors for black employees and visitors, or by partitioning, as described in a letter from 1913:

Lafayette Hershaw, a black government lawyer in the Interior Department and a founder of the NAACP, reported that most of the [Washington, D.C.] Post Office Department's black clerks had been placed in the Dead Letter Office and *separated from white clerks by a row of lockers running down the center of the room.*⁴⁸

Segregation in the government outlasted Wilson's administration.⁴⁹ Subsequent administrations in the 1920s accepted the Wilsonian standard that efficiency in government required segregation.⁵⁰ Spreading throughout the federal government with nationwide New Deal programs, the segregation seen in Washington offices extended to field offices and programs.⁵¹

Racial Segregation at the Harrisonburg Post Office-Court House

The Harrisonburg Post Office-Court House was designed in the late 1930s, a time when public facilities in Virginia were strictly segregated by state law. Harrisonburg followed suit, restricting areas of movie theatres, rest rooms, and buses, with patrons on notice either by explicit signage or local practice.⁵² A review of the original construction correspondence and drawings for the Post Office-Court House suggests the building was designed to accommodate Virginia's segregation laws.⁵³

For example, there are three basement rooms identified on the original 1939 plans for custodial use, one a large, L-shaped space labeled "custodial storage" and two adjacent, equally-sized rooms labeled "custodial employees." Whether two separate custodial employee rooms were provided to segregate employees either by sex or by race cannot be determined from the existing documentation.

However, whether the building entrances and/or lobbies were segregated—African Americans in the era the building was designed and built were typically relegated by local practice to secondary entrances—cannot be determined from the existing documentation alone. There are three public lobbies, but none are labeled on the drawings as restricted by race. There is a large "public lobby" immediately inside the main entrance; a smaller "finance lobby" at the north with service windows for the "finance section"; and a smaller "elevator lobby" to the south. The elevator lobby has an entrance from the street which

⁴⁸ Yellin, 116-117, citing September 11, 1913, letter from Lafayette M. Hershaw to May Childs Nerney (emphasis added). The terms "exclusion" and "partitioning" as segregation strategies are derived from the work of Professor Richard Weyeneth of the University of South Carolina. See Robert R. Weyeneth, "The Architecture of Racial Segregation: The Challenges of Preserving the Problematical Past," *Scholar Commons*, University of South Carolina, Department of History, Faculty Publications, October 1, 2005.

⁴⁹ King, 30-31.

⁵⁰ Yellin, 185; Meir, 183.

⁵¹ King, 31.

⁵² Interview with Weldon "Red" Bundy in "Harrisonburg Then and Now," WVPT Public Media, March 1999, available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfFAGbdd1m4, accessed March 16, 2018.

⁵³ Building floor plans, "Drawing No. 2" showing ground and first floors and "Drawing No. 3" showing second and third floors, signed as approved in 1938/1939..

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may have served as a service entrance for office deliveries and a prisoner entrance for the courtroom. As a secondary entrance, it may also have been designated by local practice as the entrance for black patrons.

There are numerous toilet rooms in the building, most still extant, many associated with judicial uses, *e.g.*, there are toilet rooms adjacent to the jury rooms; witness room; and attorneys/clients consultation room. The judge has a personal toilet room. On the first floor, there is a “janitor’s room,” with a toilet, and a “women’s swing [break] room,” also with a toilet; both are adjacent the postal work room. At the second floor, accessible from the postal work room via a staircase, is a large swing [break] room with a “swing room toilet.” There are large public restrooms on the second and third floors, labeled “mens toilet” and “womens toilet” [sic] and smaller public restrooms in the basement, also demarcated by gender. None are labeled on the plans beyond gender distinction and no sign schedule has been found for signage, for example, specifying, in the language of the time, “Colored” or “Whites Only.”

Toilets, however, are a bellwether for segregation and the multiplicity of toilets in this building suggests racially segregated spaces. In addition to the numerous toilet rooms shown on the original plans, requests were made during the course of construction for additional toilet rooms within specific office spaces. A June 1939 letter from the Department of Agriculture discusses reshuffling and reconfiguring second floor spaces assigned to the Forest Service, the Internal Revenue Department, and the Civil Service Commission, and requests approval of an additional toilet room as a matter of efficiency, noting

[u]pon referring to the plans it will be noted no lavatories are provided in the space assigned to the Forest Service. In Room 217 typists and other clerical and machine workers will be employed and a lavatory at column 27 is suggested. This lavatory will make it unnecessary for these employees to walk half way around the building to the present toilets.⁵⁴

The 1941 space assignment plan for the third floor documents two additional toilet rooms (both still extant) not shown on the original 1939 building plans: one is within an office assigned to the Soil Conservation Service, at the west side (approximately 30 feet from the public toilets), and the other, within an office assigned to the Marshals Service, at the south side (approximately 20 feet from the public toilets).⁵⁵

Each jury room—there are two, one for the petit (trial) jury, one for the grand jury—was designed and built with two toilet rooms adjacent each jury room; all four are simply marked “toilet” and, to today’s eyes, they appear gendered. However, at the time the Post Office-Court House was designed and built c. 1940, women were not allowed by law to serve on juries in Virginia, which suggests that these toilet rooms, all still extant, were intended to provide racially segregated facilities. Although women at that time could not serve as jurors, African-Americans could: Virginia law specifically identified as jurors “all male citizens over twenty-one years of age who shall have been residents of this State two years,”

⁵⁴ Joseph Haley, Department of Agriculture Acting Chief, Office of Plant and Operations, letter to W.E. Reynolds, Treasury Department Assistant Director of Procurement, June 23, 1939, construction files located at Harrisonburg Post Office-Court House.

