

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

785

# 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 only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: United States Post Office and Court House

Other names/site number: Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

### 2. Location

Street & number: 201 North Vermilion Street

City or town: Danville State: IL County: Vermilion

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A  B  C  D

	<u>10/4/2016</u>
<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<u>Federal Preservation Officer, U.S. General Services Administration</u>	
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

In my opinion, the property <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
	<u>09-28-16</u>
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<u>Deputy SHPO, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency</u>	
<b>Title :</b>	<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>

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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:)

*Joe Elson K. Beall*  
Signature of the Keeper

*11-22-16*  
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>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT: Courthouse

GOVERNMENT: Post Office

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT: Offices

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS: Neo-Classical Revival

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: limestone, brick, granite,

### 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.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The United States Post Office and Court House is located in downtown Danville, Illinois, on Vermilion Street, historically one of the two main commercial streets. It is a three story Neo-Classical building constructed of brick, stone, and concrete. Significant stylistic elements include a symmetrical main façade with monumental columns flanking the main entries and pilasters separating window openings, smooth limestone-faced walls on three elevations, arched window openings with keystones, and a projecting cornice with dentils. The first floor lobby and second floor courtroom are significant interior spaces generously adorned with terrazzo, marble, hardwoods, and ornamental plaster. A lawn and minimal landscaping separate the building from the adjacent sidewalks and streets. A cast bronze replica of Daniel Chester French's armed sculpture, "The Minute Man," stands atop a granite base in front of the west facade of the building. The building retains a high level of integrity.



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## **Narrative Description**

The U.S. Post Office and Court House is located in the central business district of Danville on the east side of Vermilion Street between Madison Street on the north and Harrison Street on the south; an alley borders the property to the east. The street address is 201 N. Vermilion Street, and the building is oriented to Vermilion Street. The building's setback is the width of the sidewalk plus the front steps. The property slopes gently north to south, though the grade is barely discernable from street level. A memorial to veterans of the American Revolutionary War who are buried in Vermilion County stands on the front lawn, on the west side of the building. The bronze statue atop the memorial depicts a minuteman.

The U.S. Post Office and Court House was completed in 1911, and the only subsequent addition to the building is the 1991 sally port. The original building illustrates a Neo-Classical design. The primary façade is symmetrically composed. All façades have a granite base and either limestone or brick walls above. The primary, west, façade is composed of classical elements, including arched openings, columns, pilasters, pediments over entrances, and a classical cornice treatment. In addition to the exterior, there are a number of significant interior elements, particularly in the public lobby and in the courtroom (described in detail below).

The building has a three story central mass which is oriented along a north-south axis, flanked by three story pavilions and a central one story light court visible from the rear, east elevation. The building rests on a slightly raised basement level, and it has an irregular floor plan. The building has solid brick bearing walls and a foundation and floors of concrete. The mansard roof is framed with steel beams and trusses. Dormers on the western and southern portions of the roof provide attic venting. A single-story sally port replaced a U.S. Post Office loading dock on the northern end of the east elevation.

A set of construction drawings are extant and located in the building. Original drawings dating to 1909 were produced by the Office of Supervising Architect, the Treasury Department, and approved by Supervising Architect James Knox Taylor.

There have been a number of alterations at the U.S. Post Office and Court House, primarily on the interior. There were extensive interior alterations in 1939, although the post office lobby and the courtroom remained intact. In 1956, alterations included updating the electrical and mechanical systems, replacing the original tin roof with sheet metal, and replacing the roof-mounted flagpoles over the north and south entrances on the west elevation with a single ground-mounted flagpole at the northwest corner of the site.

In 1970, the courtroom's exterior north wall was altered. The three large, arched exterior windows were in-filled with limestone, to facilitate the reorientation of the courtroom inside. In addition, some windows on the east elevation were in-filled, while the original wood sash windows were replaced by aluminum sash in other locations. Finally, the original revolving doors in the west elevation's two entrances were replaced with pairs of aluminum doors.

After the U.S. Postal Service vacated the building in 1987, the U.S. General Services Administration undertook renovations that were completed in 1991. These renovations included replacement of some wood window sash with similar units, construction of a limestone-clad sally port on the east elevation, and interior alterations in the building's lobby, which originally

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serviced the post office's public functions, the post office workspace behind the lobby, and the corridors on the second and third floors.

In the lobby, glass double doors and a metal detector were added at the main entrance, and the locations of the former post office windows and lock-boxes were in-filled with wood paneling. The original woodwork, marble wainscot, and terrazzo flooring were retained. The former post office workspace was completely renovated for office space. The third floor corridor was narrowed to increase the amount of office space while retaining the original woodwork and marble wainscot. Aluminum-framed windows and glass doors were inserted on the second and third floor landings of the lobby stairwell.

## Exterior

The exterior walls on the north, south, and west elevations are faced with Bedford limestone above a granite base. An intermediate limestone cornice with large dentils divides the second and third floors and extends around all elevations. The cornice at the roofline is unadorned and topped with a low limestone solid parapet wall. First floor windows are arched openings with plain keystones, while the second and third floor openings are square or rectangular. The windows are generally four-over-four, double-hung wood sash, with fanlights in the first floor arches.

