

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

SEP 08 1989

NATIONAL REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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).

1. Name of Property

historic name Halstead United States Post Office

other names/site number Same

2. Location

street & number 319 Main Street

not for publication

city, town Halstead

vicinity

state Kansas

code KS

county Harvey

code 079

zip code 67056

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s), district, site, structure, object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

Name of related multiple property listing: Kansas Post Offices that Contain Treasury Department Section Artwork, 1936-1942

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: [Signature] State Historic Preservation Office February 14, 1989 Date

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. See continuation sheet. determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet. determined not eligible for the National Register. removed from the National Register. other, (explain:)

[Signature] 10-17-89

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government: Post Office

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government: Post Office

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)20th Century Revival: Classical

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Revival

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

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walls Brick

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roof Asphalt

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other Stone: limestone

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

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The Halstead United States Post Office (c. 1939) is located at 319 Main Street in Halstead, Harvey County, Kansas (pop. 1,994). The one story, ridge hipped roof, red brick building has an eastern facade orientation. The building measures approximately sixty feet from north to south and fifty-nine feet from east to west. A double door pierces the center of the building's facade. The door is surmounted by a transom and enframed by a classical wooden surround. Steps lead up to the doorway. Two pairs of large, double hung 1/1 windows surmounted by limestone lintels and underscored by limestone sills flank the doorway. The windows are set into slight recessions. A similar fenestration treatment is employed on the lesser elevations. The building sits on a limestone foundation and is surmounted by a limestone entablature. This post office is an example of the many smaller class C or D standardized design type that was repeated throughout the country during the 1930s.

The mural, "Where Kit Carson Camped", was installed on the south wall of the Halstead Post Office lobby above the postmaster's door and the two bulletin boards that flank it. This is the traditional location for Section artwork in the smaller class C and D post offices. "Where Kit Carson Camped" is an oil on canvas mural of a scene at the junction of the Little Arkansas River and Black Kettle Creek. The scene seems to be in the spring, as Sandzen's pastels do not portray a searing hot summer day. A large, gnarled cottonwood spreads its limbs over the blue, rushing river. High lavender clay banks slope down to the water. Verdant green pastures and Van Goghque trees frame the river banks. White clouds stretch across the blue sky. The colors are bright and naturalistic.

The mural was installed on August 4, 1941. It measured 12' by 3' 10" before installation and was surmounted by a wide classical cornice. It was not varnished. For cleaning the painting, Sandzen recommended washing it with ivory soap and rain water, using a soft linen rag. In August, 1973 a slight defect was recorded in the mural's condition. This defect was not evident during a 1987 site visit and it can be assumed that the mural was restored.

**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)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Art  
Politics/Government  
Social History

1941  
1941  
1941

1941  
1941  
1941

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Sandzen, Birger: Artist

Simon, Louis: Supervising Architect

Buren and Douglas: Contractors

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

The Halstead United States Post office (c. 1939) 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 mural that it contains. The mural, "Where Kit Carson Camped", was painted by Lindsborg, Kansas artist Birger Sandzen (1871-1954) in 1941. Because the mural is less than fifty years old, criteria consideration G, which allows for exceptional significance in the case of properties achieving significance within the past fifty years, is also a factor. The National Register has identified post offices that contain Section artwork as being exceptionally significant if they retain integrity from their period of significance.

"Where Kit Carson Camped" is an oil on canvas mural of a scene at the junction of the Little Arkansas River and Black Kettle Creek. Local legend recounts that Kit Carson, the famous Indian scout and fighter, and his entourage, camped under the large cottonwood at the junction of the two waterways. Carson's wagon train was ambushed by Indians at this location. This area is now Riverside Park in Halstead and only parts of the tree stump remain.

The scene seems to be in spring, as Sandzen's pastels do not portray a searing hot summer day. A large, gnarled cottonwood spreads its limbs over the blue, rushing river. High lavender clay banks slope down to the water. Verdant green pastures and Van Gogheseque trees frame the river banks. White clouds stretch across the blue sky. In Sandzen's rendering "Where Kit Carson Camped" is a very peaceful place.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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

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

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

Samuels, Peggy and Harold. The Illustrated Biographical Encyclopedia of Artists of the American West. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976).

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository:

Kansas State Historical Society

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Less than 1 acre

UTM References

A 

1	4
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6	3	1	1	6	7
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4	2	0	6	9	2	3
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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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B 

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Zone Easting Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located on the S½ Lot 3 and all of Lots 4, 5, 6 in Block 8, Halstead, Kansas. The property is bounded to the east by Main and to the north, south, and west by adjacent property lines.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

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

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Martha Hagedorn-Krass, Architectural Historian  
organization Kansas State Historical Society date February 14, 1989  
street & number 120 W. 10th telephone 913-296-5264  
city or town Topeka state Kansas zip code 66612

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

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Sandzen has taken a familiar regional scene which has historical associations, making the ordinary extraordinary by his attention to light and color. The colors are bright and naturalistic. "Where Kit Carson Camped" is typical of Sandzen's landscapes of the 1930s and 1940s. Sandzen is classified as a post impressionist landscape artist who painted in a style reminiscent of Van Gogh. Similar murals hang in the Lindsborg and Belleville post offices. "Where Kit Carson Camped" is representative of the realistic illustrative landscape paintings that were funded under the Section program.

Sandzen is regarded as one of the most prominent Kansas landscape artists, deriving his national reputation mainly from his lithographs, woodcuts, linocuts, and dry points. Sandzen found guidance and teachings in nature, and studied the Kansas landscapes around him. He believed in the accessibility of art for the general public, and sold many of his own pieces to raise money for the purchase of works by other artists. Sandzen was one of a group of artists who founded the Prairie Print Makers, a group that espoused the theory of accessibility of art for the common man. Although Sandzen gained national fame in the 1920s, and was elected as an associate member of the Taos Society of Artists, he continued to live in Lindsborg, where he had taught language and art at Bethany College since his immigration from Sweden in 1894.

The Section was not enthusiastic about awarding the Halstead commission to Sandzen since he had received the Lindsborg commission in 1938 and the Belleville commission in 1939, but community pressure facilitated the award. Sandzen received the contract for the mural on June 2, 1941 and worked quickly on the commission, installing the mural on August 4, 1941. "Where Kit Carson Camped" was installed on the south wall of the lobby above the postmaster's door and the two bulletin boards that flank it. It measured 12' by 3' 10" before installation and was surmounted by a wide cornice moulding. Sandzen received \$700 for the mural. The Halstead Post Office is an example of one of the many smaller class C or D type post offices that received Section artwork in Kansas.

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

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Spencer, Howard Dalee. Birger Sandzen: A Retrospective. (Wichita:  
Wichita Art Museum, 1985).

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

Wichita Eagle-Beacon, 24 May 1972.