⁵⁵ Plan showing third floor and labeled “Assignment, Drawing No. AS-5,” dated June 9, 1939, revised January 12, 1940, February 20, 1940, March 4, 1941; “Drawing No. 3,” *op cit*.

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excluding only temporarily-posted armed service members, "idiots and lunatics," "persons convicted of bribery, perjury, embezzlement of public funds, treason, felony, or petit larceny," and, optionally, "male citizen[s] over sixty years of age."⁵⁶ Federal law at that time explicitly looked to state law for juror qualifications for federal court juries, with, however, the additional proviso that no one could be disqualified based on race/color.⁵⁷ It was not until 1950 that women were permitted to serve on juries in any jurisdiction in Virginia, suggesting that the two toilet rooms provided for each jury room were intended to provide segregated facilities.⁵⁸

Development and Role of the United States Post Office and Court House in Harrisonburg, Virginia

Construction of Harrisonburg's new federal building was awarded to the A. Farnell Blair construction company of Lake Charles, Louisiana. The building was primarily designed by consulting architect R. Stanley-Brown, under the supervision of Supervising Architect Louis A. Simon. The construction engineer was Bruce K. Jones. Its construction was a source of considerable community pride and the work provided jobs to the locally unemployed as well as utilized local and regional materials such as brick and marble.

The building opened on Saturday, March 23, 1940, at 2:30 in the afternoon. Smith W. Purdum, fourth assistant postmaster general, dedicated the building. Mayor Ward Swank spoke and Representative A. Willis Robertson of the Seventh Virginia District presided. Senator Harry F. Byrd, Sr., was also present. Postmaster G. Frederick Switzer and John E. Kelley, an eighty-three-year-old Harrisonburg man, who was believed to be the oldest mail carrier in Virginia, were also in attendance.⁵⁹

The first session of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia to be held here was presided over by Judge John Paul on Monday, March 25, 1940.⁶⁰ Notably, Judge Paul's father, also Judge John Paul, presided over the first session of court held in the old 1887 building.⁶¹

⁵⁶ 195 Va. Code Ann. § 4927 (1919); 249 Va. Code Ann. § 5984 (1919). The Code of 1919 was the current code, as amended, at the time the Post Office-Court House was designed and built in 1938-1940.

⁵⁷ 28 U.S.C. §§ 411, 415 (1940 ed.). Indeed, it was through a case from Virginia that the Supreme Court in 1880 affirmed the right of black citizens to serve on juries. *Ex Parte Virginia*, 100 U.S. 339 (1880). Nevertheless, during the Jim Crow era, African-Americans were *de facto* routinely excluded from jury service in Virginia through the manipulation of jury lists by lay jury commissioners. See S.W. Tucker, "Racial Discrimination in Jury Selection in Virginia," *Virginia Law Review*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (May, 1966), 736-750.

⁵⁸ Holly J. McCammon, *The U.S. Women's Jury Movements and Strategic Adaptation: A More Just Verdict* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 38, Table 3.1 "Years in which Women Gained Eligibility to Serve on State Juries." The change in Virginia state law preceded the Civil Rights Act of 1957 which required all federal courts, nationwide, to impanel women ("any citizen") as jurors in federal courts regardless of state law.

⁵⁹ "Federal Court Opens Session in New Room," *Daily News Record* (Harrisonburg, Virginia), March 26, 1940.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Bassford, *Sketches*, 30.

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U.S. District Court for the Western District of Virginia and School Desegregation In Virginia

On May 17, 1954, the United States Supreme Court in the case of *Brown vs. Board of Education* declared segregated schools inherently unequal and ruled that state laws requiring school segregation on the basis of race were unconstitutional.⁶² The *Brown* case was comprised of five separate cases, including one from Virginia, *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*. The Court's ruling, however, did not address the many questions associated with the "how" of desegregation—the Court asked for additional briefing on the issue that fall—and on May 27, 1954, Virginia's Superintendent of Public Instruction Dowell J. Howard announced the continuation of segregation, statewide, for the 1954-1955 school year.⁶³

In the fall of 1954, just how desegregation was to be achieved was the subject of additional briefing: immediate or gradual? by detailed decree from the Supreme Court? or by recommendations from an appointed special master? or should the original District Courts oversee desegregation and, if so, to what degree and by what process? On May 31, 1955, the Supreme Court answered these questions in ruling that that federal district court judges, more familiar with local conditions, were better able to apply its mandate and remanded the cases with instructions

to take such proceedings and enter such orders and decrees consistent with this opinion as are necessary and proper to admit to public schools on a racially nondiscriminatory basis *with all deliberate speed* the parties to these cases.⁶⁴

Shortly thereafter, in June 1955, the Virginia State Board of Education, citing lack of sufficient time to prepare, announced continued segregation in all Virginia schools during the 1955-1956 school term.⁶⁵ Anticipating continued resistance for the 1956-1957 school term, the NAACP filed desegregation suits in the spring of 1956 against the school boards in Arlington, Norfolk, Newport News, and Charlottesville.⁶⁶

On July 12, 1956, Judge John Paul, Jr., of the District Court for the Western District of Virginia issued the first order in the State of Virginia for the immediate desegregation of the state's public schools.⁶⁷ Ruling from the bench in the case of *Allen v. School Board of the City of Charlottesville*, Judge Paul ordered

⁶² *Brown v. Board of Education*, 437 U.S. 483, 495 (1954).

⁶³ Brian J. Daugherty, *Keep On Keeping On: The NAACP and the Implementation of Brown v. Board of Education* (Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2016), 38.

⁶⁴ *Brown vs. Board of Education*, 349 U.S. 294, 301 (1955) (*Brown II*) (emphasis added).

⁶⁵ Daugherty, 53.