### West Elevation

The main, west, façade is composed of two slightly projecting end pavilions flanking a seven bay central section. The pavilions are identical in design and accented with limestone rusticated quoins with deep joints. Each pavilion has a centered entrance flanked by two story Doric columns. The entrances are approached by a flight of granite steps. A pair of steel lamp posts sits above the cheek walls at the landing. A limestone pediment with broad entablature adorned with a band of dentils and scrolled brackets rests above each pair of entrance doors. Above each pediment, an arched window with a scrolled keystone, topped by a garland-motif spandrel panel, fills the space beneath the pavilion's second floor window unit. The corners' quoining is repeated at the third floor level of the end pavilions. The pavilion's third floor rectangular window is flanked by slightly projecting limestone panels and topped by a low gabled parapet wall.

The central section of the main, west, façade is characterized by seven bays, each of which is flanked by two story Doric pilasters. The first, second, and third floor windows are aligned vertically within each bay. The first and second floor windows are united by rectangular spandrel panels. The third floor windows are recessed behind the intermediate cornice and flanked by one story Doric pilasters.

### South Elevation

The south elevation consists of five bays: an entrance bay at the west end and four window bays. The elevation's openings are vertically aligned for all three stories. Similar to the west elevation, the entrance is accessed by a flight of granite steps. Wall sconces rather than stanchions provide lighting for this entrance. The pair of entrance doors are capped by a pediment and arched window with a flat keystone. The pediment over the entrance is wood, however, and relatively unadorned. A plain spandrel panel separates the arched window over

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the entrance doors from the second floor window. Window detailing on the south elevation is the same as on the west elevation, although there are no pilasters between the windows at any level.

### North Elevation

The north elevation consists of five bays: three window bays in the central section and end bays slightly projecting, with the westernmost bay containing an entrance. The intermediate cornice that wraps around the building breaks at the central section. This section's first floor has three functioning windows while the same three locations on the second and third floors are two story courtroom windows that were in-filled with brick and limestone in 1970. Except for the courtroom windows' treatment, the detailing of this elevation is similar to the south elevation.

### East Elevation

The east elevation, which faces the alley, was the service side of the building. This elevation consists of three sections – a pair of three-story pavilions flanking a one story light court. The window pattern on the pavilions is similar to that of the other elevations, with vertically aligned window openings-- arched windows on the first story and rectangular windows on the second and third stories. However, many of the windows on this elevation have been in-filled with limestone. The intermediate cornice extends along the east elevation's pavilions but does not extend across the light court's east wall, since it is only one story tall.

The light court section of the elevation is marked by five segmental-arched windows with six-over-six wood sash and fixed sidelights and transoms. This central section is otherwise unadorned. The second and third floor interior-facing walls of the pavilions and the main mass in the light court are faced in buff-colored brick with a limestone cornice above the third floor, below the low parapet wall. As previously noted, a flat-roofed, limestone-clad sally port is attached to the east elevation's north pavilion.

## Interior

### First Floor

The first floor interior space is divided between the public lobby area, which runs the full length of the building along the western wall, and the former mail-processing area, which encompasses the eastern three-quarters of the building. The office space formerly occupied by the postmaster is located in the southeast corner of the building. The lobby flooring is cream-colored terrazzo with green marble bands at regular intervals. Green marble is also used for the baseboards, wainscot, arches over windows, and pilasters that separate the exterior wall's window bays, as well as the original postal window bays. The original postal windows have been in-filled with wood paneling, but the original wood trim and writing shelves are still in place.

Four entrances provide access to the lobby: two on the west elevation and one each on the north and south elevations. The two entrances on the west elevation have non-original metal and glass double doors, and the southernmost entry has a glass security vestibule. The north and south elevations' entries also have replacement doors, while retaining their wood surrounds and pediments. The lobby's plaster ceiling is paneled with a Greek key pattern around its perimeter. Replicated pendant light fixtures and wall sconces light the space.

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At the south end of the lobby, a short hallway extends east, and originally contained the money order counter and access to the postmaster's office. The stairway to the second floor is also located at the south end, and it is divided into two perpendicular half-flights separated by a landing. The stairs have white marble treads and wood risers, and the green marble wainscot extends up both sides of the stairway. The stairs wrap around the elevator shaft, which was originally a caged elevator but is now enclosed. The former postal workspace and offices have been extensively altered and reconfigured to accommodate new uses.

On the second floor, the courtroom is located on the north end of the building. The courtroom is oriented east-west, with the bench on the west side and visitor seating on the east. Originally, the bench was located on the east side, where the wall is adorned with a pair of pilasters flanking a panel for the seal of the court (also moved to the west side with the bench). Otherwise, the plaster walls are minimally adorned. A broad, denticulated cornice separates the walls from the coffered, plaster ceiling. Modern fluorescent lighting has been placed in many of the ceiling coffers. There are three sets of double doors along the south walls, consisting of sound-proofing doors with brass kick and push plates on the court side and solid wood doors on the corridor side. The doorways have four-light transoms and stepped wood surrounds. The doorways to the judge's chambers and jury room have solid wood paneled doors with stepped wood surrounds.

The second and third floor corridors are similar in layout and finishes. The corridors are U-shaped, wrapping around the east elevation light court. The floor is finished with buff-colored terrazzo with white marble bands at regular intervals. The base trim and wainscot are green marble. The doorways have stepped wood surrounds and solid wood paneled doors with patterned glazing, and some retain the transom windows. Windows facing the light court are arched lunette on the second floor and rectangular on the third. The walls and ceilings consist of smooth plaster. As noted above, the third floor corridor was narrowed to provide additional office space, though the wainscot and woodwork were retained. On the south end of both corridors, a glass and aluminum partition separates the corridors from the stairway landings. Office spaces on both floors have been altered over the years to accommodate evolving uses. The basement is partially finished, and contains a boiler room, a break room, and storage spaces.

