

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Federal Post Office and Courthouse

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 401 South Second not for publication

city, town Mankato vicinity of congressional district Second

state Minnesota code 22 county Blue Earth code 013

**3. Classification**

| Category  | Ownership                                  | Status  | Present Use                                    |
|---|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied        | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> private           | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied                 | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure              | <input type="checkbox"/> both              | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress           | <input type="checkbox"/> educational           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site                   | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                  | <b>Accessible</b>                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object                 | <input type="checkbox"/> in process        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered  | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted          | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial            |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> no                         | <input type="checkbox"/> military              |
|   |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> museum                |
|   |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> park                  |
|   |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> private residence     |
|   |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> religious             |
|   |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific            |
|   |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation        |
|   |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> other:                |

**4. Owner of Property**

name U.S. Postal Service

street & number 401 South Second

city, town Mankato, Minnesota vicinity of state Minnesota

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Blue Earth County Courthouse

street & number 204 South Fifth Street

city, town Mankato state Minnesota

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Statewide Survey of Historic Resources has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1979  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Minnesota Historical Society -- 240 Summit Avenue-Hill House

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota

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## 7. Description

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|  |                                       |                                    |   |
|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Condition</b>                         |                                       | <b>Check one</b>                   | <b>Check one</b>                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent       | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> original site    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins        | <input type="checkbox"/> altered   | <input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair            | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed    |                                    |   |

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Federal Post Office and Courthouse is located in the central business district of Mankato on a principal downtown artery.

The massive Richardsonian Romanesque structure fronts on Second Street and includes two principal entrances on this street and a third entrance on Hickory. Extensive loading facilities for postal vehicles are located to the rear.

The building is of rock-faced buff-colored Mankato stone, with smooth-faced courses at the first story sill level, between the first and second stories, and at the frieze level under the eaves. Symmetrical fenestration is composed of double hung arched windows at both the first and second levels. Transoms are arched on the second level and rectangular on the first level. The broad smooth-faced arches of the two principal entrances on Second Street spring from piers capped by foliate designs in carved stone. A recessed area is located at the second story above each of the entrances. A secondary entrance on the Hickory Street side also utilizes the archway and decorative foliate designs on the piers, but includes rock-faced stone voussiors rather than a smooth-faced arch. Wall-mounted light standards flank this entrance.

The broad hipped roof of the structure is pierced on the south and north by hip-roofed dormers. The wide overhanging eaves are supported by modillions. A stone chimney is at a central location.

The building was constructed in three principal phases. The original structure included the northwestern portion of the present building, including the north entrance on Second Street and the groupings of four windows on either side of this entrance. A tall, square, flat-roofed clock tower was originally situated over the entrance on this section. The tower was removed at an uncertain date, and in 1932, the building was expanded to the south by more than twice its original size. The materials and design of this addition were meticulously matched with the original so that the expanded building appears as a unified whole. In 1965, the building was again enlarged. This addition, which again made use of similar materials, is located at the rear (towards Broad Street) and is not generally visible from the principal facades.

## 8. Significance

| Period  | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below    |   |   |  |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric          | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric  | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning     | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture         | <input type="checkbox"/> religion                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499            | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic     | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation           | <input type="checkbox"/> law                            | <input type="checkbox"/> science                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599            | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> economics              | <input type="checkbox"/> literature                     | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education              | <input type="checkbox"/> military                       | <input type="checkbox"/> social/<br>humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> music                          | <input type="checkbox"/> theater                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy                     | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–     | <input type="checkbox"/> communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> industry               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)         |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> invention              |   |  |

**Specific dates** 1896, 1932, 1965      **Builder/Architect** see below

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Federal Post Office and Courthouse is primarily significant for the imposing strength of its Richardsonian Romanesque design. The central clock tower commanded a dominant image for the original structure; the 1932 remodeling changed the building's emphasis to a ponderous horizontal mass, but retained the integrity of the Romanesque styling, and the building continues to occupy an eminent position in downtown Mankato. The relative simplicity and ordered use of the Romanesque detailing contribute to the strength of the structure's design. The building is one of three in the Mankato downtown area to made extensive use of local stone. The courtrooms have been used for the Second Division of U.S. District Court until recent decades.

### BUILDER/ARCHITECT

1896 William Martin Aiken  
Supervising Architect, Treasury Department

1932 J.A. Wetmore  
Acting Supervising Architect, Treasury Department

1965 Edward W. Novak  
Design and Construction Division, G.S.A.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Hughes, Thomas. History of Blue Earth County, and Bibliographies of its Leading Citizens. Chicago: Middle West Publishing Company, (1909?), p. 209.  
 Plans on file at Mankato Postmasters Office.  
Mankato Free Press. April 3, 1978.

# 10. Geographical Data

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

Acreage of nominated property less than 1

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

Quadrangle name Mankato West

Quadrangle scale 7.5

**UMT References**

A 

|      |   |   |   |         |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 5 | 4 | 1 | 9       | 7 | 3 | 0 | 4        | 8 | 9 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| Zone |   |   |   | Easting |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |

B 

|      |  |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| Zone |  |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

C 

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| Zone |  |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

D 

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| Zone |  |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

E 

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| Zone |  |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

F 

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|      |  |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

G 

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|      |  |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

H 

|      |  |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|--|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

Mankato by Everts Survey  
 Lots 1-3, vacated alley adjacent  
 Block 33

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

|       |      |        |      |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|

|       |      |        |      |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dennis Gimmetad

organization Minnesota Historical Society date March, 1980

street & number 240 Summit Avenue-Hill House telephone 612-296-9545

city or town St. Paul state Minnesota

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Russell W. Fridley

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 5/31/80

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| For HCRS use only  |                     |
| I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register |                     |
| <u>W. Ray Luce</u>   | date <u>6/17/80</u> |
| Keeper of the National Register  |                     |
| Attest: <u>Kristin J. O'Connell</u>                                      | date <u>6/16/80</u> |
| Chief of Registration  |                     |