⁶⁶ Robert A. Pratt, *The Color of Their Skin: Education and Race in Richmond, Virginia, 1954-89* (Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 1992), 7.

⁶⁷ Benjamin Muse, *Virginia's Massive Resistance* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1961), 64. See *Davis v. School Board of Prince Edward County*, 142 F. Supp. 616 (E.D. Va. 1956), argued July 9, 1956, opinion issued July 17, 1956 opinion; *Thompson v. County School Board of Arlington County*, 144 F. Supp. 239 (E.D. Va. 1956), argued July 30, 1956, opinion issued July 31, 1956. Desegregation orders in the Newport News and Norfolk cases were not issued until February 1957.

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Charlottesville to discontinue its discriminatory admissions policy beginning with the new school term in September 1956.⁶⁸

Judge Paul was an “alert, quick-moving, snap-jawed, and decisive man.”⁶⁹ In ruling from the bench, Judge Paul observed,

I am accustomed to being perfectly frank—maybe sometimes too frank for a Judge on the Bench—but I would close my eyes to the obvious facts if I did not realize that the State has been, for some months, pursuing a deliberative and well-conceived, we will call it “policy of delay” in these cases.⁷⁰

Judge Paul declared, “there must be not be any discrimination on account of the color of the children or the race of the children” and that the school board was to “begin to make plans for the integration of the schools *this coming session*.”⁷¹

This July 12, 1956, ruling predated any desegregation order in the original *Brown* case from Virginia, *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*. In that case, Judge Sterling Hutcheson of the District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia in July 1955 had simply decided that it would not be practicable to require desegregation in Prince Edward County before the start of the school term in September 1955.⁷² And a year later, in July 1956, a date-certain for desegregation in Prince Edward County still had not been set; indeed, in his July 12, 1956, ruling, Judge Paul referenced a hearing in the Prince Edward County case that had occurred only three days earlier, noting “on Monday of this week,

⁶⁸ *Allen v. School Board of the City of Charlottesville*, transcript of hearing, July 12, 1956, District Court for the Western District of Virginia, 130.

⁶⁹ Jack Walter Peltason, *Fifty-eight Lonely Men: Southern Federal Judges and School Desegregation* (Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1961, reprinted 1971), 210. A native Virginian from a prominent Shenandoah Valley family, Judge Paul had a long record of public service, including a stint in the Army during World War I, and later representing the people of Virginia, first in the State Senate and then the U.S. House of Representatives. He had been appointed to the bench by President Hebert Hoover in 1931; his father, John Paul, Sr., had served the same court from 1883 (the year his son was born) to 1901. The Charlottesville case was not Judge Paul’s first foray into the issue of segregation; in 1950, he was part of a three-judge panel that ruled the University of Virginia’s exclusion of black students was unconstitutional, a ruling that led to the admission of African-American Gregory H. Swanson to the University’s School of Law. See Register of the Papers of Judge John Paul 1930-1964, summary at “Biographical/Historical Information,” available at <http://ead.lib.virginia.edu/vivaxtf>, accessed April 2, 2018; and the Federal Judicial Center, History of the Federal Judiciary, Judges, “Paul, John, Jr.,” available at www.fjc.gov/history/judges/paul-john-jr, accessed April 2, 2018.

⁷⁰ *Allen*, transcript, 130.

⁷¹ *Allen* transcript, 136, 138 (emphasis added). Judge Paul, however, did stay his order pending appeal to the Fourth Circuit, which, on December 31, 1956, upheld the ruling. *Allen v. School Board of the City of Charlottesville*, 1 R.R.L.R. 886, 888-89 (W.D. Va. 1956), *aff’d*, 240 F.2d 59 (4th Cir. 1957).

⁷² *Davis v. School Board of Prince Edward County*, 142 F. Supp. 616 (E.D. Va. 1956), recounting the case history and citing the July 1955 ruling.

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[that] Court had considered the Prince Edward County case and delayed any further action in it because of some procedural matter.”⁷³

Judge Hutcheson continued to resist setting a date for desegregation in Prince Edward County until expressly directed by the Fourth Circuit to do so; and in August 1958, in a rambling opinion invoking ancient Greek statesman Solon, citing the Christian bible’s Book of Matthew, and discoursing on “hearts and the minds of men,” he set that date as 1965, ten years from the 1955 *Brown* decision.⁷⁴ By contrast, Judge Paul, on July 12, 1956, announced,

I am not willing that this Court be a knowing and conscious accessory to a program, which has for its purpose delay and evasion of the decree of the Supreme Court of the United States. I don’t think my duty would permit me to be a knowing party or an accessory to that program.⁷⁵

The State of Virginia had begun developing its program of "massive resistance" following the first *Brown* decision in 1954, to prevent the desegregation of its public schools.⁷⁶ Directed by the Byrd Organization—the political machine that dominated Virginia politics for much of the middle portion of the 20th century, under the leadership of former Governor and U.S. Senator Harry F. Byrd, Sr.—Virginia had, as characterized by Judge Paul, “been pursuing a deliberate, well-conceived policy of delay.”⁷⁷ By the fall of 1956, these resistance tactics had coalesced through lengthy legislative efforts into “The Stanley Plan.” Named for then-Governor Stanley, one feature of that plan was a new law that authorized the governor to close any school attempting integration and to cut off any state funding for any school district that attempted desegregation, either voluntarily or pursuant to a court order.⁷⁸

Two years later, in 1958, the Harrisonburg Post Office-Court House became the site of another Virginia “first”: Judge Paul triggered the governor’s first exercise of that power on Monday, September 8, 1958, when he ordered the Warren County School Board to admit twenty-two black students to the white high school.⁷⁹ A week later, on Monday, September 15, 1958, Warren County High School became the first school in Virginia to be closed by order of the governor to prevent desegregation.⁸⁰

⁷³ *Allen* transcript, 132-133.