## **Integrity**

Since its construction in 1911, the U.S. Post Office and Court House in Danville, Illinois, has undergone a series of modest alterations intended to maintain its utility as federal building. The U.S. Post Office and Court House's setting in downtown Danville still contains a mixture of commercial, civic, and residential buildings reflecting the setting present at the time of its construction. The exterior of the building retains a high level of integrity. Exterior alterations are largely confined the infill of the window openings on the north (side) and east (rear) elevations and the addition of a small sally port on the east elevation. The interior has undergone more alterations than the exterior. However, the most significant interior spaces, the main lobby and courtroom, still convey a sense of the original civic spaces. Although the postal windows in the main lobby were infilled with wood in 1991, following the departure of the post office, the lobby retains nearly all of its original high quality finishes and features, including terrazzo floors, marble wainscot and decorative plasterwork and woodwork. Although the courtroom was reoriented in 1970, it retains its original coffered ceiling, decorative plasterwork and woodwork.

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Thus, despite alterations over time, the building is easily able to reflect those qualities that make it a significant local example of the Second Renaissance Revival style.

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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  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1911  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1911  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Taylor, James Knox, Supervising Architect of the Treasury  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The United States Post Office and Court House, in Danville, Illinois, is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The building meets Criterion C as a distinctive example of the Second Renaissance Revival style of architecture. The Period of Significance is 1911, representing the original construction date. The building retains all aspects of integrity, and is significant at the local level with a period of significance of 1911. It was evaluated within the context of U.S. post offices, courthouses and federal buildings designed and constructed by the Treasury Department, 1864-1939.

Within Danville, numerous commercial and public buildings constructed during 1900 to 1930 utilized classically inspired designs. The post office and courthouse building, however, is one of the fullest expressions of that architectural trend. It is a formal, symmetrical composition displaying many typical Renaissance Revival elements, including: round-arched window openings with keystones, as well as segmental- and flat-arched openings; quoins at the corners; two-story columns and pilasters flanking entries and window bays; pediments over entries; a prominent, denticulated cornice. These elements are fully evident in the three street-front façades and are carried over to a lesser extent to the rear façade. In addition, public interior spaces – the first floor lobby and the courtrooms – were constructed with high-quality craftsmanship and materials, including terrazzo and marble floors, coffered plaster ceilings with decorative elements, and extensive woodwork.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### **Historic Context: Construction of Federal Buildings, 1864-1939**

The late-nineteenth century was a time of growth for the federal government, as institutions were established or expanded to administer the growing national economy. The number of federal civilian employees grew steadily from approximately 36,700 in 1861 to roughly 157,400 in 1891. To house the growing federal workforce, the United States Treasury Department, which was responsible for federal buildings, constructed numerous mints, post offices, and courthouses in cities and towns around the country during the second half of the nineteenth century. The Office of Supervising Architect, established within the Treasury Department in 1864, oversaw design and construction of the federal civilian facilities.

Federal buildings were the public façade of the federal government. Because the buildings embodied the federal presence at the local level, Supervising Architects consistently sought to convey dignity and refinement in their designs through the proportions, siting, materials, and overall solidity of the buildings. The design of Federal buildings tended to follow the favorite style of the Supervising Architect, however, and consistency in quality of design and stylistic

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direction was plagued by a high turnover rate in leadership, with six different Supervising Architects serving from 1884 to 1896.<sup>1</sup>

From 1895 through World War I, the federal government grew at an even faster pace than previously, as Progressive Era reformers advocated government intervention to address problems that emerged as American society transformed from primarily rural and agrarian to urban and industrial. As the role of the federal government increased, so too did the number of buildings to house it. In 1899, the Supervising Architect's Office was responsible for 399 buildings, and by 1912, the number had grown to 1,126.<sup>2</sup> The federal building campaign followed the successful construction and exhibition of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1892-93. Featuring building designs by some of the most noted architects of the time, the unifying style of the Exposition was the Beaux Arts, a style that returned to classical motifs and emphasized symmetrical plans, monumentality, and highly ornamented façades. The architecture of the Exposition was so well received by the public that it would popularize Neo-Classical designs in public buildings for decades to follow.

By the turn of the twentieth century, Beaux Arts Neo-Classical and, to a lesser extent, revival styles executed in formal, symmetrical Neo-Classical forms, dominated public building design. James Knox Taylor, who served as Supervising Architect from 1897 to 1912 and oversaw the design and construction of many federal buildings, was an advocate for Beaux Arts and Neo-Classical-influenced designs. Through classical architecture, Taylor sought to provide the symbolic appearance of federal authority at the local level, as well as architectural sophistication in local communities. In 1901, Taylor declared that classical style architecture would be the standard for federal buildings. In some cases, the classically designed federal courthouses and post offices also inspired the design of local government buildings. For example, two years after the 1911 completion of the post office and courthouse in Danville, the Vermilion County Courthouse was remodeled with a Beaux Arts design and limestone and granite exterior similar to the federal building.

The first omnibus public buildings law, passed in 1902, increased the limit of cost on over 60 planned buildings, saved authorization time in Congress, and allowed construction of vastly more federal buildings.<sup>3</sup> The United States Post Office and Court House, Danville, authorized in 1905 and constructed during 1909 through 1911, is representative of this federal building boom. The Beaux Arts design of the Danville building illustrates Taylor's commitment that federal architecture should be in the classical styles.

