

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: ~~Government~~ Office

Government: Courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement: Moderne

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone: limestone

walls Stone: limestone

roof Other: tar and gravel

other Metal: bronze

Metal: copper

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Wichita United States Post Office and Federal Building (c. 1930-1932) is located at 401 N. Market in Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas (pop. 279,835). The three and four story, flat roofed, Bedford limestone building is done in the Modern style. The building has a southern facade orientation, with prominent east and west elevations. The building measures approximately one hundred and seventy feet from east to west and two hundred feet from north to south. Large, blocky towers mark each corner. Incised decoration marks the friezes above the windows and on the tower entablatures. Rusticated, smooth faced blocks comprise the first floor, the rest of the stone including that used on the towers is smooth faced and flush. Multipaned metal windows comprise the building's fenestration. Brass double doors with transoms pierce the main entry towers on the south, east, and west elevations. The Wichita federal building is an example of the larger class A buildings constructed by the Treasury Department in larger metropolitan areas during the 1930s. The building cost \$1.2 million to construct. The first floor was devoted to post office facilities, with a lobby extending between the east and west entrances and the post office proper at the north end of the building. The second floor contained Federal District Court rooms, with offices for the judges, juries, clerks and marshalls. The third floor was occupied by the Internal Revenue Department, and the fourth floor by the United States Circuit Court of Appeals. The weather bureau and other agencies of government were also housed on the top floor. Today the building houses the United States District Judges, the Office of District Clerk, the office of a United States Representative, the Federal Emigration Office, the Clerk of Bankruptcy, the Federal Probation Officer, the United States District Trustees, the United States District Attorney, and the United States District Marshall. The United States Postal Service no longer owns the building, it is owned by the General Services Administration.

The murals are located in the first floor lobby of the federal building, in the area that originally housed the United States Postal Service. The walls, columns, and floors are sheathed with different marbles. Brass baseboard mouldings accentuate the marble. Metal vestibules project into the lobby on the south and east walls but do not obstruct the murals. Non-original fluorescent lights hang from the coffered ceilings.

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"Pioneers in Kansas" and "Kansas Farming" were placed at the east and west ends of the lobby respectively. The murals measured 10'6" by 4'7" each and were attached to the marble walls with white lead paste. "Pioneers in Kansas" was installed on April 24, 1936 and "Kansas Farming" was installed on May 25, 1936. In 1973 the condition of the murals was evaluated, "Pioneers in Kansas" was judged in good condition and remains as such, "Kansas Farming" was judged to have a slight defect and likely has not been repaired.

"Pioneers in Kansas" is an oil on canvas mural that is a collage of images associated with western settlement. A stagecoach loaded with mail and passengers marks the center of the canvas, the other images radiate around it. A Pony Express rider and an American Indian shoot at one another on the left side of the canvas. A vulture flies above the rider, symbolizing imminent danger and death. In the center foreground of the canvas a hardened, buckskinned and coon capped pioneer loads his shotgun as he crouches down behind a rock outcropping. A well dressed pioneer couple stand on the right side of the canvas, the woman reads a letter. A black steam engine emerges behind the couple, symbolizing continued western expansion. The collage is composed of five major images that are woven together into the same rugged landscape of the high plains. Lockwood employs a primary palette of blue, brown, and orange for the mural.

"Kansas Farming" is an oil on canvas mural that depicts various aspects of rural life and farm production, it is arranged in three interrelational units. In much the same way that Lockwood achieved a collage of images associated with western settlement in one landscape, so too has Haines achieved a collage of sorts, integrating various aspects of agriculture into one landscape. Rolling fertile hills ripe with the bounty of the fall harvest comprise Haines' idealized rural landscape. A tall corn plant and a tall sunflower plant frame the center panel of the canvas. The merging of traditional and modern rural lifestyles is represented in this panel. A farmer on horseback visits with his neighbors in the center of the canvas, the neighbor leans on a fence post digger while his wife cradles freshly picked tomatoes in her apron. The three form a triangular association, symbolizing a traditional way of life on the farm that is slowly changing, as the events around them indicate. In the foreground, a farmer prepares to place a fence post in the ground, symbolizing the growing separation between the farm and the city. He looks to the sky as do the young boy and girl near him. The girls hold mail in both hands as the boy waves to an unseen mail plane. A mail

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box stands in front of the children. The farmer and the children look up to the sky in the same way that they look toward the future and the impact that technology and transportation will have on their lives. The two outer panels represent the relationship between farm production and the shipping of those products to consumers. On the right side of the canvas a farmer feeds hogs corn. A cow and chickens feed behind him. A white barn and silo stand in the background. The farmer looks toward the produce packers on the left side of the canvas. These workers package and load the produce onto rail cars that transport the food to the city. One worker looks toward the farmer across the canvas, mirroring him in appearance and stance. The workers are inside but the transition between outside and inside is subtle. Rows of boxes stand outside the packing building ready for transport, they merge with the freshly tilled field in the center of the canvas. A small town with a railroad depot and grain elevator stand beyond the boxes. Oil derricks meet the horizon beyond the town. Haines employs a primary palette of green, gold, and rust for the mural.