⁷⁴ *Allen v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*, 164 F. Supp. 786, 793-794 (E.D. Va. 1958). (Note on case name: Eva Allen, and later, Ulysses Allen, replaced former lead plaintiff Dorothy Davis, thus the different case name.) The Fourth Circuit in May 1959 rejected Judge Hutcheson’s ten-year timeframe and ordered Prince Edward County schools to admit all qualified applicants “without regard to race or color” for the term starting September 1959. *Allen v. School Board of Prince Edward County*, 266 F.2d 507, 511 (4th Cir. 1959). The Prince Edward County school board opted to close its schools, and they remained closed until ordered reopened by the United States Supreme Court in 1964.

⁷⁵ *Allen* transcript, 134.

⁷⁶ Daugherty, 37-38; Pratt, 6-7.

⁷⁷ *Allen* transcript, 129.

⁷⁸ Pratt, 7. Encyclopedia Virginia, “Massive Resistance,”

www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Massive_Resistance, accessed January 2, 2018.

⁷⁹ *Kilby v. County School Board of Warren County*, 3 R.R.L.R. 972 (W.D. Va. 1958), *aff’d* 259 F.2d 497 (4th Cir. 1958); Peltason, 128-129. A day later, on September 9, 1958, Judge Paul ordered the admission of twelve black children to Charlottesville’s white schools. Adolph R. Grundman, “Public School

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Virginia's resistance to school desegregation effectively ended on January 19, 1959, when both the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals and a special three-judge federal District Court declared Virginia's school-closing laws unconstitutional.⁸¹ With the new school term in February 1959, black students entered public schools in Arlington, Alexandria, Norfolk, and Warren County; Charlottesville was allowed by Judge Paul to delay desegregation until the fall term.⁸² For the next several years, as the state pursued various policies to minimize school desegregation—private school tuition grants, pupil placement laws, "freedom-of-choice" plans—Judge Paul continued to preside over desegregation cases, ruling on administrative issues and appearing in court only a few weeks before his death at the age of eighty on February 13, 1964.⁸³ School desegregation cases continued to be heard and administered by the District Court throughout the 1960s.

The post office would continue to serve the citizens of Harrisonburg the opening of the Post Office-Court House on North Main Street for the next sixty years. In February 2000, fifty-nine years after the opening, crowded work conditions and a lack of parking led to the opening of a \$4.9 million post office outside the downtown at 3811 S. Main Street. A downtown substation was subsequently opened later that year, following the close of the old post office. GSA assumed control of the building the following year.⁸⁴ Today, the building continues to house offices for the staff of GSA, the U.S. District Court and Attorney's Office for the Western District of Virginia and related courtrooms, and the U.S. Marshals Service.

Significance

Criterion A; Politics/Government, Law, and Social History; state level; 1956-1968

The Post Office-Court House is significant for its association with civil rights as the site of judicial rulings directing the desegregation of Virginia's public schools following the Supreme Court's seminal rulings in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* in 1954 and 1955. The State of Virginia led the South in what came to be called "Massive Resistance" against school desegregation and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) led the fight for the rights of black school children by pursuing relief in the federal courts. The NAACP filed suits in the Western District of Virginia challenging segregation in the City of Charlottesville and Warren County. Unlike his fellow district court judges, Judge John Paul, Jr., took literally the Supreme Court's direction to desegregate the public schools "with

Desegregation in Virginia from 1954 to the Present," Ph.D. Dissertation in American History (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University, 1972), 217.

⁸⁰ Pratt, 10. Shortly thereafter, on September 19, 1958, the governor paraphrased his notice to the Warren County School Board, and closed two Charlottesville schools, Lane High School and Venable Elementary School. Muse, 74.

⁸¹ *Harrison v. Day*, 200 Va. 439 (1959); *James v. Almond*, 170 F. Supp. 331 (E.D. Va. 1959). See also Muse, 181; Peltason, 217. Prince Edward County's schools remained closed until 1964.

⁸² Daugherty, 91.

⁸³ "John Paul, Ex Judge, 80 Dies," *The New York Times*, February 15, 1964.

⁸⁴ Bettina Puckett, "Less 'Cozy' Post Office Delivered After 59 Years," *Daily News Record* (Harrisonburg, Virginia), February 2, 2000.

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all deliberate speed.” In 1956, Judge Paul issued the first order in the State of Virginia pursuant to *Brown vs. Board of Education*, directing a public school system to desegregate immediately. The Harrisonburg Post Office-Court House lead in another state first in 1958, testing the constitutionality of Virginia’s law mandating school closure for any school required by court order to desegregate: Judge Paul’s orders in September 1958 to the City of Charlottesville and to Warren County to admit black school children triggered orders from the governor to close the affected schools. Judge Paul’s ruling was upheld in January 1959 by the Fourth Circuit, foreshadowing the end of Massive Resistance. School desegregation cases continued to be administered from this court throughout the 1960s.

Criteria A; Politics/Government; local level; 1940-1943

The Post Office-Court House embodies the perceived growth of Harrisonburg in the early twentieth century and demonstrates elements of the federal building construction campaign carried forth under the Public Works Administration and into the Great Depression. The building was designed and constructed as part of the federal construction programs that were enacted to reduce unemployment during the Great Depression. The building’s granite and marble elements emphasize the permanence and monumentality of the federal government during uncertain times. At the same time, the building’s restrained ornamentation highlights the government’s frugality at a time when ostentatious displays would have been inappropriate. The incorporation of classical elements further expresses the sense of a federal permanence and presence in the community and continuity of tradition. The federally commissioned mural inside the building is an integral part of the Post Office-Court House and represents the type and style of art commissioned by the Section of Fine Arts during the Great Depression era. Together, the building and the art were perceived as a symbol of civic pride; its placement along North Main Street, the main thoroughfare for the City of Harrisonburg, supports that sentiment.