In 1912, Taylor resigned, signaling the end of the emphasis on individual plan and design and high-quality materials and construction used for federal architecture. In 1913-1914, however, Supervising Architect Oscar Wenderoth continued to design Federal buildings in the individual manner of his predecessor, but legislative action and policies were proceeding that would end this era.<sup>4</sup> The Public Buildings Act of 1913 directed the Treasury Department to economize costs and led to the standardization of plans, specifications, and materials for different classes

<sup>1</sup> Lois Craig, ed., and the staff of the Federal Architecture Project. *The Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics, and Symbols in United States Government Building* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1978), 195.

<sup>2</sup> Craig, *The Federal Presence*, 213.

<sup>3</sup> Emily Harris, "History of Federal Policy Concerning Post Office Construction, 1900-1940" (Washington, DC: U.S. Postal Service, 1982), 4.

<sup>4</sup> Harris, *History of Post Office Construction*, 7.

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of Federal buildings. After 1916, standardized plans were commonly used under the direction of Acting Supervising Architect James Wetmore, and they typically retained the basic Beaux Arts style, massing, and plan, but with fewer architectural details on the smaller buildings.<sup>5</sup>

The trend of standardized designs continued during the 1920s and 1930s. With the onset of the Great Depression, the Public Works Administration (PWA) was established in 1933 to oversee planning and construction of public works projects.<sup>6</sup> Under the PWA, government architecture was designed in a simplified classical revival style, which has been termed “Starved Classicism” or “PWA Moderne,” and which often featured murals or sculptures.<sup>7</sup> The Reorganization Act of 1939 created the Public Buildings Administration within the Federal Works Agency (FWA), removing control of federal architecture from the Treasury Department and abolishing the title Supervising Architect. The Public Buildings Act of 1949 established the new General Services Administration, which included the Office of the Supervising Architect.

Within the context of the construction of federal buildings, the 1909 Beaux Arts design of the Danville building represents an example of Supervising Architect James Knox Taylor’s commitment that federal architecture be in the classical styles.

### **Development of the United States Post Office and Court House, Danville**

Dan Beckwith platted Danville in 1827 on the Vermilion River at the confluence of the North Branch and the Salt Branch near Lake Vermilion. Despite Danville’s river connections and the expansion of agriculture in Vermilion County, the town’s growth was slow, and its population stood at 503 in 1840 and 736 in 1850. Two main factors would propel Danville’s growth after 1860: coal and railroads.

The Bloomington Moraine, which runs along the north edge of Danville, contained rich deposits of coal, covering 300 square miles by one estimate. The first mine in the Danville area was established in 1866. The industry expanded rapidly, particularly after railroad connections were made, and by the early 1880s, roughly 1,000 people worked for the mining companies in the Danville area. Attracted by the potential freight provided by the coal mines, the Chicago and Eastern Illinois (C&EI) railroad completed a line to Danville in 1870 and became a major coal carrier over the next decade. Other railroads followed with connections to Danville, including the Wabash and the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis (Big Four). Danville’s population grew steadily, reaching 7,733 by 1880.<sup>8</sup>

The coal mining and railroad companies expanded their facilities in the Danville area, and the city grew accordingly. Mining employed 2,700 workers in Danville in 1900 and, by the early 1920s, about 4,000 workers. By the early twentieth century, Danville was regional railroad hub, as the C&EI maintained a large shops complex, and the Wabash and the Big Four established division offices. Railroad employment reached 1,800 in 1900 and about 4,800 in the mid-1920s.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>6</sup> Boland, Beth M. *National Register Bulletin 13: How to Apply the National Register Criteria to Post Offices* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1994), 3.

<sup>7</sup> Harris, *History of Post Office Construction*, 20, 25.

<sup>8</sup> Robert E. Coleberd, Jr., “A Local Economy in Transition: The Rise of Diversified Manufacturing in Danville, Illinois” (masters thesis, University of Illinois, 1960), 30-45.

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Other industries were established to take advantage of the railroad connections, including brick making, manufacturing, and wholesale jobbing. Meanwhile, Danville's population continued expanding steadily, from 11,491 in 1890 to 27,871 in 1910, then to 36,765 in 1930.<sup>9</sup>

Commerce in Danville centered on the intersection of Main and Vermilion Streets, and during the late-nineteenth century, one- and two-story commercial buildings radiated north on Vermilion and east and west on Main. Industrial operations focused on the railroad tracks to the east. As the city's economy boomed during the early twentieth century, large new commercial buildings and hotels, as well as prominent public buildings were constructed within the main commercial district. A number of commercial buildings three stories and higher were built in Danville during the early decades of the twentieth century, the most notable building the 12-story First National Bank Building (1918), the 5 story Adams Building (1095), and the 9-story Hotel Wolford (1926). Public buildings included the Danville Public Library (1904), the U.S. Post Office and Court House (1911), and the rebuilt Vermilion County Courthouse (1913). Those buildings generally were influenced stylistically by the classical revival (see discussion below, Architectural Significance).<sup>10</sup>

