

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

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**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Pawnee City United States Post Office
other names/site number PW06-117

2. Location

street & number 703 G Street N/A not for publication
city, town Pawnee City N/A vicinity
state Nebraska code NE county Pawnee code 133 zip code 68420

3. Classification

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--------------------------|
| Ownership of Property | Category of Property | Number of Resources within Property | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | Contributing | Noncontributing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-local | <input type="checkbox"/> district | <u>1</u> | <u> </u> buildings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State | <input type="checkbox"/> site | <u> </u> | <u> </u> sites |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <u>2</u> | <u> </u> structures |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> object | <u>3</u> | <u> </u> objects |
| | | | <u> </u> Total |

Name of related multiple property listing:
Nebraska Post Offices Which Contain Section Artwork (1938-1942)
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Bob Paschendorf, DSHPO 4/2/92
Signature of certifying official Date
Director, Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet. 5/11/92
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:)

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government/Post Office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government/Post Office**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concretewalls Brickroof Terra Cottaother Brick

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Pawnee City United States Post Office is located at 703 G Street in Pawnee City, a small county seat community in southeast Nebraska (1990 population: 1,008). The one-story brick Colonial Revival style building constructed in 1940-1941, is a well-preserved example of a Class C or D post office built from standardized plans in the 1930's. The nomination includes two contributing objects: two ornamental lamp posts located on either side of the front entry.

Symmetrical in plan, the five-bay building measures 67 by 68 feet and has a hipped roof with end chimneys and clay tile shingles. The raised central entry features a cast-iron front, double doors, transom, and sidelights. A large stylized eagle is located over the main entry. Two pairs of 8-over-12 paned double-hung windows are located on the main (east) facade; the recessed bays have segmentally arched openings with jack-arched hoods. Similar fenestration is found on the north and south facades. Other decorative elements include a brick corbelled cornice and dentils. On the main (east) and side facades, below grade area ways with steps and iron railings provide light and ventilation to the lower level. The building exhibits good integrity; modifications include covering of the workroom skylight and replacement of the front entry doors. The post office was completed and officially dedicated on June 26, 1941, and approximately 1,000 Pawnee County residents attended the ceremony (The Pawnee Chief, July 2, 1941).

A mural entitled "The Auction," by Kenneth Evett, is located on the north lobby wall directly above the postmaster's door which is flanked by wooden, glass-enclosed bulletin boards. The mural measures approximately 4 feet by 12 feet and occupies the typical space for artwork commissioned by the Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts in a small Class C or D post office. The Pawnee City commission was awarded to Colorado Springs artist Kenneth Evett in July, 1941, and the completed mural was installed by the artist in June, 1942 (The Pawnee Chief, June 10, 1942).

Painted in shades of gold, brown, sepia, red, and grey the mural depicts people gathered at a farm auction. The figures are located in several groups outside a two-story red brick building where the auction is underway. The artist's use of single point perspective, light and shadow, and placement of the 24 figures provide depth, interest and a complex

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composition. The scene is divided into two main areas. A board fence extends outward from the side of a two-story building where the auction is taking place. The fence, building, and placement of the figures divides the scene into roughly two main areas.

In the right foreground the figure of a man in striped overalls leads a horse into the dark interior of the building where the auction is underway. The space and depth of the interior is suggested by a shaft of light that silhouettes sketchy figures of the crowd, auctioneer, and animals. A man and woman stand in the doorway of the building; in the foreground are cattle and people. The figures of a man and woman ascend an exterior staircase and the figure of another woman is located at a second floor doorway. Other figures: a boy petting a dog, and a group of four men are located near the board fence. At the left edge of the scene, additional figures are grouped around a large tree: a man, woman and two children seated on a bench and figures gathered at a refreshment stand in the background.

The lobby interior is in good condition and retains its original marble tile floor, marble wainscoting, and woodwork. Sometime after the mural was installed the original light fixtures were replaced; currently the lobby has enclosed fluorescent fixtures flush to the ceiling. A varnished wooden vestibule projects into the lobby, an original design feature typical of Class C or D post offices built from standardized plans in the 1930's. In 1981 the mural was cleaned and restored by an art conservator under contract with the United States Postal Service; it is in excellent condition.