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Art
 Politics/Government
 Social History

Period of Significance

1936
 1936
 1936

Significant Dates

1936
 1936
 1936

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Haines, Richard: Artist

Lockwood Ward: Artist

Murch Bros.: Contractors, Wetmore, James: Supervising Architect

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

The Wichita United States Post Office and Federal Building (c. 1930-1932) is being nominated to the National Register as part of the Kansas Post Office Artwork (1936-1942) Thematic Resources nomination at the local and state levels of significance under criteria A and C for its historical association with the Treasury Department's Section program and for the artistic significance of the murals that it contains. The murals, "Pioneers in Kansas" and "Kansas Farming", were painted by Taos, New Mexico artist J. Ward Lockwood (1894-1963) and Marion, Iowa artist (Charles) Richard Haines (1906-?) respectively in 1935 and 1936.

"Pioneers in Kansas" is an oil on canvas mural that is a collage of images associated with western settlement. A stagecoach loaded with mail and passengers marks the center of the canvas, the other images radiate around it. A Pony Express rider and an American Indian shoot at one another on the left side of the canvas. A vulture flies above the rider, symbolizing imminent danger and death. In the center foreground of the canvas a hardened, buckskinned and coon capped pioneer loads his shotgun as he crouches down behind a rock outcropping. A well dressed pioneer couple stand on the right side of the canvas, the woman reads a letter. A black steam engine emerges behind the couple, symbolizing continued western expansion. The collage is composed of five major images that are woven together into the same rugged landscape of the high plains. Lockwood employs a primary palette of blue, brown, and orange for the mural. Lockwood captures the dramatic sense of motion toward settlement in his brush strokes, the varying intensity of colors and light, and the radial composition of the mural. "Pioneers in Kansas" is an example of the historically based, illustrative realism that was funded under the Section program.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Community Services Collaborative. Historic Structures Report - United States Courthouse Building, Wichita, Kansas. (Boulder, CO., 1982).

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

General Services Administration. Treasury Department Section Records-Kansas Post Offices. Wichita, Kansas.

Harmsen, Dorothy. Western Americana. (Flagstaff, AZ: Northland Press, 1971).

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository:

Kansas State Historical Society

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property less than 1 acre

UTM References

A 14 646510 4172700
 Zone Easting Northing

C

B
 Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located on lots 145 to 163 inclusive in Greiffenstein's Original Town, Wichita, Kansas. The property is bounded to the east by Market, to the west by Main, to the south by 3rd, and to the north by adjacent property lines.

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Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire parcel that is historically associated with the property.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Martha Hagedorn-Krass, Architectural Historian

organization Kansas State Historical Society date March 21, 1989

street & number 120 W. 10th telephone 913-296-5264

city or town Topeka state Kansas zip code 66612

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"Kansas Farming" is an oil on canvas mural that depicts various aspects of rural life and farm production, it is arranged in three interrelational units. In much the same way that Lockwood achieved a collage of images associated with western settlement in one landscape, so too has Haines achieved a collage of sorts, integrating various aspects of agriculture into one landscape. Rolling fertile hills ripe with the bounty of the fall harvest comprise Haines' idealized rural landscape. A tall corn plant and a tall sunflower plant frame the center panel of the canvas. The merging of traditional and modern rural lifestyles is represented in this panel. A farmer on horseback visits with his neighbors in the center of the canvas, the neighbor leans on a fence post digger while his wife cradles freshly picked tomatoes in her apron. The three form a triangular association, symbolizing a traditional way of life on the farm that is slowly changing, as the events around them indicate. In the foreground, a farmer prepares to place a fence post in the ground, symbolizing the growing separation between the farm and the city. He looks to the sky as do the young boy and girl near him. The girls hold mail in both hands as the boy waves to an unseen mail plane. A mail box stands in front of the children. The farmer and the children look up to the sky in the same way that they look toward the future and the impact that technology and transportation will have on their lives. The two outer panels represent the relationship between farm production and the shipping of those products to consumers. On the right side of the canvas a farmer feeds hogs corn. A cow and chickens feed behind him. A white barn and silo stand in the background. The farmer looks toward the produce packers on the left side of the canvas. These workers package and load the produce onto rail cars that transport the food to the city. One worker looks toward the farmer across the canvas, mirroring him in appearance and stance. The workers are inside but the transition between outside and inside is subtle. Rows of boxes stand outside the packing building ready for transport, they merge with the freshly tilled field in the center of the canvas. A small town with a railroad depot and grain elevator stand beyond the boxes. Oil derricks meet the horizon beyond the town. Haines employs a primary palette of green, gold, and rust for the mural.