The new public buildings represented not only Danville's economic growth, but also its long-standing role as a government center. City and county offices as well as a post office were housed in Danville throughout the nineteenth century. Danville's first postmaster was Amos Williams, appointed in 1827, and the post office was located in his house. The location of the post office, however, tended to move whenever a new postmaster was appointed. In 1890, a second federal institution was established in Danville, when Congress directed the Southern District Court to hold sessions in Danville, though the seat remained in Springfield. A permanent location for the post office was established in 1893 when a substantial new building was built on Vermilion Street across from the current federal building site. In addition, the post office building in Danville provided accommodations for the federal court when in session. A third, unrelated facility, the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, Danville Branch was established in 1898.<sup>11</sup>

Reflecting the industrial, commercial, and population growth of Illinois, as well as the influence of Joseph G. Cannon, a third federal courts district was added to the state. Since 1855, Illinois had been divided into two districts, Northern and Southern. Cannon, who was from Danville, served in the United States House of Representatives for 47 years and as Speaker of the House from 1903 to 1910. In 1905, Cannon introduced a bill to carve out a third district court with its seat in Danville. Federal funding of \$500,000 was appropriated in 1908 for construction of a new combined post office and courthouse building.<sup>12</sup>

The Office of Supervising Architect of the Treasury completed the design and Supervising Architect James Knox Taylor signed the construction drawings in 1909. Construction of the

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 46-60.

<sup>10</sup>The Sanborn Map Company, "Fire Insurance Maps for Danville, Illinois" (Pelham, NY: The Sanborn Map Company, 1900)-- Microfilm copy available at the Danville (IL) Public Library; *ibid.*, 1914; Karen Lang Kummer, "Adams Building," National Register of Historic Places nomination (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> Hasbrouck Peterson Associates, "Historic Structures Report, U.S. Postal Service Building" (Washington, DC: U.S. General Services Administration, 1988).

<sup>12</sup> Kevin Cullen, "Fed Building's Shine Returns," *Danville Commercial-News*, [n.d], 1991; Mark Spencer, "Little-Known Federal Court Has Long History in Danville," *Danville (IL) Commercial-News*, November 11, 1970.

Vermilion, IL

United States Post Office and Court House

Name of Property

County and State

building began in September 1909 and the building was completed two years later. Magnus, Yeager and Son were the building contractors. A dedication ceremony was held on September 14, 1911 to mark the opening of the post office and courthouse and to unveil a portrait of Joe Cannon, which currently hangs in the lobby near the elevator.<sup>13</sup>

As was typical of federal buildings designed by Taylor, the United States Post Office and Court House, Danville, utilized high-quality exterior materials, including granite at the basement level and limestone on the first through third floors. The first floor was dedicated to the post office function, with a richly ornamented lobby running the length of the building, a series of service windows, and a back area for mail sorting. Upstairs, the courtroom, with its raised ceiling, occupied two floors, and there were adjacent offices on the second and third floors.

A few years after the dedication of the post office and courthouse in Danville, the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution commissioned a memorial for the building grounds dedicated to Revolutionary War soldiers buried in Vermilion County. In 1915, a replica of Daniel French's "The Minute Man" sculpture was installed at the memorial located between the main west entries. Although located on the grounds of the federal building, the memorial is owned by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

### **Architectural Significance**

The United States Post Office and Court House, Danville is a fine example of a public building in Danville that represents the distinctive characteristics of the Second Renaissance Revival. At the time it was built, it was one of the fullest expressions of classically inspired architecture in Danville, and it anchored the north end of the city's central business district with an impressive building utilizing a sophisticated design and high-quality materials.

Growing out of the revival styles of the late-nineteenth century, classically inspired architecture was the preferred style for federal buildings, and public buildings generally, from the 1900s through the 1920s. Benefiting from a federal building boom, Renaissance Revival and Neo-Classical became the standard for post offices, courthouses, and federal office buildings.

The architecture of federal buildings during the late-nineteenth century, mirroring commercial architecture, represented a break from the formal classicism that dominated the early century. Exuberant designs utilizing motifs from a variety of historic periods resulted in the "revival" styles – Romanesque, Italian Renaissance, English Renaissance (particularly Georgian), and French Second Empire. By the 1890s, Richardsonian Romanesque thoroughly dominated public buildings. By the turn of the twentieth century, however, tastes were changing. In the wake of the 1892 Chicago Exposition and in no small measure due to Progressive Era preferences for orderliness, architectural styles shifted to more formal symmetrical compositions. By the early twentieth century, Neo-Classical, Beaux Arts, and the Second Renaissance Revival styles all sought to discipline the eclecticism and perceived excesses of High Victorian styles. In the case of the Second Renaissance Revival, many of the motifs of the earlier revival were carried over,

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<sup>13</sup> "Handsome New Post Office Almost Finished," *Danville(IL) Commercial-News*, June 24, 1911; "Unveil Portraits of Mr. Cannon and Judge Wright; Many Present," *Danville (IL) Commercial News*, September 14, 1911.