Criteria C; Architecture; local level; 1940-1943

The Post Office-Court House is significant at the local level as a notable example of the Neoclassical architectural style. The Neoclassical style is one of the most utilized architectural styles for federal buildings erected during the early tenure of Supervising Architect Louis A. Simon, who served as Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury Department from 1934 to 1941. Characteristic of the Neoclassical style, the Post Office-Court House’s full-height portico, Doric columns, and exterior masonry present a strong mass that suggests permanence. The careful if restrained detailing of the public spaces conveys the building’s public purpose, while simultaneously emphasizing the parsimony of Depression-era federal government.

Integrity

The Post Office-Court House retains a high degree of integrity. The building has only limited alterations to the exterior, the majority of which are located at the north elevation to accommodate a new stair tower and elevator and at the east (rear) elevation to accommodate changes to the loading dock. While these alterations are sizeable in scale, they are located at secondary elevations. On the interior, the postal lobby retains the original WPA murals and built-in desks, although the original lock boxes have been removed. The lobbies and corridors retain their original terrazzo floors and marble wainscoting, finishes that were typical to the public buildings of that period and style. The third-floor courtroom

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retains the ornate plaster wall behind the judge's bench, plaster ceiling, wood trim, ornate door surrounds, and decorative oak benches. However, the continued use of the building throughout the twentieth century necessitated the need for interior alterations to second floor spaces to create a new courtroom. Additionally, the application of new interior finishes such as industrial carpeting, acoustic-tile drop ceilings, and fluorescent lighting does not detract from the integrity of the building as most of the original features remain beneath the more recent materials.

The Harrisonburg Post Office-Court House retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. With respect to location and setting, the building remains in its original location, surrounded by commercial and government buildings. Despite interior alterations to accommodate the changing and continuous use of the building, the building retains its overall integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Finally, it retains its overall monumentality as a governmental entity and continues its use as a federal building and courthouse, all of which contribute to integrity of feeling and association.

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United States Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Harrisonburg City VA
County and State

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Allen v. County School Board of Prince Edward County, 164 F. Supp. 786 (E.D. Va. 1958), *modified*, 266 F.2d 507, (4th Cir. 1959)

Brown v. Board of Education, 437 U.S. 483 (1954)

Brown vs. Board of Education, 349 U.S. 294 (1955)

Davis v. School Board of Prince Edward County, 142 F. Supp. 616 (E.D. Va. 1956)

Ex Parte Virginia, 100 U.S. 339 (1880)

Harrison v. Day, 200 Va. 439 (1959)

James v. Almond, 170 F. Supp. 331 (E.D. Va. 1959)

Kilby v. County School Board of Warren County, 3 R.R.L.R. 972 (W.D. Va. 1958), *aff'd*, 259 F.2d 497 (4th Cir. 1958)

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Thompson v. County School Board of Arlington County, 144 F. Supp. 239 (E.D. Va. 1956)

Construction Documentation

Haley, Joseph, Department of Agriculture Acting Chief, Office of Plant and Operations. Letter dated to W.E. Reynolds, Treasury Department Assistant Director of Procurement, dated June 23, 1939. On file in GSA Offices, U.S. Post Office and Court House, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Harrisonburg Post Office-Courthouse building floor plans. "Drawing No. 2" showing ground and first floors, "Drawing No. 3" showing second and third floors. Signed as approved in 1938/1939. On file in GSA Offices, U.S. Post Office and Court House, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

United States Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Harrisonburg City VA
County and State

Harrisonburg Post Office-Court House third floor space assignment plan. "Assignment, Drawing No. AS-5." Dated June 9, 1939, revised January 12, 1940, February 20, 1940, March 4, 1941. On file in GSA Offices, U.S. Post Office and Court House, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

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United States Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Harrisonburg City VA
County and State

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Society of Architectural Historians website, www.sah.org/oldsite06012004/aame/biosz.htm. Accessed February 28, 2007.

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United States Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Harrisonburg City VA
County and State

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
(Contributing resource to Harrisonburg Downtown Historic District)
- 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 (General Services Administration)
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____ N/A

United States Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Harrisonburg City VA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 0.93

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 17 | Easting: 685546 | Northing: 4257252 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

The property includes the approximately 0.93-acre tax parcel (City of Harrisonburg Tax Parcel # 034-Q-1) upon which the Post Office-Court House is located. The northern boundary is delineated by the tax parcel line that extends between the property and the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church. North Federal Street forms the eastern boundary of the property, East Elizabeth Street the southern boundary, and North Main Street the western boundary.

United States Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Harrisonburg City VA
County and State

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary described above is consistent with the historical boundary of the property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Sherry Frear, Preservation Specialist
organization: U.S. General Services Administration
street & number: 1800 F Street, NW
city or town: Washington state: DC zip code: 20006
e-mail: sherry.frear@gsa.gov
telephone: 202-297-0812
date: June 18, 2018

name/title: Barbara C. Frederick, Architectural Historian
organization: A.D. Marble & Company, prepared for U.S. General Services Administration
street & number: 3913 Hartzdale Drive, Suite 1302
city or town: Camp Hill state: PA zip code: 17011
e-mail: bfrederick@admarble.com
telephone: 717-731-9588
date: September 2010

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.)