In terms of representational art "Kansas Farming" is the most complicated example of Section artwork in Kansas. For the most part the Section murals in Kansas do not rely on the sophisticated interplay and symbolism, exemplified in "Kansas Farming", they are restricted to simple portrayals of one subject, such as wheat threshing, rural mail delivery, or a river bank scene. Haines employed a naive style for "Kansas Farming", influenced by the midwestern regionalists Grant Wood and Thomas Hart Benton. The

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mural has a childlike, dreaming quality to it. All of the details and colors are the same intensity. His people are large, healthy and solid, they resemble one another in body type and facial features. They appear somewhat larger than life and represent all people involved in the various aspects of agricultural production, with the past and present clearly looking toward the future. "Kansas Farming" is an example of the regional social realism that was funded under the Section program.

The Wichita competition was held in Spring, 1935 and was one of the first Section competitions to occur. C.A. Seward, a Wichita artist active with the Kansas Federation of Artists, Mrs. Henry J. Allen, a member of the Wichita Art Association, and Alton Smith, a representative of the Wichita Chamber of Commerce, comprised the competition committee. Eighty-one sketches from forty-one artists were reviewed by the committee and displayed at the public library before they were sent to the Section in Washington, D.C. for a final decision. Haines submitted two sketches in the competition and one can assume that Lockwood did as well, as the competition had been publicized as a double panel competition. "Pioneers in Kansas" and "Kansas Farming" were placed as at the east and west ends of the lobby respectively. The murals measured 10'6" by 4'7" each and were attached to the marble walls with white lead paste. "Pioneers in Kansas" was installed on April 24, 1936 and "Kansas Farming" was installed on May 25, 1936. Each artist received \$940 for his commission.

Haines was an Iowa farm boy who studied art at the Minneapolis School of Art and in Europe. He recalls in an interview with the Smithsonian that he always painted his murals a little larger and then cut the canvas to fit the space exactly. This cut away technique is apparent on the Wichita mural. Haines also recalled that he did not install the mural himself, but did pay for the shipping and installation charges, the burden of payment was standard. Haines was an active Section and WPA artist who enjoyed a prolific career. He recalls in the Smithsonian interview that in the 1930s Grant Wood offered him a scholarship to study with him in Iowa City, where he was teaching, but Haines refused, fearing that because he was influenced by Wood already, studying under him would overshadow his own development as an artist. He says that he never regretted that decision. Haines is responsible for the Section murals in the Cresco, Iowa; Hastings, Minnesota; Shelton, Washington; Berwyn, Illinois; and Clinton, Missouri post offices.

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Lockwood was born in Atchison, Kansas and studied art at the University of Kansas before attending the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and the Academic Ranson in Paris. He returned to Kansas where he worked as the Art Director for the Capper Publications of Topeka. He moved to Taos, New Mexico in the 1920s and became a member of the Taos Society of Artists. He founded the University of Texas Art Department in the late 1930s or early 1940s. He also taught at the University of California-Berkeley, the University of Kansas, and the University of Washington, and developed the lithography program at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. Lockwood was a follower of Andrew Dasburg and John Marin. He was classified as a regionalist in the 1930s but as his style matured it moved from academic interpretations to a more cubist approach. In Lockwood's post office murals he worried about the integration of painting into architecture, his solution was to concentration color patterns above form. Mecklenburg writes that this approach was essentially antithetical to the Section mural formula of minimal color in favor of linear and tonal description. In addition to the Wichita commission, Lockwood received Section commissions for the United States Postal Service Department Building in Washington D.C., and the post offices in Lexington, Kentucky; Hamilton, Texas; and Edinburg, Texas. When Lockwood died in 1963 his widow, Martha Clyde Bonebrake Lockwood donated more than five hundred pieces of his work to the University of Kansas to be distributed to various museums and used to supplement the endowment fund. Lockwood's work is well represented in private and public collections nationally.

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

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Hoag, Betty Lochrie. Interview with Richard Haines, 29 January 1965.
The Oral History Collections at Archives of American Art. Smithsonian
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Kansas). Personal interview with Martha Hagedorn-Krass, January
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Topeka State Journal; 10 July 1935, 30 November 1935.

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Wichita Magazine, 26 November 1930.