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including arched openings, varied wall materials, and richly adorned cornices, paneling, and sculptural elements.<sup>14</sup>

As the popularity of the Classical Revival in architecture peaked during 1900 to 1920, Danville was in the midst of a building boom. From the late 1890s through early 1920s, Danville grew fast: its population, manufacturing, wholesaling, and government operations all expanded. Reflecting that growth, many new buildings, both public and private, were constructed in the downtown area. Judging by the designs of those buildings, it is clear that Danville had embraced the Classical Revival in architecture. A number of those buildings are extant and retain good historic integrity, as depicted in Table 1.<sup>15</sup>

**Table 1. Classical Revival Buildings in Danville**

Name	Address	Year Built	Type
Temple Building	106 N. Vermilion Street	1901	Commercial
Building	304-310 E. Main Street	1902	Commercial
Danville Public Library	303 N. Vermilion Street	1904	Public
Adams Building	139-141 N. Vermilion Street	1905 and 1928	Commercial
Soldier's Home Library	2000 E. Main Street	1907	Public
Baum Building	41-43 N. Vermilion Street	1907	Commercial
US Post Office and Court House	201 N. Vermilion Street	1911	Public
Building	17 E. Main Street	1912	Commercial
Vermilion County Courthouse	Public Square	1876, 1913	Public
First National Bank Building	2-4 N. Vermilion Street	1918	Commercial
Illinois National Guard Armory	135 North Hazel Street	1923	Public
Commercial-News Building	17 W. North Street	1926	Commercial
Hotel Wolford	9 E. Harrison Street	1926	Hotel

The Danville federal building is a well-designed example of the Second Renaissance Revival architectural style. The U-shaped floor plan provides an overall symmetry to the building, and the primary façade is symmetrically composed. The primary façade is dominated by a row of round-arched window openings that are set between projecting entry pavilions and that have the appearance of an arcade. The three street-front façades include a blend of classical design elements: a monumental scale for the ornamentation, granite and limestone wall materials, columns and pilasters, a pronounced cornice with dentils, pediments over entries, and ornamental spandrel panels.

When it was constructed, the post office and courthouse represented one of the fullest expressions of classical revival architecture in Danville. As listed in Table 1, a number of Neo-Classical commercial buildings and the Beaux Arts public library were built before the new federal building was completed in 1911. The commercial buildings, however, were generally standard commercial blocks ranging from two to six stories in height with classically inspired ornamentation applied to the street front façades. The library, while a fine example of Beaux

<sup>14</sup> See Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 1969).

<sup>15</sup> The table and following analysis were developed based on a reconnaissance survey of downtown Danville and information contained in: Lang 2000.

Vermilion, IL

United States Post Office and Court House

Name of Property

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Arts design, is a rather modest, one-story building that lacks the monumentality typical of Classical Revival public buildings. The post office and courthouse building, however, carries its design through all façades and in the overall layout of the building. When the post office and courthouse was constructed in 1911, it placed a large, well-designed building at the north end of the Vermilion Street commercial strip

### **Summary of Significance**

The United States Post Office and Court House, Danville is a well-designed example of the Second Renaissance Revival style, and it was executed in high quality materials, as was the policy of Supervising Architect James Knox Taylor. The building retains all aspects of integrity that convey the characteristics of the Second Renaissance Revival style and therefore, reflects the prevailing classical revival architectural styles utilized during the early-twentieth century building boom in Danville. For these reasons, it meets National Register Criterion C, at the local level of significance, with a period of significance of 1911. It was evaluated within the context of U.S. post offices, courthouses and federal buildings designed and constructed by the Treasury Department, 1864-1939.

United States Post Office and Court House

Name of Property

County and State

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### **Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Craig, Lois, ed., and the staff of the Federal Architecture Project. The Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics, and Symbols in United States Government Building. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1978.

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United States Department of the Treasury, Office of the Supervising Architect. "U.S. Courthouse & P.O., Danville, Ill." Architectural Plans and Specifications on file at the United States Courthouse, Danville, Illinois. c.1911.

Vermilion, IL

United States Post Office and Court House

Name of Property

County and State

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The MIT Press, 1969.

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1930.

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: U.S. General Services Administration

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** Less than one acre

Vermilion, IL

United States Post Office and Court House  
Name of Property

County and State

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: 16 | Easting: 446365 | Northing: 4442225 |
| 2. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 3. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 4. Zone:    | Easting :       | Northing:         |

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

The United States Post Office and Courthouse, Danville is located in Lots 2, 7, and 10, comprising the entire west half of Block 5 North, Range 1 East in Hezekiah Cunningham's Addition to Danville.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nomination consists of the property historically associated with 201 North Vermilion Street, Danville, Illinois.

Vermilion, IL

United States Post Office and Court House  
Name of Property

County and State

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Andrew J. Schmidt  
organization: Jones & Stokes Associates  
street & number: 811 W. 7<sup>th</sup> St., Ste. 800  
city or town: Los Angeles state: CA zip code: 90017  
e-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
telephone: 213-627-5376  
date: October 6, 2006, Rev. August 25, 2009; Revised by Elizabeth Hannold, U.S. General Services Administration, Center for Historic Buildings, August 2016

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### 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.)



Vermilion, IL

United States Post Office and Court House

Name of Property

County and State

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: United States Post Office and Court House

City or Vicinity: Danville

County: Vermilion County State: Illinois

Photographer: Andrew Schmidt; ICF Jones & Stokes

Date Photographed: July 25, 2006

Location of Negatives: General Service Administration, Office of Chief Architect

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

1. Exterior, West elevation, view northeast.
2. Exterior, Statue on west side, view east.
3. Exterior, West elevations, view east.
4. Exterior, South elevation, view north.
5. Exterior, West and north elevations, view southeast.
6. Exterior, West elevation, north entrance pavilion, view east.
7. Exterior, North elevation, view south.
8. Exterior, North and east elevations, view southwest.
9. Exterior, East elevation, view northwest.
10. Interior, Main lobby and north entrance, view north.
11. Interior, Main lobby, west wall, view south.
12. Interior, Main lobby, east wall with former postal windows, view north.
13. Interior, Public stairway to second floor.
14. Interior, South end of main lobby with portrait.
15. Interior, Corridor on second floor.
16. Interior, Corridor on second floor with lunette windows onto light court.
17. Interior, Courtroom, rear wall and clock.
18. Interior, Courtroom, judge's bench and ceiling.