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Art
Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1942

Significant Dates

1942

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Evett, Kenneth: Artist
Simon, Louis: Supervising Architect
Busboom & Rauh: Contractor

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

The Pawnee City United States Post Office is being nominated to the National Register as part of the Nebraska Post Offices Which Contain Section Artwork (1938-1942) multiple property nomination at the state level of significance under Criterion A for its association with the United States Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts program (1934-1943) and under Criterion C for the artistic significance of the mural it contains. The mural, entitled "The Auction," was painted by Colorado Springs artist Kenneth Evett. When the mural was installed in June, 1942, it was the final Section commission for a Nebraska post office and the program ended a year later in June, 1943.

The oil-on-canvas mural which measures approximately 4 feet by 12 feet is located on the north lobby wall directly above the postmaster's door in the typical space for Section artwork installed in Class C or D post offices. The mural is an excellent example of artwork commissioned for new post offices through the Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts program from 1934-1943. Painted in shades of gold, brown, sepia, red, and grey, the mural depicts people at a farm auction. With its theme related to daily life and local agriculture, painted in a realistic style, it is an excellent example of government sponsored Regionalism.

In June, 1941, Colorado Springs artist Kenneth Evett received a notice from the Section of Fine Arts inviting him to submit designs for the Pawnee City, Nebraska, mural on the basis of previously submitted designs and Section commissions. The letter cited the commission amount, \$750, and payment schedule; one-third after preliminary sketches were received and approved; one-third upon approval of a full-size cartoon; and the remainder when the completed mural was installed and photographed. The letter included building blueprints with dimensions of the mural space.

In the fall of 1941, Evett apparently visited Pawnee City when he and his family were enroute to Woodstock, New York. In October, 1941, he submitted preliminary sketches of an auction scene, "a characteristic affair in the middle west." In November the Section informed Evett that

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Marling, Karal Ann. Wall-to-Wall America. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. Record Group 121: Preliminary Inventory of the Records of the Public Building Service. Entry 133: Case Files Concerning Embellishments of Federal Buildings, 1934-1943. Box 61: Nebraska.

Park, Marlene and Gerald Markowitz. Democratic Vistas. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984).

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property Less than one acre.

UTM References

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
The property is described as a tract of land commencing at the northeast corner of Lot 12, Block 50, North Pawnee City Addition, thence south 86', thence west 40', thence north 4.42', thence west 15.50', thence south 23', thence west 43.50', thence north 104.58', thence east to point of beginning, Pawnee City, Pawnee County, Nebraska.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes that parcel of land which has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carol Ahlgren, Architectural Historian

organization Nebraska State Historical Society date August, 1991

street & number 1500 R Street telephone (402) 471-4773

city or town Lincoln state Nebraska zip code 68501

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the design had "great possibilities as an amusing decoration" and informed him to proceed with the color sketch. Within a month Evett submitted the color sketch which was also approved.

In January, 1942, Evett notified the Section that he was proceeding with the full-size cartoon but had not been paid. In March, he expressed his frustration to Rowan; although he had received the contract for the mural months ago and had fulfilled his obligations, he had received no money. Evett noted that the Section was "no doubt harassed by complexities due to the War" but said that he could not pay his rent. A few weeks later the Section approved Evett's full-size cartoon and apologized for the delays.

A month later in April, 1942, Evett finally received two-thirds of the contract amount and asked for approval to have the mural mailed to Pawnee City and installed by a local paper-hanger. Evett also asked if any new commissions were available, "I'd be grateful for one more" he wrote, "before the army gets me." The Section responded that staff and commissions had been reduced and that no new competitions would be announced. In June, 1942, Evett and his family moved back to Colorado from Woodstock, New York, and stopped in Pawnee City where Evett installed the mural. (The Pawnee Chief, June 10, 1942).

The Pawnee City commission was Evett's last work for the Section of Fine Arts. From 1939-1941 he had received commissions for post office murals in Horton and Caldwell, Kansas, and in Colorado. Evett received his B.A. from the University of Colorado and an M.A. from Colorado College. In the mid-1930's he studied under Boardman Robinson at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. From 1948-1979 he taught at Cornell University and in 1954 he returned to Nebraska when he won a national competition to provide murals for the rotunda of the state capitol. From the 1940's to the 1980's Evett's work was exhibited throughout the United States and is in the permanent collections of institutions such as the National Museum of American Art, Cornell University and the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center.

For additional information, refer to the Nebraska Post Offices Which Contain Section Artwork (1938-1942) multiple property form.

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The Pawnee City Chief: July 2, 1941; June, 10, 1942.

Pikes Peak Vision: The Broadmoor Art Academy, 1919-1945. Exhibit Catalog,
Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, 1989.

Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles.
(Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 1969).