United States Post Office and Court House
Name of Property

Harrisonburg City VA
County and State

Figure Log

Figure 1. Mural study c. 1941 with painted clock. Source: Smithsonian American Art Museum website, <https://americanart.si.edu/artwork/country-fair-and-trading-court-house-square-mural-study-harrisonburg-virginia-post-office>. Accessed 23 October 2017

Figure 2. Mural existing conditions 2017, showing electrical outlet for clock. Source: Photograph by Sherry Frear, 31 October 2017.

Photo Log

Name of Property:	United States Post Office and Court House
City or Vicinity:	Harrisonburg
County:	Rockingham
State:	Virginia
Name of Photographer:	Annie Sauser, RA
Date of Photographs:	June 26, 2015*
Location of Original Digital Files:	1800 F Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006

*Images accurately convey appearance of building as of 2018.

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

Photo #1, VA_HarrisonburgCity_United States Post Office and Court House_0001: View of west (main) façade, looking east.

Photo #2, VA_HarrisonburgCity_United States Post Office and Court House_0002: View of south facade, looking north.

Photo #3, VA_HarrisonburgCity_United States Post Office and Court House_0003: View of east facade, looking west.

Photo #4, VA_HarrisonburgCity_United States Post Office and Court House_0004: View of north facade, looking south.

Photo #5, VA_HarrisonburgCity_United States Post Office and Court House_0005: View of dock at east facade, looking northwest.

Photo #6, VA_HarrisonburgCity_United States Post Office and Court House_0006: Detail of infill at former garage doors at dock.

Photo #7, VA_HarrisonburgCity_United States Post Office and Court House_0007: Detail of typical first floor spandrel panel.

United States Post Office and Court House

Name of Property

Harrisonburg City VA

County and State

Photo #8, VA_ HarrisonburgCity _United States Post Office and Court House_0008: View of entry vestibule at Main Street, from within main lobby.

Photo #9, VA_ HarrisonburgCity _United States Post Office and Court House_0009: View of former postal workroom, looking north.

Photo #10, VA_ HarrisonburgCity _United States Post Office and Court House_0010: Detail of post office lobby east wall with mural, looking east, 1 of 2.

Photo # 11, VA_ HarrisonburgCity _United States Post Office and Court House_0011 Detail of post office lobby east wall with mural, looking east, 2 of 2.

Photo #12, VA_Rockingham _United States Post Office and Court House_0012: Detail of Post office lobby, east wall with mural, looking southeast, 1 of 2.

Photo #13, VA_ HarrisonburgCity _United States Post Office and Court House_0013: Detail of Post office lobby, east wall with mural, looking southeast, 2 of 2.

Photo #14, VA_ HarrisonburgCity _United States Post Office and Court House_0014: Third floor courtroom lobby, looking southeast.

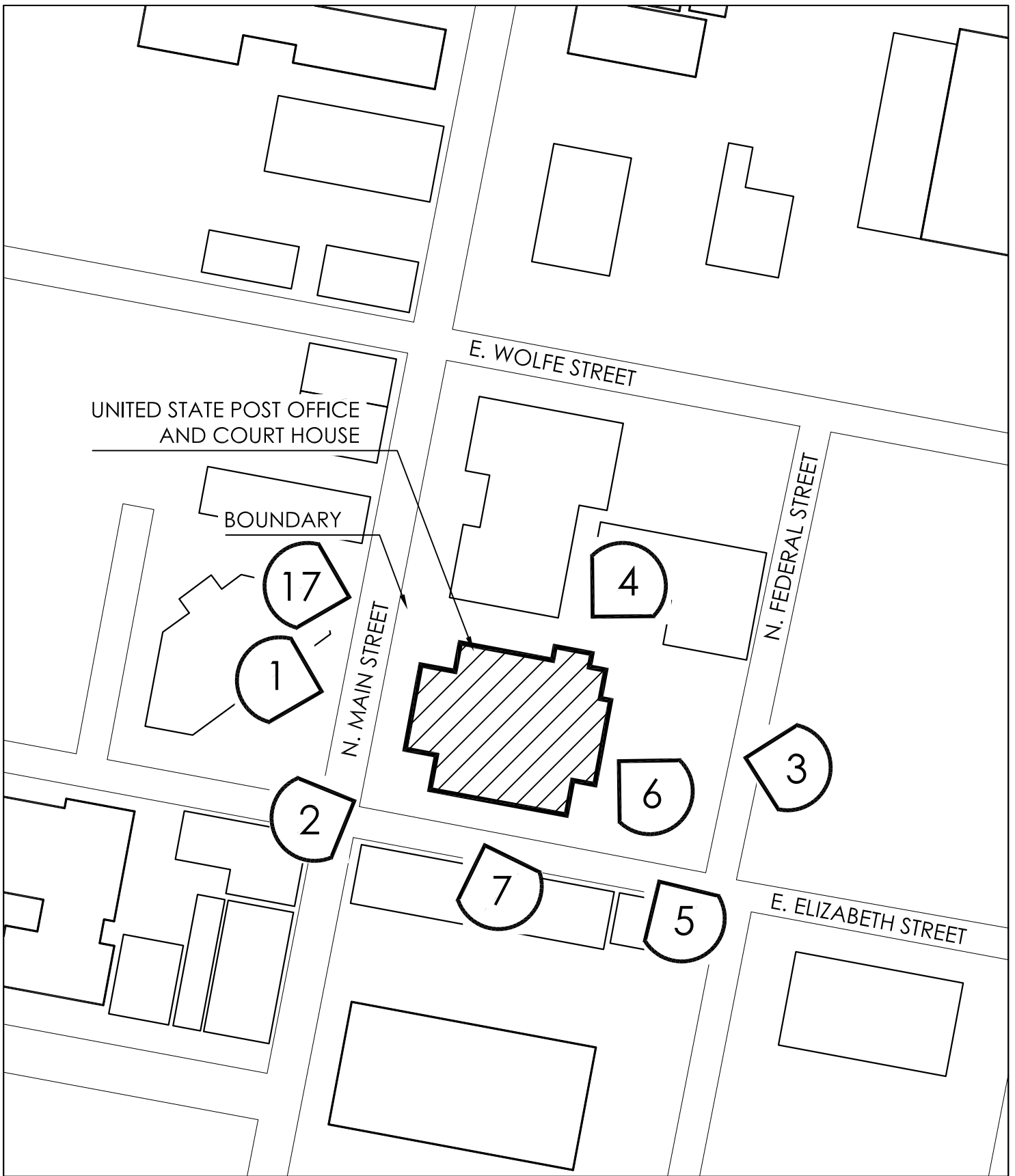
Photo #15, VA_ HarrisonburgCity _United States Post Office and Court House_0015: Third floor courtroom, looking east from main entry doors leading from courtroom lobby.