\*Note – GSA has verified that the building as shown in these views has not changed since the date of photography.

**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.

Vermilion, IL

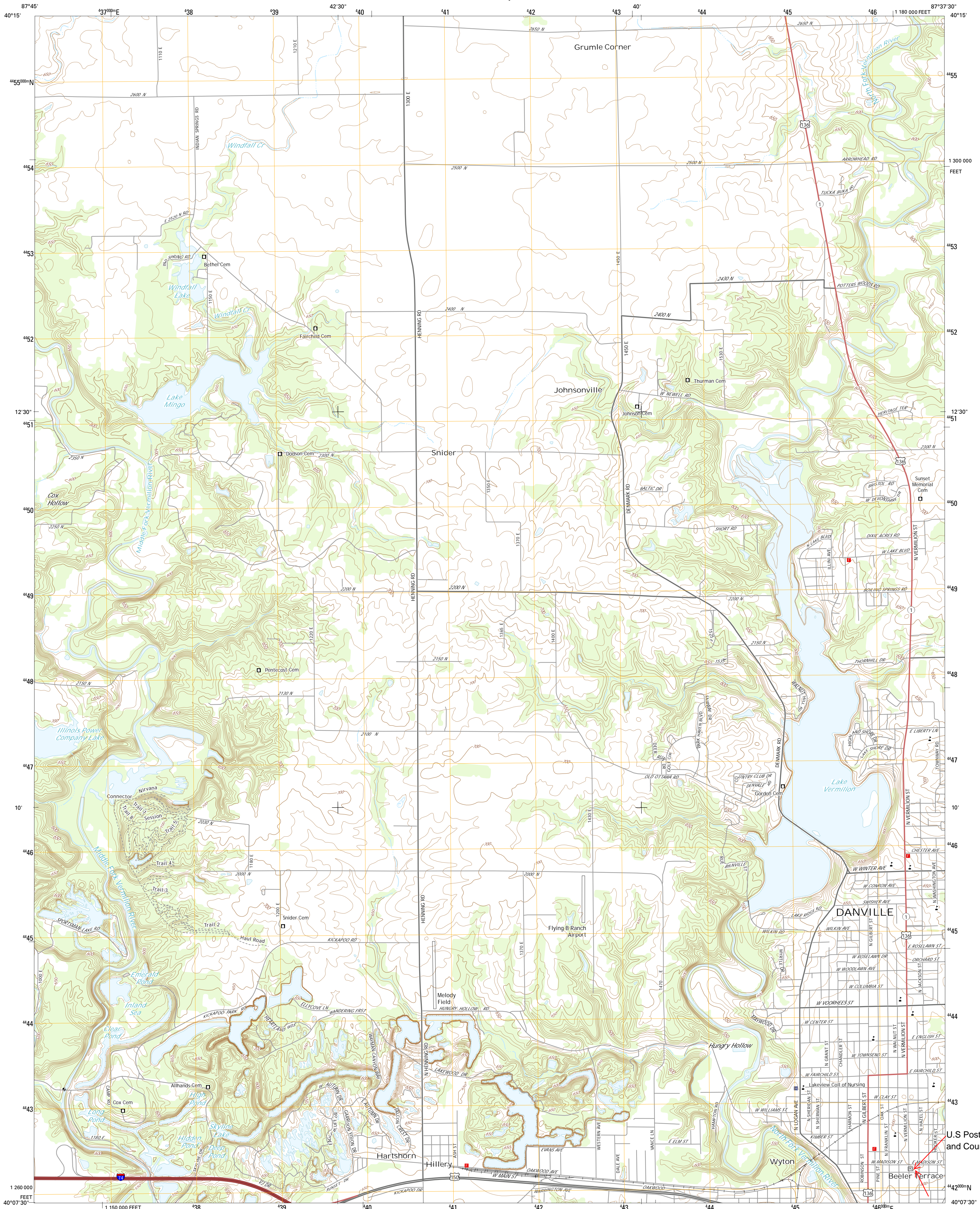
United States Post Office and Court House  
Name of Property

County and State

### Location Map





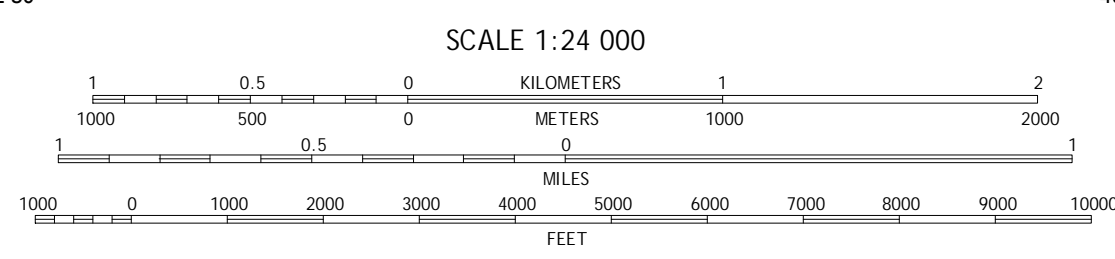
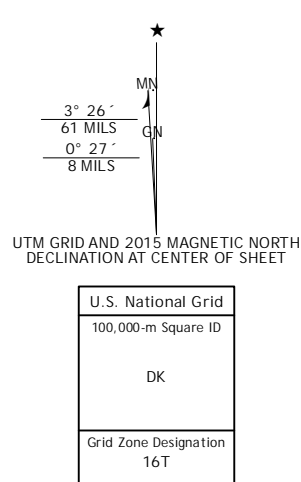


U.S. Post Office  
and Court House

Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)  
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84) Projection and  
1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 16T  
10 000-foot ticks: Illinois Coordinate System of 1983 (east zone)

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

Imagery.....NAIP, September 2014  
Roads.....HERE, ©2013 - 2014  
Names.....GNIS, 2015  
Hydrography.....National Hydrography Dataset, 2014  
Contours.....National Elevation Dataset, 2012  
Boundaries.....Multiple sources: see metadata file 1972 - 2015



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1988  
This map was produced to conform with the  
National Geospatial Program US Topo Product Standard, 2011.  
A metadata file associated with this product is draft version 0.6.18



**ROAD CLASSIFICATION**

Expressway	Local Connector
Secondary Hwy	Local Road
Ramp	4WD
Interstate Route	US Route
	State Route

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	

ADJOINING QUADRANGLES

- 1 Potomac
- 2 Henning
- 3 Blomack
- 4 Collison
- 5 Danville NE
- 6 Oakwood
- 7 Danville SW
- 8 Danville SE

DANVILLE NW, IL  
2015







DANVILLE  
FEDERAL BUILDING & U.S. COURTHOUSE

FEDERAL BUILDING & U.S. COURTHOUSE  
201 N. HENNING

FEDERAL MAIL DELIVERY SERVICE









VERMILION MANOR NURSING HOME









FEDERAL BUILDING &  
US COURTHOUSE  
JULIA K. HERRMANN































ON JUNE 12, 1911, THIS BUILDING  
WAS DEDICATED AS THE  
NEW COURTS HOUSE FOR THE  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA.

REMEMBER  
HARRIS & BROWN  
ARCHITECTS  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.  
REMEMBER  
HARRIS & BROWN  
ARCHITECTS  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.













UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY United States Post Office and Court House  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ILLINOIS, Vermilion

DATE RECEIVED: 10/07/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/22/16  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000785

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 11-22-16 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.





October 4, 2016

Mr. Paul Loether  
Chief, NRHP & NHL Program  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye Street, NW (2280), 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Loether: *Paul*

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is pleased to nominate the United States Post Office and Court House (current name: Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse) located at 201 North Vermilion Street, Danville, IL, for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination is hereby submitted on disk in accordance with the May 6, 2013 guidance and includes the following:

- Signed original first page of the National Register of Historic Places nomination form;
- Disk 1 - The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the United States Post Office and Court House, located in Danville, IL, to the National Register of Historic Place; and,
- Disk 2 – The enclosed disk contains the .tif image files for the above referenced nomination.

In accordance with 36 CFR Part 60.9(c), the appropriate local elected officials were notified of GSA's intent to nominate the above referenced property to the National Register of Historic Places by letters dated August 12, 2016. No response comments were received.

If for any reason any nomination package that GSA submits needs to be returned, 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 have any questions or concerns regarding this nomination package, please contact Elizabeth Hannold at (202) 501-2863 or elizabeth.hannold@gsa.gov.

Sincerely,

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

Enclosures

cc: Heidi Brown-McCreery, State Historic Preservation Officer  
Regina Nally, Regional Historic Preservation Officer

August 11, 2016

Heidi Brown-McCreery  
Director, State Historic Preservation Officer  
Illinois Historic Preservation Agency  
313 South Sixth Street  
Springfield, Illinois 62701

Dear Ms. Brown-McCreery:

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is pleased to submit for your review the enclosed National Register of Historic Places registration package for the United States Post Office and Court House (current name: Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse) located at 201 North Vermilion Street, Danville, Illinois.

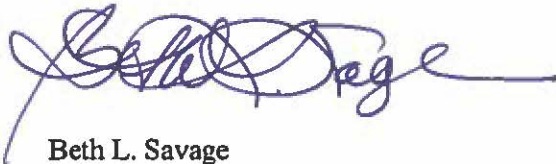
The following documents are enclosed for your review:

- Original archival National Register of Historic Places signature page;
- Print copy of the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form;
- Black and white photographic prints; and
- Electronic copy of the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form and Tiff images.

The print and electronic copies of the nomination and photographic prints are to be retained for your records. We ask that you sign the original archival National Register of Historic Places Registration Form signature page as indicated on the commenting official line and return to us. Please note, when the signed original nomination page is returned, return via UPS (we have provided a return UPS slip for this purpose) as packages returned via regular mail to our offices are irradiated and the materials severely damaged.

We are concurrently forwarding nomination packages to the Mayor of the City of Danville, the Vermilion County Board and the staff of the Danville CLG Program for their review and comment, pursuant to 36 CFR Part 60.9(c). We look forward to the nomination of this historic property to the National Register. Should you need further information regarding the nomination package, please contact Ms. Hannold at (202) 501-2863 or [elizabeth.hannold@gsa.gov](mailto:elizabeth.hannold@gsa.gov).

Sincerely,



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

Enclosure

cc: Regina Nally, Regional Historic Preservation Officer