Photo #16, VA_ HarrisonburgCity _United States Post Office and Court House_0017: Third floor north corridor, looking east.

Photo #17, VA_ HarrisonburgCity _United States Post Office and Court House_0018: Roof and penthouse, looking east along the north side of the building.

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



UNITED STATE POST OFFICE
AND COURT HOUSE

BOUNDARY

E. WOLFE STREET

N. MAIN STREET

N. FEDERAL STREET

E. ELIZABETH STREET

--- property line

 United States Post Office and Court House

 photograph view

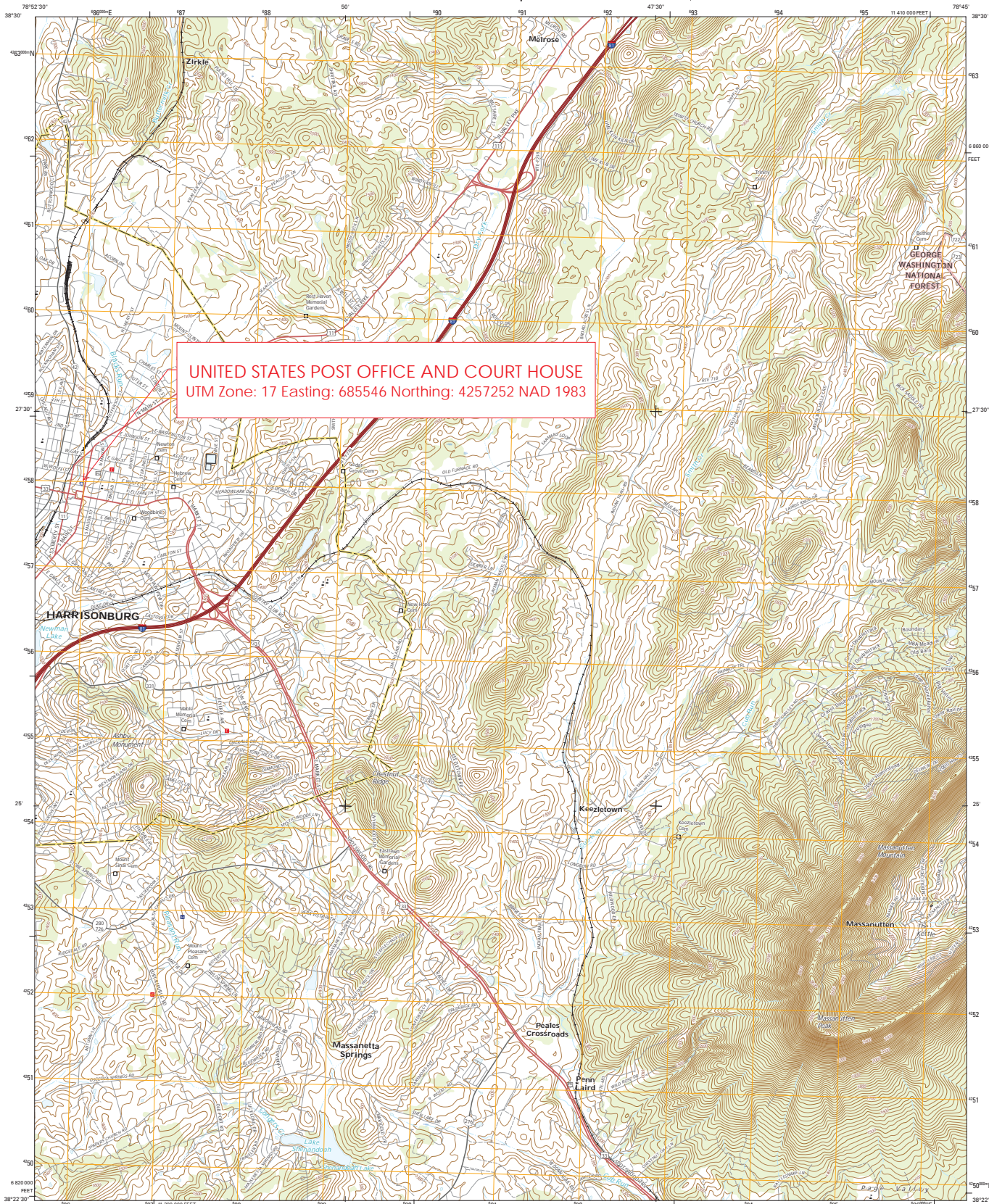


SCALE 1" = 100'

UTM Zone: 17 Easting: 685546 Northing: 4257252 NAD 1983

UNITED STATES POST OFFICE AND COURT HOUSE
HARRISONBURG, VA
SKETCH MAP and
PHOTOGRAPH KEY
for exterior photographs

Prepared 6 OCT 2017

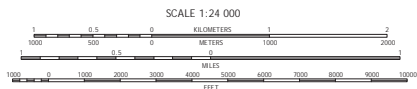
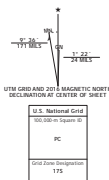


UNITED STATES POST OFFICE AND COURT HOUSE
UTM Zone: 17 Easting: 685546 Northing: 4257252 NAD 1983

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)
Vertical Geoid System of 1984 (CGVD84) Projection and
1 000 meter grid. Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 17S
11 000-foot ticks. Virginia Coordinate System of 1983 (north zone)

This map is not a legal document. Boundaries may be generalized for this map scale. Private lands with government reservations may not be shown. Obtain permission before entering private lands.

Imagery NADP, August 2014
Roads U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 - 2016
Roads within US Forest Service Lands FS Topo Data with limited Forest Service updates, 2012 - 2016
Names National Hydrography Dataset, 2014
Contour National Elevation Dataset, 2009
Boundaries Multiple sources; see metadata file 1972 - 2016
Wetlands FWS National Wetlands Inventory 1977 - 2014



SCALE 1:24 000
CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1988
This map was produced to conform with the National Geospatial Program US Topo Product Standards, 2011.
A metadata file associated with this product is draft version 6.6.19



ADJOINING QUADRANGLES

1	2	3	1 Singers Glen
4	5	6	2 Broadway
7	8	9	3 Trout Springs
			4 Bridgewater
			5 Stone West
			6 Mount Sidney
			7 Centerville
			8 McGaheysville

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Expressway
- Secondary Hwy
- Ramp
- Int interstate Route
- US Route
- FS Primary Route
- FS Passenger Route
- Local Connector
- Local Road
- 4WD
- State Route
- FS High Clearance Route

Check with local Forest Service unit for current travel conditions and restrictions.

HARRISONBURG, VA
2016





UNITED STATES POST OFFICE AND COURT HOUSE



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH ALABAMA
LIBRARY &
ARCHIVES



























United States
District Court
CLERK'S OFFICE

Hours:
8:30am - 4:30pm

Clerk of Court
Julia C. Dudley





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 8/17/2018 Date of Pending List: 8/31/2018 Date of 16th Day: 9/17/2018 Date of 45th Day: 10/1/2018 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 9/18/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

August 16, 2018

Ms. Joy Beasley
Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240



Dear Ms. Beasley: *Joy*

Enclosed please find the nomination for the United States Post Office and Court House in Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, Virginia.

It is GSA's opinion that the United States Post Office and Court House, a stately brick and marble building within the Harrisonburg Downtown Historic District (NRISID 04001536, 01/19/2005) is significant for three reasons. It possesses significance under Criterion A at the state level for its role in the desegregation of Virginia's public schools and at the local level as a significant example of a federal government building erected under the New Deal-era federal programs. Under Criterion C it is a locally significant example of the Neoclassical architectural style popularized through the federal building projects of the 1920s and 1930s. The building retains a very high degree of integrity with few alterations to its 1940 exterior configuration and appearance and limited interior changes. Notably, the main lobby and third floor courtroom have been little altered. There are two distinct periods of significance, the first being 1940-43, the year construction was completed to the year the lobby murals were installed; and 1956-1968, the years that the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Virginia issued state-leading rulings in public school desegregation cases.

The following materials are enclosed for your review:

- A signed copy of the first page of the nomination
- "Disk 1" containing the true and correct copy of the nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for the Harrisonburg Post Office and Court House, and
- "Disk 2" containing the TIF image files for the above referenced nomination.

We look forward to the listing of this historic property in the National Register. If for any reason these materials need to be returned to GSA, please do so by a delivery service as items returned to our offices via regular mail are irradiated and the materials severely damaged.

Should you need further information regarding the nomination package, my contact for this matter is Ms. Sherry Frear, who may be reached at (202) 297-0812 or sherry.frear@gsa.gov.

Sincerely,



Beth L. Savage
Federal Preservation Officer
Director, Center for Historic Buildings

Enclosure

cc: Donna Andrews, Regional Historic Preservation Officer, Region 3





COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Historic Resources

2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221

Matt Strickler
Secretary of Natural Resources

Julie V. Langan
Director

Tel: (804) 367-2323
Fax: (804) 367-2391
www.dhr.virginia.gov

July 31, 2018

Sherry Frear
General Services Administration
1800 F St. NW
Suite 5400
Washington, DC 20405-0001

Re: U.S. Post Office and Courthouse, City of Harrisonburg, VA

Dear Ms. Frear:

Please find enclosed a signed cover sheet for the nomination for the U.S. Post Office and Courthouse in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Staff of the Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have completed review of the nomination and offer our wholehearted support for it to continue to official listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The enclosed cover sheet has been signed by Virginia's State Historic Preservation Officer, Julie Langan, who also is Director of DHR.

If we can be of further assistance concerning the nomination for this important historic property, please contact us at your convenience. My direct phone number is 804-482-6439 and my email address is lana.mcdonald@dhr.virginia.gov. The continuing protection and preservation of Virginia's historic properties is of immediate concern to this office. We welcome the opportunity to work with you at any time to further the General Services Administration's efforts to identify and nominate significant properties here in Virginia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lena S. McDonald".

Lena S. McDonald
National/State Register Historian

Western Region Office
962 Kime Lane
Salem, VA 24153
Tel: (540) 387-5443
Fax: (540) 387-5446

Northern Region Office
5357 Main Street
PO Box 519
Stephens City, VA 22655
Tel: (540) 868-7029
Fax: (540) 868-7033

Eastern Region Office
2801 Kensington Avenue
Richmond, VA 23221
Tel: (804) 367-2323
Fax: (804) 367-2391